

Factsheet Fourteen

Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is a pattern of behaviour involving verbal, physical, social, or psychological abuse by your employer (or supervisor or manager), or another person or group of people who work with you or access your workplace such as customers or contractors. Workplace bullying can happen to work experience students, volunteers, interns, apprentices and contractors.

Bullying behaviour may be subtle and not easily observed by other people, or done in private, or it may be overt and noticeable to other people. Some types of workplace bullying are criminal offences. If you have experienced assault, violence, threats of violence or assault and stalking you can report this directly to the police.

Examples of Workplace Bullying

- Aggressive or intimidating behaviour;
- Belittling or humiliating comments;
- Victimisation;
- Spreading malicious rumours;
- Teasing, practical jokes or 'initiation ceremonies';
- Exclusion from work-related events;
- Unreasonable work expectations, including too much or too little work or work below the worker's skill level;
- Withholding information vital to your effective work performance;
- Displaying offensive material;

- Pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner.

What is not workplace bullying?

Reasonable management action is not held to be bullying. This may include management action such as performance appraisals, taking disciplinary action, or changing a worker's roster. Management action that is not carried out in a reasonable way may be considered bullying. This will depend on the individual facts or circumstances.

What can I do if I am being bullied?

- Keep a diary of events;
- Seek Support;
- Do not blame yourself;
- Avoid being alone with the bully;
- Avoid justifying yourself to the bully;
- Check grievance procedures in the workplace;
- Talk to the Health and Safety representative in your workplace (if there is one);
- Talk to a trusted colleague;
- Get professional advice;
- Report to your supervisor or boss where it is safe to do so.

Making an internal grievance

Your workplace should have policies and procedures in place about workplace bullying. These policies and procedures should tell you who you should complain to if you have been bullied, how you do it and what will happen.

Deciding whether to write a letter of complaint or lodge a grievance directly to your employer can be a difficult decision. The NT Working Women's Centre recommends that you seek advice prior to writing a complaint so that you can be well prepared.

Fair Work Commission

If you are covered by the national anti-bullying laws and there is a risk the bullying will continue, you can apply to the [Fair Work Commission](#) for an order to stop the bullying. This is a Form 72. Once the complaint is accepted the Commission may refer the matter to mediation, conciliation, or hearing. Mediation in this context will mean confidential and voluntary process in which the participants try to reach an agreement with an independent mediator to resolve the issues. Once an order has been made, there are substantial penalties for failing to comply with the orders. To find out if you are covered

by the national anti-bullying laws, visit FWC Website (<https://www.fwc.gov.au/issues-we-help/bullying>).

The Fair Work Commission may make any order it considers appropriate, but they cannot order a payment of financial compensation. If bullying results in you being dismissed or leaves you no other option but to resign, you may be able to lodge a claim for adverse action, unfair dismissal, or unlawful termination through the Fair Work Commission. If you feel forced to resign, it is important that you seek advice before doing so. See *Factsheet 8 on Unfair Dismissal*.

Where can I get more help?

NT Working Women's Centre Ph: 1800 817 055 www.ntwwc.com.au	Your Union Unions NT Ph: 8941 0001 www.unionsnt.com.au	NT Anti-Discrimination Commission Ph: 1800 813 846 adc.nt.gov.au
Australian Human Rights Commission Ph: 1300 656 419 www.humanrights.gov.au	Fair Work Ombudsman Ph: 13 13 94 www.fairwork.gov.au	Fair Work Commission Ph: 1300 799 675 fwc.gov.au
NT Police Ph: (emergency) 000 If calling from a mobile: 112	Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment (OCPE) Ph: 8999 4129 www.ocpe.nt.gov.au	NT WorkSafe Ph: 1800 019 115 www.worksafe.nt.gov.au
Your HR Department	Aboriginal Interpreter Service Ph: 1800 334 944 www.ais.nt.gov.au	To access an interpreter Interpreting and Translating Service NT Ph: 1800 676 254 www.itsnt.nt.gov.au/

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