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Friday, March 15, 2002

Workplace bullying's high cost: \$180M in lost time, productivity

Orlando Business Journal - by [Liz Urbanski Farrell](#) Business Journal Staff Writer

You're in the high school lunch room and a familiar, fear-inspiring shadow crosses your back. In science class, a spitball makes a wet "splat" on your new sweater or worse, the back of your head.

The culprit? The schoolyard bully. For most of us, dealing with the bully -- whether watching him or her in action or being the target of bullying ourselves -- was an unpleasant but inseparable aspect of attending school.

It shouldn't be a part of work.

Unfortunately, workplace bullying has existed since the dawn of employment, according to most psychologists and human resource experts. But tolerance for its various forms is declining swiftly as academicians release new statistics detailing its human and bottom-line dollar costs.

At work, no spitballs please

So-called workplace bullies usually prefer memos, informal disciplinary meetings and grinding criticism to spitballs.

According to Gary Namie, Ph.D., founder of the Campaign Against Workplace Bullying, adults employ various types of what he prefers to call "psychological violence," which demoralizes and distracts both the target of bullying and co-workers aware of the bully's efforts.

Bullying also is unlike sexual or racial harassment, although it may be seen as a related problem. Instead of looking at whether a target is male, female, black, white or Asian, he or she chooses a victim based on his or her own needs and insecurities.

And, yes, women bully their co-workers as much as men. Namie says his research shows a nearly 50-50 split. However, a 1998 study out of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill showed that workplace bullies are more than twice as likely to be male.

Namie, who founded the Campaign in 1998, is a social psychologist and a professor at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Wash. His organization defines bullying as "the repeated, health-endangering, illegitimate mistreatment of a person by a cruel perpetrator driven by his or her need to control the target of mistreatment."

Such action "defeats, rather than serves, a legitimate business purpose ... affecting the health and career of targeted individuals and paralyzing the workplace with fear."

The bottom line: Bullies are expensive

For managers and CEOs who question the wisdom of delving into what had been perceived as an inseparable part of workplace politics, the bottom line is the answer, says James R. Meindl, Donald S. Carmichael professor of organization and human resources at the University of Buffalo School of Management.

"Human resource managers are beginning to realize there is a real productivity cost to these kinds of things."

Psychologist Michael H. Harrison, Ph.D., of [Harrison Psychological Associates](#), quotes a recent survey of 9,000 federal employees indicating that 42 percent of female and 15 percent of male employees reported being harassed within a two-year period, resulting in a cost of more than \$180 million in lost time and productivity.

"This kind of harassment has a huge impact on a company's bottom line," he says.

Among the sources of these high costs are high absenteeism resulting from time off taken by harassed employees, reduced productivity among workers who are nursing emotional wounds and stress-related illnesses, or trying to appease or avoid their harasser.

High turnover is another economic drain. According to Namie's studies, 82 percent of people targeted by a bully leave their workplace: 38 percent for their health; 44 percent, because they were victims of a performance appraisal system manipulated to show them as incompetent. Human resource experts peg the cost of replacing an employee at two to three times that person's salary.

Health care costs also may rise for a company, as a bully's targets become affected by stress-related illnesses. According to Namie, 41 percent of bully targets become depressed, with 31 percent of targeted women and 21 percent of targeted men being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The person may keep experiencing or remembering being belittled and berated and becomes fearful and phobic," says Harrison. Medical symptoms develop based on the person's weakest body systems -- headaches and backaches are common.

"Our bodies tell us when things are not going well."

News9.com

Family Blames Bullying for Son's Suicide

Posted: May 18, 2010 2:36 PM PDT

Updated: May 19, 2010 1:54 PM PDT

By Kirsten McIntyre, NEWS 9

OKLAHOMA CITY – An Oklahoma father is grieving the loss of his 11-year-old son who committed suicide last week. Kirk Smalley said he believes his son took his life due to being bullied at school.

Ty Field shot himself Thursday—the same day he was suspended from school for fighting.

"We're in a parent's nightmare. We lost our baby. It's not supposed to happen. They're supposed to put you in the ground," Smalley said.

Smalley said he believes Ty was sticking up for himself to the young boy who had bullied him all year long.

"I think he was tired of fighting it. I don't think he had anything left in him," Smalley said.

Smalley said his wife had complained to the school but got nowhere.

"She's talked to the school a lot and the most answers we usually got were, 'Boys will be boys,'" Smalley said.

Smalley said he and his family are now committed to speaking about bullying in hopes of saving someone else's child.

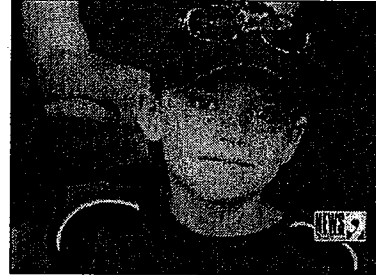
"My wife and I are adamant. Something needs to be done. If you're being bullied find help. Don't be afraid to talk about it," Smalley said.

Smalley said he's already been contacted by a filmmaker who's working on a documentary about children who commit suicide after being bullied. He said he and his wife plan to help in any way they can.

The superintendent of Perkins Schools, where Ty attended sixth grade, said there's no indication the bullying occurred. However, Superintendent James Ramsey said he didn't know if any complaints were made to the principal's office.

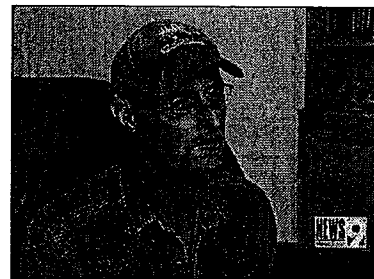
The principal was unavailable for comment Wednesday morning.

Ramsey said the district is providing grief counseling for staff and students in light of the student's tragic death.



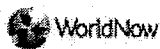
[Enlarge this picture](#)

Eleven-year-old Ty Field shot himself Thursday. Ty's family said they believe bullying led their son to suicide.



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Ty's father, Kirk Smalley, said he wants to use his family's tragic loss to speak out against bullying in hopes of saving someone else's child.



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<http://www2.dailyprogress.com/news/2010/aug/19/after-suicide-uva-launches-probe-vqr-ar-463074/>

The Daily Progress

Published: August 19, 2010

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After suicide, UVa launches probe of VQR

By Brian McNeill

"The untimely death of Kevin Morrissey, the managing editor of Virginia Quarterly Review, has caused a great deal of pain for his family, friends and colleagues. It has also raised questions about the university's response to employees' concerns about the workplace climate in the VQR office," UVa's president said.

The University of Virginia is launching a "thorough review" of the operations of the Virginia Quarterly Review, the university's award-winning literary magazine that has been rocked by the recent suicide of its managing editor and subsequent allegations of workplace bullying.

Kevin Morrissey, 52, killed himself at the coal tower near downtown Charlottesville on July 30. In the days since his death, Morrissey's friends and family have accused VQR editor Ted Genoways of being a workplace bully toward Morrissey, who had worked at the magazine since 2003.

UVa's new president, Teresa A. Sullivan, announced Thursday afternoon that the university is investigating.

"The untimely death of Kevin Morrissey, the managing editor of Virginia Quarterly Review, has caused a great deal of pain for his family, friends and colleagues," Sullivan said in a statement. "It has also raised questions about the university's response to employees' concerns about the workplace climate in the VQR office. I therefore am announcing that we will be undertaking a thorough review of VQR's operations."

Sullivan added the investigation "does not in any way presume that any members of the VQR staff have been involved in improper conduct." It will be used, she said, to "provide a factual basis for understanding this workplace and deciding what corrective actions, if any, the university should undertake."

Morrissey's friends have said he struggled with depression. His sister, Maria Morrissey of Austin, Texas, could not immediately be reached for comment Thursday evening. She has spoken out on local Web sites and blogs, however, to say that her brother suffered under what she says was Genoways' bullying management style.

"Kevin loved his job as Managing Editor of VQR and was proud of what he had achieved," Maria

Morrissey wrote. "Despite his competence (or maybe because of it) at his job, Kevin had been the target of a workplace bully for several years."

UVa's chief audit executive, Barbara Deily, will lead the review. Deily has been conducting an audit of VQR's finances, as is standard practice after a department's financial officer — Morrissey, in this case — is no longer in their position and unavailable.

UVa officials have said the financial audit was not launched because of any suspicion of wrongdoing.

Deily, who reports directly to UVa's Board of Visitors, will broaden her financial audit to include an examination of VQR's management.

"My hope is that this review can be completed by the end of September so that we can address the issues and allegations that have been raised," Sullivan said. "This timetable, however, will be subject to change if unanticipated complexities are discovered. It is more important that this review be done well than that it be done quickly."

VQR was founded in 1925 and has become, with Genoways at the helm, one of the nation's most respected small circulation magazines, winning three National Magazine Awards and numerous other accolades.

Genoways is out of town at a writer's conference in Vermont. His lawyer, Lloyd Snook, said he cannot comment on allegations of workplace bullying because of UVa's personnel confidentiality rules.

Snook did say, however, that no one at the university ever presented Genoways with a formal complaint about his management style or other personnel matters.

"No formal complaint has ever been made to Ted to which he could ever respond," Snook said.

Genoways, who recently renewed his five-year contract as the magazine's editor, expects to sit down with UVa officials early next week to discuss where to go from here, Snook said.

"He likes the job. He likes what he's been doing. He's extremely grateful to the university for giving him this opportunity," Snook said. "[Becoming editor of VQR] was a very rare opportunity. I'm sure he's not going to want to lose that. But given personalities, it may not work."

Genoways is not editing VQR's fall issue, as he is working on a Guggenheim Fellowship-funded project to research Walt Whitman's poems on the Civil War. UVa has moved Genoways' office to New Cabell Hall while he works on the project.

Carol Wood, UVa's associate vice president for public affairs, is sitting in as editor for VQR's fall issue. The magazine is nearly finished and is likely to head off to the printer next week.

"We can pay Kevin no greater honor than to deliver the fall issue of VQR as Kevin would have wanted: carefully edited and on schedule," the magazine's staffers said in a statement posted on VQR's Web site.

Wood said the magazine's small staff has "suffered mightily" from Morrissey's loss.

"They adored Kevin," she said. "He was their boss, but he was also one of their best friends."

Following completion of the fall issue, Wood said, the university and VQR will begin making decisions about how to move forward. For one thing, a new managing editor will need to be hired.

The magazine's online editor, prominent Charlottesville blogger Waldo Jaquith, is also leaving, having submitted his resignation just days before Morrissey's death, though he agreed to stay on temporarily to help complete the fall issue.

The university is also aiming to address any potential problems in VQR's workplace environment.

"We are continuing to work with employees at VQR to resolve what are clearly some issues between the editor and his staff," Wood said. "We need to determine what next steps need to be taken."

VQR has 2,400 subscribers and 941 newsstand copies, Wood said. The magazine's budget is roughly \$600,000 each year.

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Workplace Bullying: What Everyone Needs to Know

ATTACHMENT 4

April 2008

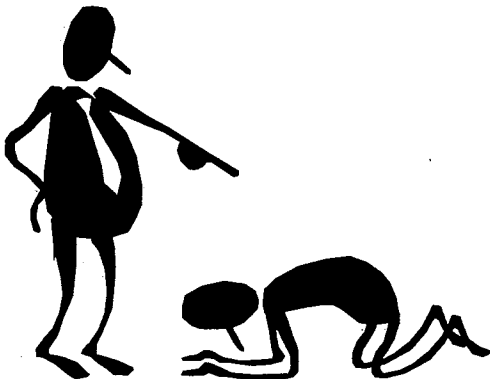
Report # 87-2-2008.

What is workplace bullying and who is affected?

Workplace bullying refers to repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards an employee (or a group of employees), which is intended to intimidate and creates a risk to the health and safety of the employee(s).

Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power. Bullying includes behavior that intimidates, degrades, offends, or humiliates a worker, often in front of others. Bullying behavior creates feelings of defenselessness in the target and undermines an individual's right to dignity at work.

Bullying is different from aggression. Whereas aggression may involve a single act, bullying involves repeated attacks against the target, creating an **on-going pattern** of behavior. "Tough" or "demanding" bosses are not necessarily bullies, as long as their primary motivation is to obtain the best performance by setting high expectations.



Many bullying situations involve employees

bullying their peers, rather than a supervisor bullying an employee.

One study from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found that a quarter of the 516 private and public companies studied reported some occurrence of bullying in the preceding year.

Examples of bullying:

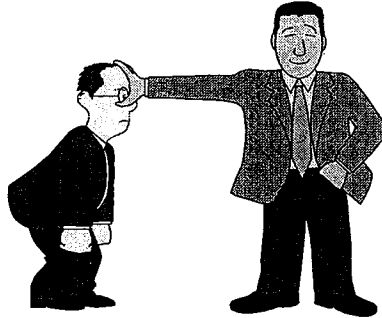
- Unwarranted or invalid criticism.
- Blame without factual justification.
- Being treated differently than the rest of your work group.
- Being sworn at.
- Exclusion or social isolation.
- Being shouted at or being humiliated.
- Being the target of practical jokes.
- Excessive monitoring.

What is Corporate/Institutional Bullying?

Corporate/institutional bullying occurs when bullying is entrenched in an organization and becomes accepted as part of the workplace culture.

Corporate/institutional bullying can manifest itself in different ways:

- Placing unreasonable expectations on employees, where failure to meet those expectations means making life unpleasant (or dismissing) anyone who objects.
- Dismissing employees suffering from stress as “weak” while completely ignoring or denying potential work-related causes of the stress.
And/or
- Encouraging employees to fabricate complaints about colleagues with promises of promotion or threats of discipline.



- Significant organizational change (i.e., major internal restructuring, technological change).
- Worker characteristics (e.g., age, gender, parental status, apprentice or trainee).
- Workplace relationships (e.g., inadequate information flow between organizational levels, lack of employee participation in decisions.
And
- Work systems (e.g., lack of policies about behavior, high rate and intensity of work, staff shortages, interpersonal conflict, organizational constraints, role ambiguity, and role conflict).

Signs of corporate and institutional bullying include:

- Failure to meet organizational goals.
- Increased frequencies of grievances, resignations, and requests for transfers.
- Increased absence due to sickness.
And
- Increased disciplinary actions.

If you are aware of bullying in the workplace and do not take action, then you are accepting a share of the responsibility for any future abuses. This means that witnesses of bullying behavior should be encouraged to report any such incidences. Individuals are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior when it is understood that the organization does not tolerate such behavior and that the perpetrator is likely to be punished.

Factors that Increase the Risk for Bullying Behavior:

How Bullying Affects People:

Victims of bullying experience significant physical and mental health problems:

- High stress; post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Financial problems due to absence
- Reduced self-esteem.
- Musculoskeletal problems.
- Phobias.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Increased depression/self-blame.
- Digestive problems.



How Bullying Affects Organizations:

Each of the individual consequences listed above can be very costly for the organization. Costs of bullying generally fall into three categories:

1. Replacing staff members that leave as a result of being bullied.
2. Work effort being displaced as staff cope with bullying incidents (i.e., effort being directed away from work productivity and towards coping).
3. Costs associated with investigations of ill treatment and potential legal action.

Bullies do not run good organizations; staff turnover and sick leave will be high while morale and productivity will be low. Stress, depression and physical health problems result in time away from work that is costly in terms of workers' compensation and lost productivity.

The health problems experienced by victims of bullying result in a sense of helplessness and negative emotional states among employee(s). Low self-esteem and a negative organizational climate suppress creativity and hamper employees' abilities to respond to difficult situations or challenging goals.

The breakdown of trust in a bullying environment may mean that employees will fail to contribute their best work, do not give extra ideas for improvement, do not provide feedback on failures and may be less honest about performance.

Bullying is Different from Harassment

Harassment is one type of illegal discrimination and is defined as offensive and unwelcome conduct, serious enough to adversely affect the terms and conditions of a person's employment, which occurs because of the person's protected



class, and can be imputed to the employer. Protected classes in employment are race/color, creed (religion), national origin, sex, marital status, disability, HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C status, sexual orientation/gender identity, and honorably discharged veteran and military status. An example of **harassment** could be when an employee tells racist jokes and refers to a particular co-worker or group of co-workers by using racial slurs, and after a complaint, the employer does nothing to stop the behavior. Another example of **harassment** could be a male manager who makes unwelcome sexual suggestions to a female employee and touches her inappropriately.

Bullying also differs from **retaliation**, which occurs after a person makes a complaint of illegal discrimination, and is then the subject of an adverse employment action or subjected to harassment because he or she made the complaint,

If you believe that you are being harassed or retaliated against for making a discrimination complaint, you should immediately contact the Washington State Human Rights Commission (1-800-233-3247, <http://www.hum.wa.gov>).

Bullying, on the other hand, is often directed at someone a bully feels threatened by. The target often doesn't even realize when they are being bullied because the behavior is covert, through trivial criticisms and isolating actions that occur behind closed doors. While harassment is illegal; bullying in the workplace is not.

What Can be Done About Bullying?

Bullying in general is NOT illegal in the U.S. unless it involves harassment based on race/color, creed (religion), national origin, sex, age (40+), disability, HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C status and, in Washington State, on marital status, sexual orientation/gender identity, honorably discharged veteran and military status or retaliation for filing a whistleblower complaint with the Washington State Auditor (RCW 49.60).

However, here is what you can do about bullying:

Employees:

Regain control by:

- Recognizing that you are being bullied.
- Realizing that you are NOT the source of the problem.
And
- Recognizing that bullying is about control, and therefore has nothing to do with your performance.

Take action by:

- Keeping a diary detailing the nature of the bullying (e.g., dates, times, places, what was said or done and who was present).
And
- Obtaining copies of harassing / bullying paper trails; hold onto copies of documents that contradict the bully's accusations against you (e.g., time sheets, audit reports, etc.).

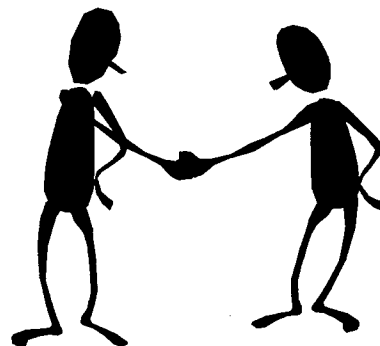
Other actions:

- Expect the bully to deny and perhaps misconstrue your accusations; have a witness with you during any meetings with the bully; report the behavior to an appropriate person.
- Contact the Washington State Employee Assistance Program, (<http://www.dop.wa.gov/eap>) for guidance on dealing with the issue.

Employers:

- Create a zero tolerance anti-bullying policy. This policy should be part of the wider commitment to a safe and healthful working environment and should involve the appropriate Human Resources representative.

- When witnessed or reported, the bullying behavior should be addressed IMMEDIATELY.
- If bullying is entrenched in the organization, complaints need to be taken seriously and investigated promptly. Reassignment of those involved may be necessary (with an “innocent until proven guilty” approach).
- Structure the work environment to incorporate a sense of autonomy, individual challenge/mastery, and clarity of task expectations for employees – Include employees in decision-making processes.
- Hold awareness campaigns for EVERYONE on what bullying is. Encourage reporting.
- Ensure management has an active part in the staff they supervise, rather than being far removed from them.
- Encourage open door policies.
- Investigate the extent and nature of the problem. Conduct attitude surveys.
- Improve management's ability and sensitivity towards dealing with and responding to conflicts.
- Establish an independent contact for employees (e.g., HR contact).
And
- Have a demonstrated commitment “from the top” about what is and is not acceptable behavior.



See the **example Workplace Bullying Policy** at the end of this document.

Other Resources & Contacts:

The Washington State Employee Assistance Program (<http://www.dop.wa.gov/Employees/EmployeeAssistanceProgram/>) has representatives that are available to help state workers with personal or work-related problems that may be impacting your work performance. EAP services are only available to state employees and are confidential, voluntary, free of charge, and accessible. EAP representatives can be reached at these offices:
Olympia (360) 753-3260
Seattle (206) 281-6315
Spokane (509) 482-3686.

The Australian government has put together a publication on "Advice to Supervisors on Bullying in the Workplace" that includes useful resources for employers, including a checklist to assess whether you have a bully-free workplace. Use this checklist to see whether you are being bullied or have a bullying workplace:
<http://www.defence.gov.au/fr/issues/AdviceonBullying.doc>.

References:

The following websites/organizations have put together valuable information that includes definitions and facts about bullying in the workplace:

- Key Elements of New York City's Workplace Violence Law Fact Sheet:
<http://www.pef.org/stopworkplaceviolence/>.
- Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care & Social Service Workers:
<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3148/osh3148.html>.
- Dealing with Workplace Violence: A Guide for Government Agency Planners:
http://www.opm.gov/Employment_and_Benefits/WorkLife/OfficialDocuments/handbookguides/WorkplaceViolence/full.pdf.
- Article distinguishing bullying from harassment: Bullying at Work Can Have Legal, Financial Penalties:
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5292/is_20080825/ai_n28118867.
- NIOSH Update: Most Workplace Bullying is Worker to Worker:
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-07-28-04.html>.
- Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute, Bellingham, Washington:
<http://www.bullyinginstitute.org/>.
- Advice for Employers on Workplace Bullying:
www.defence.gov.au/fr/issues/AdviceonBullying.doc
http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe/Content/Safety_Topics/Bullying/Violence_in_the_workplace.html.
- Guide for Employees on Workplace Bullying:
http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe/PDF/Guidance_notes/Dealing_with%20bullying_english.pdf.

Research References:

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- Spector, P. E., & Fox, S. (2005). Stressor-emotion model. In S. Fox and P. E. Spector (Eds.) *Counterproductive Work Behavior: Investigations of Actors and Targets* (pp. 151-174), American Psychological Association: Washington, DC.
- Keashly, L., & Harvey, S. (2005). Emotional Abuse in the Workplace. In S. Fox and P. E. Spector (Eds.) *Counterproductive Work Behavior: Investigations of Actors and Targets* (pp. 201-235), American Psychological Association: Washington, DC.
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ATTACHMENT 5

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Wednesday, Jul. 21, 2010

New Laws Target Workplace Bullying

By Adam Cohen

There are some very important things they don't tell you on career day. Chief among them is that there is a good chance that at some point during your working adult life you will have an abusive boss — the kind who uses his or her authority to torment subordinates. Bullying bosses scream, often with the goal of humiliating. They write up false evaluations to put good workers' jobs at risk. Some are serial bullies, targeting one worker and, when he or she is gone, moving on to their next victim.

Bosses may abuse because they have impossibly high standards, are insecure or have not been properly socialized. But some simply enjoy it. Recent brain-scan research has shown that bullies are wired differently. When they see a victim in pain, it triggers parts of their brain associated with pleasure. ([See 10 ways your job will change.](#))

Worker abuse is a widespread problem — in a 2007 Zogby poll, 37% of American adults said they had been bullied at work — and most of it is perfectly legal. Workers who are abused based on their membership in a protected class — race, nationality or religion, among others — can sue under civil rights laws. But the law generally does not protect against plain old viciousness.

That may be about to change. Workers' rights advocates have been campaigning for years to get states to enact laws against workplace bullying, and in May they scored their biggest victory. The New York state senate passed a bill that would let workers sue for physical, psychological or economic harm due to abusive treatment on the job. If New York's Healthy Workplace Bill becomes law, workers who can show that they were subjected to hostile conduct — including verbal abuse, threats or work sabotage — could be awarded lost wages, medical expenses, compensation for emotional distress and punitive damages.

Not surprisingly, many employers oppose the bill. They argue that it would lead to frivolous lawsuits and put them at risk for nothing more than running a tight ship and expecting a lot from their workers. But supporters of the law point out that it is crafted to cover only the most offensive and deliberate abuse. The bill requires that wrongful conduct be done with "malice," and in most cases that it has to be repeated. It

also provides affirmative defenses for companies that investigate promptly and address the problem in good faith. (See "When Bullying Goes Criminal.")

The New York state assembly is expected to take up the bill next year. At least 16 other states are considering similar bills, and some employment-law experts think antibullying legislation may have real momentum now.

Legislatures are not the only ones standing up to bullies. In 2008, the Indiana supreme court struck a blow against workplace bullying when it upheld a \$325,000 verdict against a cardiovascular surgeon. A medical technician who operated a heart and lung machine during surgery accused the surgeon of charging at him with clenched fists, screaming and swearing. The formal legal claims were intentional infliction of emotional distress and assault, but the plaintiff argued it as a bullying case, and had an expert on workplace bullying testify at trial.

Ideally, employers should rein in abusive bosses on their own, but that rarely happens. Many bullies are close to powerful people in the organization and carefully target less powerful ones. When John Bolton was nominated to be ambassador to the U.N. by President George W. Bush, a former subordinate told the Senate that Bolton was a "serial abuser" and — in a phrase that has since entered the bullying lexicon — a "kiss-up, kick-down sort of guy." (See "How Not to Raise a Bully.")

There are reasons workplace bullying may be getting worse now, including the bad economy. In good times, abused workers can simply walk out on a job if they are being mistreated. But with unemployment at around 9.5%, and five job seekers for every available job, many employees feel they have no choice but to stay put.

Another factor is the decline of organized labor. Unions were once a worker's front-line defense against an abusive boss. If a supervisor was out of line, the shop steward would talk to him — on behalf of all of the workers. But union membership has fallen from 35% of the workforce in the 1950s to under 13% today, and some unions are less aggressive than they once were. (See what to do if you have a bad boss.)

That leaves litigation. There seems to be a strong constituency for laws allowing workers to sue over workplace abuse. The vote on the Healthy Workplace Bill was bipartisan and not close: New York state senators favored it 45 to 16.

If states enact laws of this kind and lawsuits begin to be filed, juries are far more likely to sympathize with the bullied worker than the bullying boss — and damages awards could be large. There is one easy way for employers to head all of this off: get more serious about rooting out abusive bosses before serious damage is done.

Cohen, a lawyer, is a former TIME writer and a former member of the New York Times editorial board

See TIME's Pictures of the Week.

Wash's new anti-bullying law goes into effect

Washington's expanded new anti-bullying law went into effect on Thursday to tackle what statistics show has become a growing problem in the state.

June 10, 2010 Seattle Times

The Associated Press

Related

SEATTLE —

Washington's expanded new anti-bullying law went into effect on Thursday to tackle what statistics show has become a growing problem in the state.

State education officials say nearly 15,000 students were suspended because of bullying in the 2008-2009 school year and 442 were expelled.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction says the numbers show a small, steady increase in each of the past three school years. Numbers for this school year were not yet available.

The anti-bullying law taking effect this week requires every public school to have a policy for dealing with bullying. Those plans need to go to the OSPI by mid-August. It is an expansion of existing school anti-harassment laws.

The number of kids who are punished for being bullies represents about 1.5 percent of the state's more than 1 million public school students. But educators say the problem could be worse than the numbers show.

"To be honest I think the numbers are far larger than anybody understands partly because the more subtle forms of bullying go under the radar of people who monitor these types of things in school," said Todd Herrenkohl, an associate professor of social work at the University of Washington.

Mike Donlin, a nationally-recognized educator on bullying issues who works with the Seattle School district, agreed. His research indicates about 20 percent of students have been bullied.

Bullying today is broader than someone being picked on or made fun of at school or on the bus. Cyberbullying through cell phones, e-mail and social networking sites has been growing along with the technology.

"Kids are using text messaging and e-mail and social networking sites as a way to intimidate other kids after school and on weekends too," says Herrenkohl. "That's something that's increasingly difficult to monitor."

Donlin draws a connection between real-world bullying and cyberbullying, saying kids who are being made fun of at school are likely to have problems online after the bell rings.

He said that's a weakness of Washington's laws against school bullying; they only apply to incidents on school grounds and during school hours.

Information from: KIRO-FM, <http://mynorthwest.com/>

About the Author

Michelle Bennett is a Captain with the King County Sheriff's Office. She has been with the Sheriff's Office since 1990 and is currently the Chief of Police for the contract City of Maple Valley. She is an adjunct law and justice professor at a local university. She has a Bachelor's degree in Law & Justice, a Master's degree in Psychology and a Doctorate in Education.

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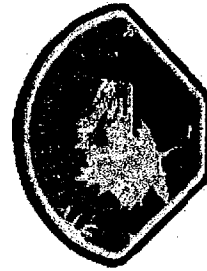
Take a Stand Against Cyber- Bullying



A Comprehensive Anti-
Cyber-Bullying Curriculum

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Maple Valley Police Department &
Taboma School District

Check out our new websites at:
www.Takeastandagainstbullying.org
www.cyber-bullying.us



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Take a Stand Against Cyber- Bullying

Take a Stand Against Cyber-Bullying is a comprehensive curriculum designed to empower citizens, parents, students and staff to take a stand, and change the culture of acceptance that allows cyber-bullying to occur. This curriculum is the product of hundreds of hours of research and has been professionally reviewed by curriculum experts.

Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory online personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

Bill Beisey, (Anderson & Sturm, 2007)

The research and creation phase of this program was made possible by the Maple Valley and King County Police/Sheriff's Offices and the Tahoma School District.

2/3 of school shooters said that prior to their attacks, they felt persecuted, bullied, attacked, threatened or injured.

Program Components

SCHOOL LESSONS:

Elementary Lessons

- Defines cyber-bullying and provides students with interactive assignments reflecting on the aspects of cyber-bullying and how to recognize bullying behaviors.
- Involves story telling and group activities such as coloring, word puzzles and age appropriate written assignments.
- Provides students useful tools to avoid participating in cyber-bullying behaviors.

Middle School Lesson

- Defines cyber-bullying and looks at the specific ways in which it occurs.
- Opens a discussion regarding the long and short term effects of cyber-bullying, using examples from real and relevant incidents.
- Provides students with practical tools to address and report cyber-bullying incidents.

High School Lesson

- Focuses on why cyber-bullies engage in the behavior while equipping students with strategies for intervention.
- Provides students with strategies to combat cyber-bullying.
- Highlights the resources available for reporting cyber-bullying incidents.

Teacher/Staff Training

- Defines cyber-bullying
- Raises staff awareness of cyber-bullying and the forms in which it occurs.
- Describes legal issues related to cyber-bullying
- Provides options for responding appropriately to cyber-bullying incidents.

Children identified as bullies by age 8 are 6 times more likely to be convicted of a crime by age 24.

"I believe schools...have a positive duty to be vigilant, to guard against bullying and to deal with it and stamp it out if it occurs. The consequences of a failure to do so can be profound."

1997 New Zealand Coroner's Report

Bully Intervention

- Four separate programs including anger management, conflict resolution, diversity and decision making.
- Designed for individuals or small groups who have participated in cyber-bullying incidents.
- May be used as an alternative to detention or suspension.

Target Intervention

- Program for kids who have been targeted by bullies.
- Focus is on building assertiveness and communication skills for combating bullying.
- Empowers the target by including them in the resolution process.

CITIZEN TRAINING:

Citizen and Parent Education

- Defines cyber-bullying and suggests several courses of action for parents or community members who suspect a child is involved in or is the target of cyber-bullying.

Legal Issues

- Highlights key liability and legal issues related to cyber-bullying incidents.
- Provides sample legislation, a sample policy and procedures written mandate for schools and a discipline continuum.

Evaluation Surveys

- Offers a course evaluation designed to elicit information for curriculum design as well as feedback for the instructor.