

CLAREMONT EAP *Your trusted resource*

MANAGER  
SUPPLEMENT

**IMPACT**

July-September 2018

## Is Your Workplace Harboring Bullies?

Recent research has confirmed that bullying is not just child's play. In fact, according to researchers looking at the issue in both the United States and Europe, workplace bullying could be more prevalent and cause more harm than sexual harassment.

By Dr. Malcolm Smith, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension ©2018



Workplace bullying refers to repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed toward an employee (or group of employees), which are intended to intimidate and which create a risk to the health and safety of the employee(s). One standard often applied is the misuse of power to intimidate, degrade, offend or humiliate a worker, often in front of other employees. It can happen in person or in cyberspace.

The bad news is that best-guess estimates say that nearly 40 percent of U.S. workers have experienced bullying in the workplace.

In some industries (e.g., health care), the estimates are even higher. A recent study conducted by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations found that more than 50 percent of nurses reported having experienced abusive behavior at work and more than 90 percent had witnessed it.

Growing evidence also shows that the competitiveness and insecurity brought about by the recent economic downturn has caused a considerable increase in workplace bullying.

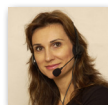
*Continued next page*

### Meet your Happiness Guide!

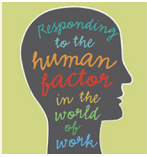
The Claremont Positivity Center is an online resource that incorporates Positive Psychology and mindfulness self-help techniques to improve employee well-being in the workplace and beyond. [Visit the Positivity Center](#)



*Our  
Serenity  
Sloths  
show you  
the way!*



**A Message to Managers from Claremont EAP** Often, the employee who needs their Employee Assistance Program the most doesn't think to call for assistance. A manager's referral to the EAP can be an effective strategy for improving an employee's effectiveness, productivity, motivation and morale. A referral to the EAP can also decrease absenteeism, reduce turnover, foster acceptance of change and reduce stress. For confidential help, call: **800-834-3773** or visit: [www.claremonteap.com](http://www.claremonteap.com)



Continued from  
previous page



Parents are learning that schoolyard bullying has much more serious consequences for students than we ever imagined. The same, it turns out, is true for workers.

Being a victim of workplace bullying can cause depression, sleeplessness, increased risk of cardiovascular disease, post-traumatic stress and financial problems from missing work. Victims of workplace bullying also have reported an increase in stress at home and in their family life.

There are also consequences for employers. Bullying in a workplace often leads to increased absenteeism, lost productivity, decreased employee loyalty, decreased morale, higher turnover rates, and an increase in employee grievances.

In other words, this is an epidemic we should all pay attention to.

## BAD FOR THE BOTTOM LINE

In the workplace, bullying can take many forms.

Some of the most visible indicators include:

- Excessive monitoring or “nitpicking.”
- Shouting or humiliation.
- Out-of-control practical joking.
- Isolation of individuals from information, outings or other opportunities.
- Blaming without justification.
- Impossible deadlines or expectations.
- Undermining by not giving credit to an individual, constant negative criticism or impossible assignments.
- Too much power given to certain individuals or groups because of position or tenure.

The message from the research is clear. If you are seeing bullying in your workplace, this is not only unhealthy for you, but unhealthy for the bottom line. Although the research hasn't caught up to the workplace, we know that children who are bystanders to bullying sometimes experience harmful effects, such as stress, depression and anxiety. The same, we can assume, may be true of workplace bystanders.

Bullying is not necessarily illegal in the U.S. Many other countries have passed strict anti-bullying laws targeting both workplaces and schools. In general, a U.S. employee must prove that “harassment” occurred in order to get recourse from bullying. So it is up to organizations to control its spread.

It appears to be in the best interest of every New Hampshire employer to pay attention to this growing phenomenon. Among the first steps you can take is to educate yourself and your co-workers about workplace bullying. Many businesses have chosen to create zero-tolerance policies for workplace bullying. Others have created effective education campaigns against workplace bullying.

One of the most effective anti-bullying measures that the research points to is to create an organizational culture of treating people with regard. In so doing, you will be protecting your most important organizational asset — your people.