

# Workplace Bullying

## Definition of workplace bullying by Amicus-MSF trade union

*"Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress"*

MSF Union, 1994

## Definition of workplace bullying by Tim Field

Those who can, do. Those who can't, bully.

*"Bullying is a compulsive need to displace aggression and is achieved by the expression of inadequacy (social, personal, interpersonal, behavioural, professional) by projection of that inadequacy onto others through control and subjugation (criticism, exclusion, isolation etc). Bullying is sustained by abdication of responsibility (denial, counter-accusation, pretence of victimhood) and perpetuated by a climate of fear, ignorance, indifference, silence, denial, disbelief, deception, evasion of accountability, tolerance and reward (eg promotion) for the bully."*

Tim Field, 1999

## Where are people bullied?

- at work by their manager or co-workers or subordinates, or by their clients (bullying, workplace bullying, mobbing, work abuse, harassment, discrimination)
- at home by their partner or parents or siblings or children (bullying, assault, domestic violence, abuse, verbal abuse)
- at school (bullying, harassment, assault)
- in the care of others, such as in hospital, convalescent homes, care homes, residential homes (bullying, harassment, assault)
- in the armed forces (bullying, harassment, discrimination, assault)
- by those in authority (harassment, abuse of power)
- by neighbours and landlords (bullying, harassment)
- by strangers (harassment, stalking, assault, sexual assault, rape, grievous bodily harm, murder)

How do you know if you're being bullied? Bullying differs from harassment and assault in that the latter can result from a single incident or small number of incidents - which everybody recognises as harassment or assault - whereas bullying tends to be an accumulation of many small incidents over a long period of time. Each incident tends to be trivial, and on its own and out of context does not constitute an offence or grounds for disciplinary or grievance action. So, ...

## What is bullying?

- Constant nit-picking, fault-finding and criticism of a trivial nature - the triviality, regularity and frequency betray bullying; often there is a grain of truth (but only a grain) in the criticism to fool you into believing the criticism has validity, which

it does not; often, the criticism is based on distortion, misrepresentation or fabrication

- simultaneous with the criticism, a constant refusal to acknowledge you and your contributions and achievements or to recognise your existence and value
- constant attempts to undermine you and your position, status, worth, value and potential
- where you are in a group (eg at work), being singled out and treated differently; for instance, everyone else can get away with murder but the moment you put a foot wrong - however trivial - action is taken against you
- being isolated and separated from colleagues, excluded from what's going on, marginalized, overruled, ignored, sidelined, frozen out, sent to Coventry
- being belittled, demeaned and patronised, especially in front of others
- being humiliated, shouted at and threatened, often in front of others
- being overloaded with work, or having all your work taken away and replaced with either menial tasks (filing, photocopying, minute taking) or with no work at all
- finding that your work - and the credit for it - is stolen and plagiarised
- having your responsibility increased but your authority taken away
- having annual leave, sickness leave, and - especially - compassionate leave refused
- being denied training necessary for you to fulfil your duties
- having unrealistic goals set, which change as you approach them
- ditto deadlines which are changed at short notice - or no notice - and without you being informed until it's too late
- finding that everything you say and do is twisted, distorted and misrepresented
- being subjected to disciplinary procedures with verbal or written warnings imposed for trivial or fabricated reasons and without proper investigation
- being coerced into leaving through no fault of your own, constructive dismissal, early or ill-health retirement, etc

## **Why me?,**

### **How do I recognise a bully?**

Most bullying is traceable to one person, male or female - bullying is not a gender issue. Bullies are often clever people (especially female bullies) but you can be clever too.

### **Who does this describe in your life?**

Jekyll & Hyde nature - vicious and vindictive in private, but innocent and charming in front of witnesses; no-one can (or wants to) believe this individual has a vindictive nature - only the current target sees both sides

- is a convincing, compulsive liar and when called to account, will make up anything spontaneously to fit their needs at that moment
- uses lots of charm and is always plausible and convincing when peers, superiors or others are present; the motive of the charm is deception and its purpose is to compensate for lack of empathy
- relies on mimicry to convince others that they are a "normal" human being but their words, writing and deeds are hollow, superficial and glib
- displays a great deal of certitude and self-assuredness to mask their insecurity

- excels at deception
- exhibits unusual inappropriate attitudes to sexual matters or sexual behaviour; underneath the charming exterior there are often suspicions or intimations of sexual harassment, sex discrimination or sexual abuse (sometimes racial prejudice as well)
- exhibits much controlling behaviour and is a control freak
- displays a compulsive need to criticise whilst simultaneously refusing to acknowledge, value and praise others
- when called upon to share or address the needs and concerns of others, responds with impatience, irritability and aggression
- often has an overwhelming, unhealthy and narcissistic need to portray themselves as a wonderful, kind, caring and compassionate person, in contrast to their behaviour and treatment of others; the bully is oblivious to the discrepancy between how they like to be seen (and believe they are seen), and how they are actually seen
- has an overbearing belief in their qualities of leadership but cannot distinguish between leadership (maturity, decisiveness, assertiveness, trust and integrity) and bullying (immaturity, impulsiveness, aggression, distrust and deceitfulness)
- when called to account, immediately and aggressively denies everything, then counter-attacks with distorted or fabricated criticisms and allegations; if this is insufficient, quickly feigns victimhood, often by bursting into tears (the purpose is to avoid answering the question and thus evade accountability by manipulating others through the use of guilt)
- is also ... aggressive, devious, manipulative, spiteful, vengeful, doesn't listen, can't sustain mature adult conversation, lacks a conscience, shows no remorse, is drawn to power, emotionally cold and flat, humourless, joyless, ungrateful, dysfunctional, disruptive, divisive, rigid and inflexible, selfish, insincere, insecure, immature and deeply inadequate, especially in interpersonal skills

It is estimated by one commentator that one person in thirty has this behaviour profile. He describes them as having a disordered personality: an aggressive but intelligent individual who expresses their violence psychologically (constant criticism etc) rather than physically (assault).

### **What does bullying do to my health?**

Bullying causes injury to health and makes you ill. How many of these symptoms do you have?

- constant high levels of stress and anxiety
- frequent illness such as viral infections especially flu and glandular fever, colds, coughs, chest, ear, nose and throat infections (stress plays havoc with your immune system)
- aches and pains in the joints and muscles with no obvious cause; also back pain with no obvious cause and which won't go away or respond to treatment
- headaches and migraines
- tiredness, exhaustion, constant fatigue
- sleeplessness, nightmares, waking early, waking up more tired than when you went to bed
- flashbacks and replays, obsessiveness, can't get the bullying out of your mind
- irritable bowel syndrome
- skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis, athlete's foot, ulcers, shingles, urticaria
- poor concentration, can't concentrate on anything for long

- bad or intermittently-functioning memory, forgetfulness, especially with trivial day-to-day things
- sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations, panic attacks
- tearfulness, bursting into tears regularly and over trivial things
- uncharacteristic irritability and angry outbursts
- hypervigilance (feels like but is *not* paranoia), being constantly on edge
- hypersensitivity, fragility, isolation, withdrawal
- reactive depression, a feeling of woe-begoneness, lethargy, hopelessness, anger, futility and more
- shattered self-confidence, low self-worth, low self-esteem, loss of self-love, etc

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is persistent unwelcome behaviour, mostly using unwarranted or invalid criticism, nit-picking, fault-finding, also exclusion, isolation, being singled out and treated differently, being shouted at, humiliated, excessive monitoring, having verbal and written warnings imposed, and much more. In the workplace, bullying usually focuses on distorted or fabricated allegations of underperformance.

### **Why do people bully?**

The purpose of bullying is to hide inadequacy. Bullying has nothing to do with managing etc; good managers manage, bad managers bully. Management is managing; bullying is not managing. Therefore, anyone who chooses to bully is admitting their inadequacy, and the extent to which a person bullies is a measure of their inadequacy. Bullies project their inadequacy on to others:

- a) to avoid facing up to their inadequacy and doing something about it;
- b) to avoid accepting responsibility for their behaviour and the effect it has on others, and,
- c) to reduce their fear of being seen for what they are, namely a weak, inadequate and often incompetent individuals, and,
- d) to divert attention away from their inadequacy - in an insecure or badly-managed workplace, this is how inadequate, incompetent and aggressive employees keep their jobs.

Bullying is an inefficient way of working, resulting in disenchantment, demoralisation, demotivation, disaffection, and alienation. Bullies run dysfunctional and inefficient organisations; staff turnover and sickness absence are high whilst morale, productivity and profitability are low. Prosperity is illusory and such organizations are a bad long-term investment. Projection and denial are hallmarks of the serial bully.

Bullying is present behind all forms of harassment, discrimination, prejudice, abuse, persecution, conflict and violence. When the bullying has a focus (eg race or gender) it is expressed as racial prejudice or harassment, or sexual discrimination and harassment, and so on. When the bullying lacks a focus (or the bully is aware of the Human Rights Act), it comes out as pure bullying.

Bullying...is a form of abuse, and bullies - and unenlightened employers - often go to great lengths to keep their targets quiet, using threats of disciplinary action, dismissal, and gagging clauses. What bullies fear most is exposure of their inadequacy and being called publicly to account for their behaviour and its consequences. This makes sense when you remember that the purpose of bullying is to hide inadequacy, and people who bully to hide their inadequacy are often incompetent.

## **A bully is a person who**

- has never learnt to accept responsibility for their behaviour
- wants to enjoy the benefits of living in the adult world, but who is unable and unwilling to accept the responsibilities that are a prerequisite for being part of the adult world.
- abdicates and denies responsibility for their behaviour and its consequences (abdication and denial are common features of bullying)
- is unable and unwilling to recognise the effect of their behaviour on others
- does not want to know of any other way of behaving
- is unwilling to recognise that there could be better ways of behaving.

Bullying is obsessive and compulsive; the serial bully *has to have* someone to bully and appears to be unable to survive without a current target.

Despite the facade that such people put up, bullies have low self-confidence and low self-esteem, and thus feel insecure. Low self-esteem is a factor highlighted by all studies of bullying. Because such people are inadequate and unable to fulfil the duties and obligations of their position (but have no hesitation in accepting salary), they fear being revealed. This fear of exposure often borders on paranoia.

Bullies are seething with resentment, bitterness, hatred and anger, and often have wide-ranging prejudices as a vehicle for dumping their anger onto others. Bullies are driven by jealousy and envy. Rejection (which cannot be assuaged) is another powerful motivator of bullying.

Bullies are people who have not learned the lesson of consequences, ie that if they behave well there are good consequences (reward), but if they behave badly there are bad consequences (restriction, sanction, punishment, etc). Since childhood, bullies have learnt that they can avoid the unpleasant consequences of bad behaviour through the instinctive response of denial, blame, and feigning victimhood.

## ***How to spot a bully in your workplace***

If you have a serial bully on the staff they will reveal themselves by their department showing excessive rates of

- a) staff turnover
- b) sickness absence
- c) stress breakdowns
- d) deaths in service
- e) ill-health retirements
- f) early retirements
- g) uses of disciplinary procedures
- h) grievances initiated
- i) suspensions
- j) dismissals
- k) uses of private security firms to snoop on employees
- l) litigation including employment tribunals or legal action against employees

## ***Types of bullying***

**Pressure bullying or unwitting bullying** is where the stress of the moment causes behaviour to deteriorate; the person becomes short-tempered, irritable and may shout or swear at others. Everybody does this from time to time, but when the pressure is removed, behaviour returns to normal, the person recognises the inappropriateness of their behaviour, makes amends, and may apologise, and - crucially - learns from the

experience so that next time the situation arises they are better able to deal with it. This is "normal" behaviour pressure bullying is generally not in definitions of workplace bullying.

**Organisational bullying** is a combination of pressure bullying and corporate bullying, and occurs when an organisation struggles to adapt to changing markets, reduced income, cuts in budgets, imposed expectations, and other external pressures. Corporate bullying is where the employer abuses employees with impunity knowing that the law is weak and jobs are scarce, eg:

- coercing employees to work 60/70/80 weeks on a regular basis then making life hell for (or dismissing) anyone who objects
- dismissing anyone who looks like having a stress breakdown as it's cheaper generally to pay the costs of unfair dismissal at Employment Tribunal than risk facing a personal injury claim for stress breakdown.
- introduces "absence management" to deny employees annual or sick leave to which they are genuinely entitled
- regularly snoops and spies on employees, eg by listening in to telephone conversations, using the mystery shopper, contacting customers behind employees backs and asking leading questions, conducting covert video surveillance (perhaps by fellow employees), sending HR officers or private investigators to an employee's home to interrogate the employees whilst on sick leave, threatening employees with interrogation the moment they return from sick leave, etc.
- deems any employee suffering from stress as weak and inadequate whilst aggressively ignoring and denying the *cause* of stress (bad management and bullying)
- "encourages" employees (with promises of promotion and/or threats of disciplinary action) to fabricate complaints about their colleagues
- employees are "encouraged" to give up full-time permanent positions in favour of short-term contracts; anyone who resists has their life made hell

**Institutional** bullying is similar to corporate bullying and arises when bullying becomes entrenched and accepted as part of the culture. People are moved, long-existing contracts are replaced with new short-term contracts on less favourable terms with the accompanying threat of "agree to this or else", workloads are increased, work schedules are changed, roles are changed, career progression paths are blocked or terminated, etc - and all of this is without consultation.

**Client bullying** is where employees are bullied by those they serve, eg teachers are bullied (and often assaulted) by pupils and their parents, nurses are bullied by patients and their relatives, social workers are bullied by their clients, and shop/bank/building society staff are bullied by customers. Often the client is claiming their perceived right (eg to better service) in an abusive, derogatory and often physically violent manner. Client bullying can also be employees bullying their clients.

**Serial bullying** is where the source of all dysfunction can be traced to one individual, who picks on one employee after another and destroys them. This is the most common type of bullying and therefore most of this paper is about describing and defining the serial bully, who exhibits the behavioural characteristics of a socialised psychopath. Most people know at least one person in their life with the profile of the serial bully; most people do not recognise this person as a socialised psychopath, or sociopath. It is estimated that one person in thirty is either a physically-violent psychopath who commits criminal acts, or an antisocial whose behaviour is antisocial, or a sociopath who commits mostly non-arrestable offences.

**Secondary bullying** is mostly unwitting bullying which people start exhibiting when there's a serial bully in the department. The pressure of trying to deal with a dysfunctional, divisive and aggressive serial bully causes everyone's behaviour to decline.

**Pair bullying** is a serial bully with a colleague. Often one does the talking whilst the other watches and listens. Usually it's the quiet one you need to watch. Usually they are of opposite gender and frequently there's an affair going on.

**Gang bullying** is a serial bully with colleagues. Gangs can occur anywhere, but flourish in corporate bullying climates. If the bully is an extrovert, they are likely to be leading from the front; they may also be a shouter and screamer, and thus easily identifiable (and recordable on tape and video-able). If the bully is an introvert, that person will be in the background initiating the mayhem but probably not taking an active part, and may thus be harder to identify. A common tactic of this type of bully is to tell everybody a different story - usually about what others are alleged to have said about that person - and encourage each person to think they are the only one with the correct story. Introvert bullies are the most dangerous bullies.

Half the people in the gang are happy for the opportunity to behave badly, they gain gratification from the feeling of power and control, and enjoy the patronage, protection and reward from the serial bully. The other half of the gang are coerced into joining in, usually through fear of being the next target if they don't. If anything backfires, one of these coerces will be the scapegoat and sacrificial lamb on whom enraged targets will be encouraged to vent their anger. The serial bully watches from a safe distance. Serial bullies gain a great deal of gratification from encouraging and watching others engage in conflict, especially those who might otherwise pool negative information about them.

Gang bullying or group bullying is often called mobbing and usually involves scapegoating and victimisation.

**Vicarious bullying** is where two parties are encouraged to engage in adversarial interaction or conflict. Similar to gang bullying, although the bully may or may not be directly connected with either of the two parties. One party becomes the bully's instrument of harassment and is deceived and manipulated into bullying the other party. An example of vicarious bullying is where the serial bully creates conflict between employer and employee, participating occasionally to stoke the conflict, but rarely taking an active part in the conflict themselves.

**Regulation bullying** is where a serial bully forces their target to comply with rules, regulations, procedures or laws regardless of their appropriateness, applicability or necessity. Legal bullying - the bringing of a vexatious legal action to control and punish a person - is one of the nastiest forms of bullying.

**Residual bullying** is the bullying of all kinds that continues after the serial bully has left. Like recruits like and like promotes like, therefore the serial bully bequeaths a dysfunctional environment to those who are left. This can last for years.

**Cyber bullying** is the misuse of email systems or Internet forums etc for sending aggressive flame mails. Serial bullies have few communication skills (and often none), thus the impersonal nature of email makes it an ideal tool for causing conflict. Sometimes called cyberstalking.

In environments where bullying is the norm, most people will eventually either become bullies or become targets. There are few bystanders, as most people will eventually be sucked in. It's about survival: you either adopt bullying tactics yourself and thus survive by not becoming a target, or you stand up against bullying and refuse to join in, in which case you are bullied, harassed, victimized and scapegoated until

your health is so severely impaired that you have a stress breakdown (this is a psychiatric injury, *not* a mental illness), take ill-health retirement, leave, find yourself unexpectedly selected for redundancy, or are unfairly dismissed.

### ***What is bullying?***

People who are bullied find that they are:

- constantly criticised and subjected to destructive criticism (often euphemistically called constructive criticism, which is an oxymoron) - explanations and proof of achievement are ridiculed, overruled, dismissed or ignored
- forever subject to nit-picking and trivial fault-finding (the triviality is the giveaway)
- undermined, especially in front of others; false concerns are raised, or doubts are expressed over a person's performance or standard of work - however, the doubts lack substantive and quantifiable evidence, for they are only the bully's unreliable opinion and are for *control*, not performance enhancement
- overruled, ignored, sidelined, marginalised, ostracised
- isolated and excluded from what's happening (this makes people more vulnerable and easier to control and subjugate)
- singled out and treated differently (for example everyone else can have long lunch breaks but if they are one minute late it's a disciplinary offence)
- belittled, degraded, demeaned, ridiculed, patronised, subject to disparaging remarks
- regularly the target of offensive language, personal remarks, or inappropriate bad language
- the target of unwanted sexual behaviour
- threatened, shouted at and humiliated, especially in front of others
- taunted and teased where the intention is to embarrass and humiliate
- set unrealistic goals and deadlines which are unachievable or which are changed without notice or reason or whenever they get near achieving them
- denied information or knowledge necessary for undertaking work and achieving objectives
- starved of resources, sometimes whilst others often receive more than they need
- denied support by their manager and thus find themselves working in a management vacuum
- either overloaded with work (this keeps people busy [with no time to tackle bullying] and makes it harder to achieve targets) or have all their work taken away (which is sometimes replaced with inappropriate menial jobs, eg photocopying, filing, making coffee)
- have their responsibility increased but their authority removed
- have their work plagiarised, stolen and copied - the bully then presents their target's work (eg to senior management) as their own
- are given the silent treatment: the bully refuses to communicate and avoids eye contact (always an indicator of an abusive relationship); often instructions are received only via email, memos, or a succession of yellow stickies or post-it notes
- subject to excessive monitoring, supervision, micro-management, recording, snooping etc
- the subject of written complaints by other members of staff (most of whom have been coerced into fabricating allegations - the complaints are trivial, often bizarre)

["*He looked at me in a funny way*"] and often bear striking similarity to each other, suggesting a common origin)

- forced to work long hours, often without remuneration and under threat of dismissal
- find requests for leave have unacceptable and unnecessary conditions attached, sometimes overturning previous approval. especially if the person has taken action to address bullying in the meantime
- denied annual leave, sickness leave, or - especially - compassionate leave
- when on leave, are harassed by calls at home or on holiday, often at unsocial hours
- receive unpleasant or threatening calls or are harassed with intimidating memos, notes or emails with no verbal communication, immediately prior to weekends and holidays (eg 4pm Friday or Christmas Eve - often these are hand-delivered)
- do not have a clear job description, or have one that is exceedingly long or vague; the bully often deliberately makes the person's role unclear
- are invited to "informal" meetings which turn out to be disciplinary hearings
- are denied representation at meetings, often under threat of further disciplinary action; sometimes the bully abuses their position of power to exclude any representative who is competent to deal with bullying
- encouraged to feel guilty, and to believe they're always the one at fault
- subjected to unwarranted and unjustified verbal or written warnings
- facing unjustified disciplinary action on trivial or specious or false charges
- facing dismissal on fabricated charges or flimsy excuses, often using a trivial incident from months or years previously
- coerced into reluctant resignation, enforced redundancy, early or ill-health retirement
- A favourite tactic of bullies which helps them evade detection is to undertake a "reorganisation" at regular intervals. This has several advantages:
  - anyone whose face doesn't fit can be organised out through downsizing (redundancy) or transfer
  - ditto anyone who challenges the reorganisation
  - ditto, their job can be "regraded" or "redefined" to the person's disadvantage
  - each reorganisation is a smokescreen for the bully's dysfunctional behaviour - everyone is so busy coping with the reorganisation (chaos) that the bully's behaviour goes unnoticed
  - the bully can always claim to be reorganising in the name of "efficiency" and therefore be perceived by those above as a strong manager
  - However, there is never any cost-benefit justification to the reorganisation - no figures before and no figures after to prove the reorganisation has brought benefits.

### **Why me?**

There are many reasons how and why bullies target others, but the reasons are surprisingly consistent between cases. There are many myths and stereotypes such as "victims are weak".

### **How do bullies select their targets?**

The bully selects their target using the following criteria:

- bullies are predatory and opportunistic - you just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time; this is always the main reason - investigation will reveal a string of predecessors, and you will have a string of successors
- being good at your job, often excelling
- being popular with people (colleagues, customers, clients, pupils, parents, patients, etc)
- more than anything else, the bully fears exposure of his/her inadequacy and incompetence; your presence, popularity and competence unknowingly and unwittingly fuel that fear
- being the expert and the person to whom others come for advice, either personal or professional (i.e. you get more attention than the bully)
- having a well-defined set of values which you are unwilling to compromise
- having a strong sense of integrity (bullies despise integrity, for they have none, and seem compelled to destroy anyone who has integrity)
- having at least one vulnerability that can be exploited
- being too old or too expensive (usually both)
- refusing to join an established clique
- showing independence of thought or deed
- refusing to become a corporate clone and drone
- Jealousy (of relationships and perceived exclusion there from) and envy (of talents, abilities, circumstances or possessions) are strong motivators of bullying.

### **Events that trigger bullying**

Bullying starts after one of these events:

- the previous target leaves
- there's a reorganisation
- a new manager is appointed
- your performance unwittingly highlights, draws attention to, exposes or invites unfavourable comparison with the bully's lack of performance (the harder you work to address the bully's claims of underperformance, the more insecure and unstable the bully becomes)
- you may have unwittingly become the focus of attention whereas before the bully was the centre of attention (this often occurs with female bullies) - most bullies are emotionally immature and thus crave attention
- obvious displays of affection, respect or trust from co-workers
- refusing to obey an order which violates rules, regulations, procedures, or is illegal
- standing up for a colleague who is being bullied - this ensures you will be next; sometimes the bully drops their current target and turns their attention to you immediately
- blowing the whistle on incompetence, malpractice, fraud, illegality, breaches of procedure, breaches of health & safety regulations etc
- undertaking trade union duties
- challenging the status quo, especially unwittingly
- gaining recognition for your achievements, e.g. winning an award or being publicly recognised
- gaining promotion

### **Personal qualities that bullies find irresistible**

Targets of bullying usually have these qualities:

- popularity (this stimulates jealousy in the less-than-popular bully)
- competence (this stimulates envy in the less-than-competent bully)
- intelligence and intellect
- honesty and integrity (which bullies despise)
- you're trustworthy, trusting, conscientious, loyal and dependable
- a well-developed integrity which you're unwilling to compromise
- you're always willing to go that extra mile and expect others to do the same
- successful, tenacious, determined, courageous, having fortitude
- a sense of humour, including displays of quick-wittedness
- imaginative, creative, innovative
- idealistic, optimistic, always working for improvement and betterment of self, family, the employer, and the world
- ability to master new skills
- ability to think long term and to see the bigger picture
- sensitivity (this is a constellation of values to be cherished including empathy, concern for others, respect, tolerance etc)
- slow to anger
- helpful, always willing to share knowledge and experience
- giving and selfless
- difficulty saying no
- diligent, industrious
- tolerant
- strong sense of honour
- irrepressible, wanting to tackle and correct injustice wherever you see it
- an inability to value oneself whilst attributing greater importance and validity to other people's opinions of oneself (eg through tests, exams, appraisals, manager's feedback, etc)
- low propensity to violence (ie you prefer to resolve conflict through dialogue rather than through violence or legal action)
- a strong forgiving streak (which the bully exploits and manipulates to dissuade you from taking grievance and legal action)
- a desire to always think well of others
- being incorruptible, having high moral standards which you are unwilling to compromise
- being unwilling to lower standards
- a strong well-defined set of values which you are unwilling to compromise or abandon
- high expectations of those in authority and a dislike of incompetent people in positions of power who abuse power
- a tendency to self-deprecation, indecisiveness, deference and approval seeking
- low assertiveness
- a need to feel valued
- quick to apologise when accused, even if not guilty (this is a useful technique for defusing an aggressive customer or potential road rage incident)
- perfectionism
- higher-than-average levels of dependency, naivety and guilt
- a strong sense of fair play and a desire to always be reasonable
- high coping skills under stress, especially when the injury to health becomes apparent
- a tendency to internalise anger rather than express it

## The typical sequence of events is:

- the target is selected using the criteria above, then bullied for months, perhaps years
- eventually, the target asserts their right not to be bullied, perhaps by filing a complaint with HR
- HR interview the bully, who uses their Jekyll and Hyde nature, compulsive lying, and charm to tell the opposite story (charm has a motive - deception)
- it's one word against another with no witnesses and no evidence, so HR take the word of the senior employee - serial bullies excel at deception and evasion of accountability
- the HR department are hoodwinked by the bully into getting rid of the target - serial bullies are adept at encouraging conflict between people who might otherwise pool negative information about them
- once the target is gone, there's a period of between 2-14 days, then a new target is selected and the process starts again (bullying is an obsessive compulsive behaviour and serial bullies seem unable to survive without a target on to whom they can project their inadequacy and incompetence whilst blaming them for the bully's own failings)
- even if the employer realises that they might have sided with the wrong person in the past, they are unlikely to admit that because to do so may incur liability
- if legal action is taken, employers go to increasingly greater lengths to keep targets quiet, usually by offering a small out-of-court settlement with a comprehensive gagging clause
- employers are often more frightened of the bully than the target and will go to enormous lengths to avoid having to deal with bully (promotion for the bully is the most common outcome)

There are many myths, misperceptions and stereotypes that bullies and their supporters, apologists and deniers disingenuously use to hide the facts listed above and to further victimise those targeted;

## ***What's the difference between bullying and harassment?***

Acts of harassment usually centre around unwanted, offensive and intrusive behaviour with a sexual, racial or physical component.

Definitions of harassment and bullying vary and there is much overlap. The essential differences between harassment and workplace bullying are as follows:

Harassment	Workplace bullying
Has a strong physical component, eg contact and touch in all its forms, intrusion into personal space and possessions, damage to possessions including a person's work, etc	Almost exclusively psychological (eg criticism), may become physical later, especially with male bullies, but almost never with female bullies
Tends to focus on the individual because of what they are (eg female, black, disabled, etc)	Anyone will do, especially if they are competent, popular and <a href="#">vulnerable</a>
Harassment is usually linked to sex, race, prejudice, discrimination, etc	Although bullies are deeply prejudiced, sex, race and gender play little part; it's

	usually discrimination on the basis of competence
Harassment may consist of a single incident or a few incidents or many incidents	Bullying is rarely a single incident and tends to be an accumulation of many small incidents, each of which, when taken in isolation and out of context, seems trivial
The person who is being harassed knows almost straight away they are being harassed	The person being bullied may not realise they are being bullied for weeks or months - until there's a moment of enlightenment
Everyone can recognise harassment, especially if there's an assault, indecent assault or sexual assault	Few people recognise bullying
Harassment often reveals itself through use of recognised offensive vocabulary, e.g. ("bitch", "hori", etc)	Workplace bullying tends to fixate on trivial criticisms and false allegations of underperformance; offensive words rarely appear, although swear words may be used when there are no witnesses
There's often an element of possession, e.g. as in stalking	Phase 1 of bullying is control and subjugation; when this fails, phase 2 is elimination of the target
The harassment almost always has a strong clear focus (e.g. sex, race, disability)	The focus is on competence (envy) and popularity (jealousy)
Often the harassment is for peer approval, bravado, macho image etc	Tends to be secret behind closed doors with no witnesses
Harassment takes place both in and out of work	The bullying takes place mostly at work
The harasser often perceives their target as easy, albeit sometimes a challenge	The target is seen as a threat who must first be controlled and subjugated, and if that doesn't work, eliminated
Harassment is often domination for superiority	Bullying is for control of threat (of exposure of the bully's own inadequacy)
The harasser often lacks self-discipline	The bully is driven by envy (of abilities) and jealousy (of relationships)
The harasser often has specific inadequacies (eg sexual)	The bully is inadequate in all areas of interpersonal and behavioural skills

## ***The difference between bullying and management***

### **How to recognise a bullying manager in your organisation**

Can you recognise a bully in the ranks? Use this table to spot the serial bully in your organisation. How much damage is this employee doing to Te Puni Kōkiri?

<b>Manager</b>	<b>Bully</b>
Leader	Bully, coward
Decisive	Random, impulsive
Has a good appreciation of short, medium and long term needs, goals and strategy	Rigidly short term, often no more than 24 hours
Accepts responsibility	Abdicates responsibility
Shares credit	Plagiarises, takes all the credit
Acknowledges failings	Denies failings, always blames others
Learns from experience and applies knowledge gained from experience to improve business, communication, language and interpersonal skills	Has a learning blindness, cannot apply knowledge gained from experience except how to be more devious, manipulative, and how to better evade accountability
Consistent	Inconsistent, random, impulsive
Fair, treats all equally	Inconsistent, always critical, singles people out, shows favouritism
Respectful and considerate	Disrespectful and inconsiderate
Seeks and retains people more knowledgeable and experienced than self	Favours weaker employees, recruits henchmen and toadying types
Values others	Unable to value, constantly devalues others
Includes everyone	Includes and excludes people selectively
Leads by example	Dominates, sets a poor example
Truthful	Economical, uses distortion and fabrication
Confident	Insecure, arrogant
Behaviourally mature	Behaviourally immature
Emotionally mature, high EQ (emotional intelligence)	Emotionally immature, very low EQ (emotional intelligence)
Good interpersonal skills	Poor interpersonal skills
Good etiquette	Poor etiquette

Balanced objectivity	Exclusive self-interest
Cares about staff, the business, etc	Cares only about self
Respects clients	Is contemptuous of clients
Gets on well with people at all levels and from all backgrounds	Identifies only with clones of himself or herself
Assertive	Aggressive
Delegates	Dumps
Builds team spirit	Divisive, uses manipulation and threat
Uses influencing skills	Alienates, divides, creates fear and uncertainty
Motivates	Demotivates
Listens, guides, instructs	Tells
Has high expectations (that staff will do well)	Has low expectations of everybody
Shares fairly	Controls and subjugates
Shares information freely	Withholds information, releases selectively, uses information as a weapon
Always strives for clarity	Revels in confusion, divide and rule etc
Allows and trusts people to get on with the job	Constantly interfering, dictating and controlling
Only addresses genuine performance issues and then focuses on performance and behaviour	Makes false claims about alleged underperformance and focuses on the person, not behaviour or performance
Focused on the future	Obsessed with the past
Respected	Loathed
Sets a good example	Sets a bad example
Has good moral code and moral integrity	Amoral behaviour, no integrity
Has honesty and integrity	Exhibits hypocrisy and duplicity
Rarely uses the disciplinary procedures	Frequently imposes verbal warnings and written warning without justification