COLORADO PRIMA LUNCH & LEARN

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Presented by
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TAKING THE BULLY BY THE HORNS: UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING WORKPLACE BULLYING

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Introduction
CAN YOU RELATE?
Is Workplace Bullying A Problem?

• It is a common experience
  – 35% report being the Target of a Bully at work (53 million people) & 94% report working with a Bully at some point
  – Bullying is 4 times more common than harassment

• It often exists in hierarchical systems
  – 91% of nurses report verbal abuse & 50% feel unable to respond

• It is learned behavior
  – 21% of Bullies report being the Target of a Bully
Other Statistics: A Note About Gender

• Over 70% of the bullies are middle and higher management.
• More than half of the bullies are Male.
• More than half of the targets are Female.
• When Female bully’s target, 80% of the time, they target other women.
• When Males target, they are more democratic as to gender.
Is Workplace Bullying A Problem?

• Bullying is on the Rise, especially with Females as the Bully
• Cost of bullying is incredibly High:
  • High number of hours in lost time & productivity
  • Consider high cost of leave, non-productive time, and of replacing departing employees
  • Tensions in the workplace rise
  • Increase in tardiness, early departure from work, or absenteeism occurs
The Lows of Bullying:

- Lower efficiency and production by the target
- Lower morale for the entire office, group or team
What Is Workplace Bullying?

• No universal definition
• Actions (by an individual or group) that are:
  – Repeated
  – Unreasonable (out of context for situation)
• And cause:
  – An intentional impact on the Target (i.e., humiliation, degradation, offense, intimidation) or
  – Dangerous results to the Target (i.e., risk to safety and/or mental or physical health issues)
• Bullying has psychological and potential medical adverse impact on the Target
What is a Workplace Bully:

1. Refer to HR Executive Online Article
2. Refer to other local jurisdictions (e.g., Pima County, AZ)
Three Typical Examples of Workplace Bullying
Examples of Workplace Bullying

(1) The Obvious
• Shouting/raising voice
• Ignoring or interrupting
• Invading personal space
(2) The Not So Obvious

- Isolating or mobbing (e.g., ganging up)
- Manipulating ability to do work (unreasonable deadlines, overloading/under-loading)
- Always taking credit for work of others
(3) Pretextual Performance Management

- Repeated accusations of undocumented errors
- Constant criticism on matters unrelated/minimally related to job performance
Four General Categories of Bullies
I. The Territory Marker

- Gets self worth from being in charge
- Covets information and relationships
- No collaboration
- No mentoring
- Creates barriers to growth of others
II. The Dismisser

- The “Talk to the Hand” person
- Shuts colleagues down
- Humiliates others in public
- Causes those around him/her to shut down
III. The Space Invader

- Uses presence to intimidate
- Does not understand the concept of personal space
- Puffing, touching, gets up close
- Shakes hand; won’t let go
- Subtle message – I’m in control
IV. The Rage-aholic

• Only has to happen once
• No one wants to be on the receiving end
Profiles of the Bully and the Target
Characteristics of a Bully

• There’s good and bad; often a disconnect between what the supervisor and Target experience

• Aggressive and creative

• Outgoing, funny and charming (people like him/her)

• Competitive (makes goals and gets things done)

• BUT – dishonest and self-interested (most often only the Target sees this part)
Characteristics of Those Targeted

- Non-expressive, often shy
- Hardworking
- Smart
- Socially and technically skilled
- Positive attitude
- Nice
- Empathetic
Bullying Dynamic

- At first, Target is too shocked to react
- Waits too long to confront or report
- Denial, shame, guilt, feels responsible
- Experiences health issue
- Stress, sleeplessness, depression, obsession
- Diminishing job performance
- Change in personality
Exercise

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC32nbGVuJM
Why Address This? – Effect on Workplace

- Cliques or Subgroups
- Low productivity
- Restricted Communications
- Rigid or Dysfunctional Procedures
- Defensiveness or Fear
- Lack of Creative Solutions to Problems
- Avoidance
Why Address This? – Legal Exposure

• Tort law – negligent hiring, negligent retention, intentional infliction of emotional distress, assault, battery, defamation
• Discrimination law – especially disability if dealing with mental illness
• Private/public benefits – workers’ compensation, disability, FMLA, unemployment
• OSHA – possibility of general duty clause implications
• Since 2003, 25 states have introduced variations of workplace anti-bullying bills that would allow workers to sue for harassment without requiring a showing of discrimination. No laws yet enacted.
• 11 States have 15 Bills active (FL, NM, WI, WV, PA, NJ, NY, VT, NH, MA, HI)
Some Bullies Are Worth Saving

- Employee who grew up in the organization; created a unique area of responsibility; did not train or share information with others; became indispensable; never took vacation; entire department became dysfunctional

- Group finally came forward to management; management admitted they knew she was dysfunctional for years; she let group confront her and she promised to work to resolve, asked employees to let her know if there was any backsliding
Where Do We Begin? Policies

• Observe the workplace for bullying – Detect, Investigate and Implement training

• Develop a Workplace Bullying & Violence Policy
  – Define workplace violence and bullying behavior
  – Provide a reporting procedure that identifies 2-3 specific management positions to report incidents
  – Include no-retaliation clause
  – Inform employees that violation of the policy may result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination
Where Do We Begin? Training

• Provide Supervisor/Employee Training
  – Basic leadership skills addressing employee problems/complaints, adequate follow up, evaluating employees, and enforcing policies and procedures
  – Anti-harassment/bullying training for all employees

KNOW THE RULES!!!
Where Do We Begin?
Addressing Bullying Situations

• Commitment from leadership
  – Make it clear to all employees that a Bullying management style is not consistent with the organization’s mission and values

• The Bully must embrace becoming a part of solution
  – Solicit feedback and be open to change
  – Identify Action Plan
  – Make meeting expectations a part of performance review; hold accountable.
Thank You

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