

teasing/taunting

Teasing

1. Allows the teaser and person teased to swap roles.
2. Isn't intended to hurt the other person.
3. Maintains the basic dignity of everyone involved.
4. Pokes fun in a lighthearted, clever, and benign way.
5. Is meant to get both parties to laugh.
6. Is only a small part of the activities shared by people who have something in common.
7. Is innocent in motive.
8. Is discontinued when person teased becomes upset or objects to the teasing.

Taunting

1. Is based on an imbalance of power and is one-sided: the bully taunts, the bullied person is taunted.
2. Is intended to harm.
3. Involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning, or bigoted comments thinly disguised as jokes.
4. Includes laughter directed *at* the target, not *with* the target.
5. Is meant to diminish the sense of self-worth of the target.
6. Induces fear of further taunting or can be a prelude to physical bullying.
7. Is sinister in motive.
8. Continues especially when targeted person becomes distressed or objects to the taunt.

flirting/sexual bullying

Flirting

1. Allows and invites both persons to swap roles with ease.
2. Isn't intended to hurt the other person—is an expression of desire.
3. Maintains the basic dignity of both persons.
4. Is meant to be flattering and complimentary.
5. Is an invitation to have fun together and enjoy each other's company.
6. Invited sexual attention.
7. Is intended to make the other person feel wanted, attractive, and in control.
8. Is discontinued when the person who is being flirted with becomes upset, objects to the flirting, or is not interested.

Flirting has playfulness about it that sexual bullying does not. It is never intended to harm and is an invitation for two people to get to know each other better. As with any other invitation, it can be accepted or rejected—and the person who initiated the flirting honors either response.

Sexual Bullying

1. Is based on an imbalance of power and is one-sided: the bully sexually taunts, the bullied kid is demeaned and degraded.
2. Is intended to harm and exploit.
3. Is invasive and intended to assert the status of the bully.
4. Is intended to be degrading and demeaning.
5. Is intended to express control and domination.
6. Is intended to violate the boundaries of the target.
7. Is intended to make the other person feel rejected, ugly, powerless, or uncomfortable.
8. Continues especially when targeted kid becomes distressed or objects to the sexual comment.

In sexual bullying there is no invitation—just an attack. The target is embarrassed, humiliated, and shamed and tends to feel powerless. It is not the intention of the bully to engage in healthy sexual flirtation with another person—the attack is meant to hurt. If the target protests, he/she is often labeled a “bitch” who is uptight and can't take a joke.

how to report

1. Meet with the appropriate person at work.
2. Bring to the meeting the facts in writing—the date, time, place, persons involved, and the specifics of the incidents—and the impact the bullying has had on you as well as what you have done to try to stop the bullying that didn't work.
3. Work with Human Resources and your Union personnel on a plan that addresses what you need right now in order to feel safe, what he/she can do to avoid being bullied and to stand up to any future bullying, and whom she can go to for help.
4. Learn the procedures the bully will experience.
5. If you feel the problem is not being adequately addressed in the workplace, know that you can express your concerns and let the employer know that you will take the next step and if necessary especially in the cases of serious abuse and racist or sexist bullying—to the police.

caring workplace

1. Gather information about bullying at work directly from employees.
2. Establish clear rules about bullying.
3. Train all supervisors in the school to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying.

re-writing the script

The bully, the bullied, the bystander—the interactions involved in such role-playing, though commonplace in our culture, are not healthy, not normal, certainly not necessary, and in fact are devastating to the people playing them. We can rewrite the script and create alternative, healthier roles that require no pretense and no violence. With care and commitment, we can rechannel the behaviors of the bully into positive leadership activities; acknowledge the nonaggressive behaviors of the bullied person as strengths that can be developed and are honored; and transform the role of the bystander into that of a witness, someone willing to stand up, speak out, and act against injustice. A daunting task, but a necessary one.

the bully

Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. Some are big; some are small; some bright and some not so bright; some attractive and some not so attractive; some popular and some disliked by almost everybody.

Bullying is a conscious, willful and deliberate hostile activity, intended to harm.

The Four Markers of Bullying

1. An imbalance of power
2. Intent to harm
3. Threat of further aggression
4. When bullying escalates unabated—terror

Bullying is not about anger, or even about conflict. It's about contempt—a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect. Contempt comes with three apparent psychological advantages that allow people to harm others without feeling empathy, compassion or shame. These are:

1. A sense of entitlement—the right to control, dominate, subjugate, and abuse another human being
2. An intolerance toward difference
3. A liberty to exclude—to bar, isolate, and segregate a person deemed not worthy of respect or care

Stop Bullying

1. Discipline (including the three Rs: restitution, resolution, reconciliation)

four most powerful antidotes to bullying

Strong sense of self, being a friend, having at least one good friend who is there for you through thick and thin, and being able to successfully get into a group—and get out when it does not serve you well.

the bullied

The one thing that all people who are bullied have in common is that a bully or a bunch of bullies has targeted them. Each one was singled out to be the object of scorn, and thus the recipient of bullying, merely because he or she was different in some way.

The Warning Signs

1. Shows an abrupt lack of interest in work, refuses to go to work or shows up late
2. Suffers drop in productivity
4. Withdraws from co-workers and activities
5. Is sad, sullen, angry, or scared after receiving a phone call or email
6. Does something out of character
7. Uses derogatory or demeaning language when talking about co-workers or employer
8. Has physical injuries not consistent with explanation
9. Has stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, is unable to sleep, sleeps too much, is exhausted

Why People Don't Tell

1. They are ashamed of being bullied
2. They are afraid of retaliation
3. They don't think anyone can help them
4. They don't think anyone will help them
5. They've bought into the lie that bullying is a necessary part of work
6. They might believe that employers are part of the lie—they bully too
7. They have learned that “ratting” on a co-worker or employer is bad

the bystander

Bystanders are the third group of players in this tragedy. They are the supporting cast who aid and abet the bully, through acts of omission and commission. They stand idly by or look away, or they can actively encourage the bully or join in and become one of a bunch of bullies. Injustice overlooked or ignored becomes a contagion that infects even those who thought they could turn away.

Standing Up and Speaking Out

Bullying is challenged when the majority stands up against the cruel acts of the minority. Establishing new norms, enforcing workplace rules, and increasing supervision are policy decisions that can help reduce the incidents of bullying. Since much of the bullying goes on “under the radar of employers,” a potent force is employees themselves showing bullies that they will not be looked up to, nor will their cruel behavior be condoned or tolerated. Employees need not be bystanders. They can become active witnesses, standing up for their peers, speaking out against injustices, and taking responsibility for what happened among themselves.

if your co-worker or employee is bullied

Don'ts

1. Don't minimize, rationalize, or explain away the bully's behavior.
2. Don't rush in to solve the problem.
3. Don't tell the bullied person to avoid the bully.
4. Don't tell the bullied person to fight back.
5. Don't confront the bully alone.

Do's

1. I hear you; I am here for you; I believe you; you are not alone in this.
2. It is not your fault.
3. There are things you can do.
4. Report the bullying to Union and Human Resources.