

# Tips on banishing bullying from your workplace

By Karen Gately, Ryan Gately HR

**Have you ever experienced or witnessed bullying at work? If you have, you probably already understand how devastating being subjected to verbal, physical or psychological abuse can be. All too often I meet people whose health, wellbeing, engagement or job performance have been impacted by the behavior of unrelenting bullies.**

Driving bullying from our workplaces will happen when we all make it a priority. While employers in Australia have a legal obligation to provide a healthy and safe work environment, creating a bully-free workplace takes everyone doing their part.

**We all need to:**

**1. Be mindful**

Observe your own character traits and how people respond to working with you. Understand the impact your behavior has on other people. Ask yourself whether your approach will bring out the best in people and help them to succeed. Take notice of how other people around you behave and are in turn treated.

**2. Take responsibility**

Assume responsibility for not only your own health and wellbeing but also that of other people you work with. Manage your own behavior and ensure the impact you have on other people is a positive one. Do your part to actively foster strong working relationships based on trust and respect.

**3. Take a stance**

Healthy workplace cultures depend on people calling out and taking issue with bullying behavior when they see or experience it. Have strength and conviction when dealing with bullies - clearly communicate what behavior needs to stop and request that happen immediately.

**Leaders need to:**

**1. Lead by example**

Behave respectfully and demonstrate that bullying is never tolerated. Set a high standard against which you can then reasonably hold other people accountable and showcase the behaviors you want from others



through the decisions you make and actions you take.

**2. Create respectful cultures**

Demonstrate and inspire kindness, respect and sensitivity. Expect every member of your team to act with compassion and give reasonable consideration to how other people feel. Reward and recognize people who demonstrate sincere regard for their colleagues and desire to support everyone to succeed.

**3. Hire well**

Recruit people who are likely to behave appropriately. Explore how candidates have approached tasks or circumstances in the past for evidence of how they are likely to behave in the future. Reflect on the values and attitudes they are likely to bring and how these will influence their approach to working with other people.

**4. Educate**

Keep people informed about how they are expected to behave and the extent to which their conduct is aligned. Ensure every person on the

team and working with the business is aware of what constitutes bullying and their obligation to avoid such behaviors.

**5. Make behavior matter**

Hold people accountable by making behavior matter as much as results achieved. Make people responsible for the impact of their own behavior on other people. Be prepared to make difficult decisions about disciplinary action if behavioral standards are not upheld. ■

*Karen Gately is a leadership and people-management specialist and a founder of Ryan Gately, a specialist HR consultancy practice. She is also the author of The People Manager's Toolkit: A Practical guide to getting the best from people and The Corporate Dojo: Driving extraordinary results through spirited people. For more information visit [www.karengately.com.au](http://www.karengately.com.au) or contact [info@karengately.com.au](mailto:info@karengately.com.au)*