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## Ways to shut down workplace bullying

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Ways to shut down workplace bullying

Do you regularly notice someone passing irrelevant comments, harmful remarks at your workplace? Well, that's a clear cut example of Bullying'. Bullying can be easily identified as verbal comments or acts that hurt a person and affect their mental health. Such behavior is intended to intimidate, offend or humiliate a particular person or group of people. Bullying at the workplace has become an issue in the recent past. However, it is important to be able to segregate strong management, healthy criticism and bullying. Healthy criticism is meant to help you grow and progress while comments that are meant to intimidate a person, belittle someone's opinions are unacceptable and are considered as Bullying'.

### Different people may have different experiences but some of the common ways of bullying at a workplace are:

- Using innuendos or inappropriate gestures.
- Offensive jokes, spreading rumors.
- Intimidating someone or constantly criticizing them.
- Establishing impossible deadlines or giving unrealistic targets that will set up the individual to fail.
- Yelling or using abusive words.
- Not allowing a particular person to take leaves or blocking their training sessions or promotions intentionally.

Bullying can seriously damage the work culture and affect an organization's image. An unhealthy workplace kills the vibe of employees which ultimately leads to increased stress in the environment. People choose to leave the organization that regularly affects their mental health which ultimately results in reduced corporate image. While Bullying' affects an organization, it can have a serious effect on an individual. Reactions like:

- Panic or anxiety
- Shock
- Feeling angry and frustrated
- Feeling helpless or vulnerable
- Loss of confidence
- Lack of productivity and low morale are some of the common effects which can help you identify if someone is being bullied or targeted unnecessarily.

If you feel you are being targeted unnecessarily and it affects your work and mental health, it's time to speak up. Here are a few do's and don'ts that you can follow to help yourself in such circumstances:

#### Do's

- Go ahead and have a face to face conversation with the person who is bothering you and ask them to stop. Take someone along when you approach the person.
- Try and keep a journal of daily events and record the details of some incidents that happen.
- Keep copies of emails, letters or memos that you have received from that person.
- Report the bullying or harassment to senior level. It is important to ask for help.

#### Don'ts

- Do not hesitate in sharing your problems with others.
- Do not resist help.

### What can you do as an employer?

A leader someone who is known to be progressive, someone who leads by taking right decisions and setting an example for others.

#### As an employer you must:

- Be proactive about such issues.
- Have meetings and sessions to discuss workplace ethics.
- Have a clear definition of workplace bullying in a concrete language and provide clear examples of unacceptable behaviour and working conditions.
- Share organizations vision of making it a safer workplace and management's commitment of preventing workplace bullying.
- State the consequences of committing such acts.
- Assure support to the people who report such acts at the workplace.
- Encourage employees to be professional and respectful towards their colleagues.
- Pledge to regularly monitor and review the policy.

In order to maintain a healthy work environment, it is important for the employer or people in power to make sure they are approachable to their employees. Any bullying incident must not be ignored. Once such an incident is spotted, immediate and strict actions must be taken. It is important for employees to feel safe and sound at their workplace. After all, our workplace is our second home and everyone should feel safe at home.

*Authored article by Malini Saba, Founder & Chairman, Saba Family Foundations and Saba Group Holdings*

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