PINK SHIRT DAY 2022
WORKPLACE BULLYING PREVENTION

Kōrero MAI
KŌRERO ATU
MAURI TŪ, MAURI ORA
SPEAK UP, STAND TOGETHER, STOP BULLYING

Mental Health Foundation
OF NEW ZEALAND
mauri tū, mauri ora

PINK SHIRT DAY '22

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On Pink Shirt Day, Friday 20 May 2022, Aotearoa will be transformed into a sea of pink to spread aroha and kindness, celebrate diversity and put an end to bullying.

Bullying is common in New Zealand workplaces, but at times it can be difficult to know exactly what it is or what you and your workplace can do to prevent and address it. This toolkit outlines common questions around identifying bullying, how you can be an Upstander and ways you can build and sustain a positive working environment.

WHAT'S BULLYING?

Workplace bullying[1] is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards people at work that can lead to physical or psychological harm.

People targeted often feel they are unable to protect themselves due to real or perceived power imbalances. They are also more likely to experience mental distress and are more vulnerable to suicidal thoughts.

From a Māori perspective, to bully someone has several meanings. Some of the kupu/words used that could describe bullying are:

- whakawetai: - (verb) (-a) to threaten, intimidate
- whakawetiweti: to threaten, make threats
- whakawhiu: to oppress, afflict, punish
- whakahakahaka: to threaten, menace, intimidate, and
- hawene: to harass, tease, hassle, persecute, torment.

Bullying generally has four key elements:[2]

a) The target person is exposed to unwanted negative acts

b) The negative acts are repeated regularly

c) They occur over a prolonged period of time

d) Targets often feel they are unable to protect themselves due to power imbalances

Is workplace bullying common?

One in 10 workers in Aotearoa feels discriminated against, harassed, or bullied at work.[3]

Who gets bullied at work?

People who are bullied are often highly competent and may be seen as a threat to the person bullying them. They're often non-confrontational and tend to be ethical and honest. Studies show they're also likely to be part of a minority or marginalised community.[4]

Racist bullying and discrimination

This refers to bullying or discrimination based on someone's cultural background (real or perceived) and/or the colour of their skin. Racist bullying and discrimination can range from casual comments or jokes right through to violent acts, and can seriously impact the mental health of the person or people receiving it. This video shares some real-life experiences of racist bullying and shows the long-term effects it can have on people.

We all have a responsibility in our workplaces to challenge racism in ways big or small, and racism can often be challenged in non-direct ways, such as by reporting it to the Human Rights Commission, or reviewing these helpful tips. Some more resources on standing up against racism and racist bullying are available through Belong Aotearoa.

1   WorkSafe New Zealand. (2020). Workplace bullying and harassment. WorkSafe.
    https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/about-us/news-and-media/workplace-bullying-and-harassment/

2   WorkSafe New Zealand. (2018). Bullying at work: Advice for workers. WorkSafe.
   https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying/bullying-at-work-advice-for-workers/

3   Statistics New Zealand. (2019). One in 10 workers feels discriminated against, harassed, or bullied at work.
    https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/one-in-10-workers-feels-discriminated-against-harassed-or-bullied-at-work

4   Gardner, D., Bentley, T. A., Catley, B. E., Cooper-Thomas, H., O'Driscoll, M. P., & Trenberth, L. (2013). Ethnicity, workplace bullying, social support and psychological strain in Aotearoa/New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 42 (2), 84 - 91.
    https://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/9483

What does bullying look like?

Workplace bullying can be carried out in a variety of ways:
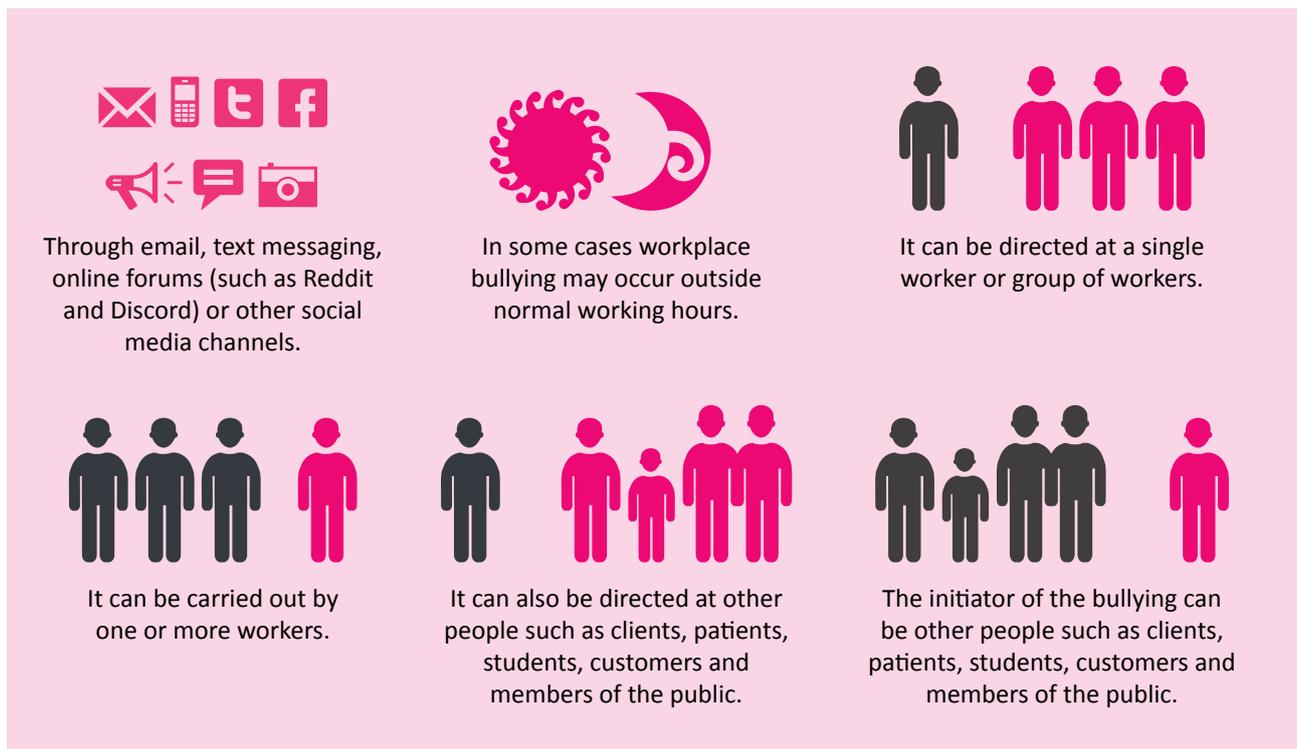
Through email, text messaging, online forums (such as Reddit and Discord) or other social media channels.

In some cases workplace bullying may occur outside normal working hours.

It can be directed at a single worker or group of workers.

It can be carried out by one or more workers.

It can also be directed at other people such as clients, patients, students, customers and members of the public.

The initiator of the bullying can be other people such as clients, patients, students, customers and members of the public.

Examples of bullying behaviour include:

Personal attacks (direct): eg, belittling remarks, undermining integrity, lies being told, sense of judgement questioned, opinions marginalised, attacking a person's beliefs, attitude, lifestyle or appearance, gender references, verbal abuse or physical attacks.

Task-related attacks (indirect): eg, giving unachievable tasks, impossible deadlines, unmanageable workloads, constant criticism of work, unreasonable or inappropriate monitoring or denial of opportunities.

Bullying is not:

- One-off/occasional instances of forgetfulness, rudeness or tactlessness
- Setting high performance standards
- Constructive feedback/legitimate advice/peer review
- Warning or disciplining workers within the boundaries of the organisation's policies and/or code of conduct
- A single incident of unreasonable behaviour
- Reasonable management actions delivered in a reasonable way
- Differences in opinion/personality clashes that do not escalate into bullying, harassment or violence.[5]

5   WorkSafe New Zealand. (2018). Preventing and responding to bullying at work. WorkSafe.
     https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying/good-practice-guidelines-preventing-and-responding-to-bullying-at-work/

Factors that increase the likelihood of bullying

- Work relationships
  - Poor communication
  - Low levels of support
  - Hostility, conflict, criticism, negative interactions
  - Excluding people socially.

- Negative leadership styles
  - 'Ruling with an iron fist'
  - Little or no guidance provided to workers
  - Responsibilities inappropriately and/or informally assigned
  - Inadequate supervision.

- Systems of work
  - Lack of resources, training, support systems
  - Poorly designed rostering/unreasonable performance measures or timeframes
  - High job demands and limited job control
  - Role conflict and ambiguity
  - An acceptance of unreasonable behaviours/lack of behavioural standards.

- Organisational change
  - Significant technological change
  - Restructures, downsizing, outsourcing and/or job insecurity.[6]

Different workplaces may also have norms that are part of their culture such as friendly banter or rites of passage when joining the organisation. These practices may be acceptable when they are designed to strengthen and include, and can assist new workers to become part of the group. However, if left unchecked over a period of time, these practices can become targeted or exclusionary and could be considered bullying. Organisations then need to step in to ensure all workers are safe and supported.
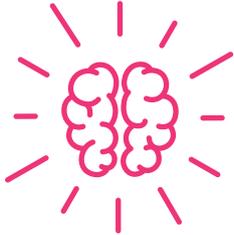

6   Darby, F, Scott-Howman, A. (2016) Workplace Bullying Thomson Reuters New Zealand Ltd, Wellington. 226pp

THE CASE FOR BULLYING PREVENTION

Employees who have experienced bullying report:
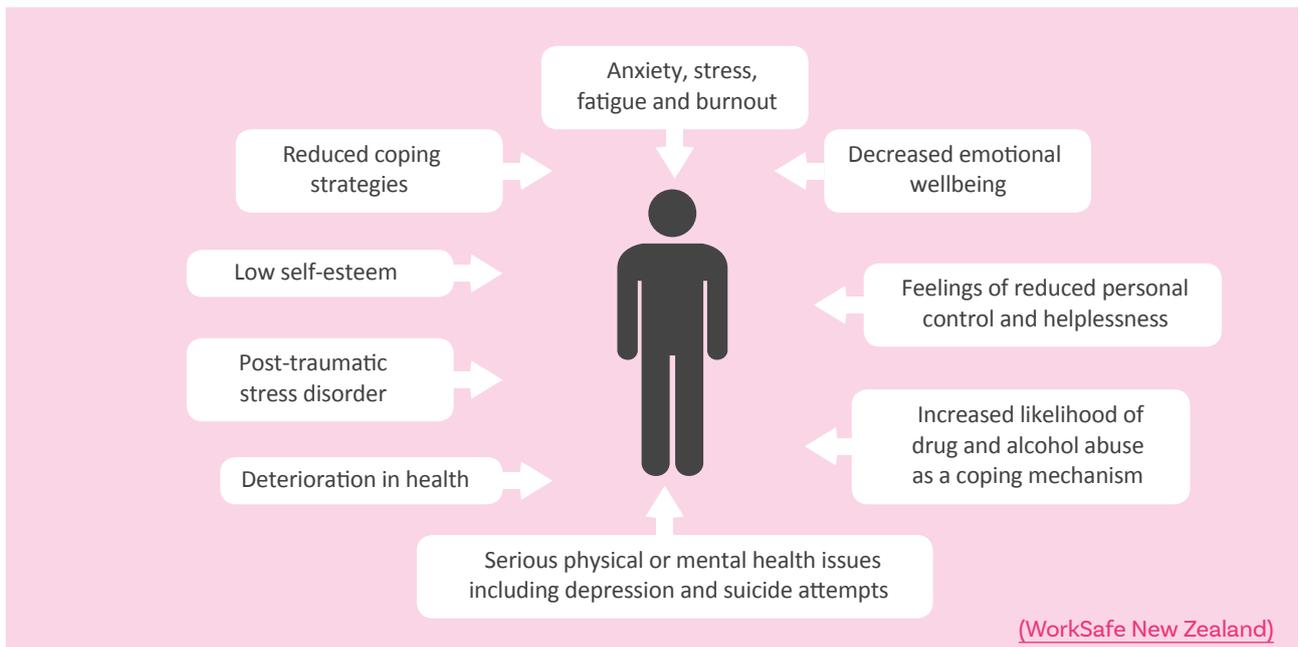
Higher levels of psychological strain	Lower wellbeing[7]	Lower commitment to their organisation	Lower job performance

The effects of bullying

Lower levels of wellbeing and higher levels of psychological strain affect individual workers in many ways.

Anxiety, stress, fatigue and burnout

Reduced coping strategies

Decreased emotional wellbeing

Low self-esteem

Feelings of reduced personal control and helplessness

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Increased likelihood of drug and alcohol abuse as a coping mechanism

Deterioration in health

Serious physical or mental health issues including depression and suicide attempts

(WorkSafe New Zealand)

Bystanders to bullying can be impacted too, and this can contribute to a mentally and physically unhealthy work environment.

Not only are workplaces legally responsible under the Health & Safety at Work Act to manage risks to mental health including bullying, workplaces that prioritise mental health have better engagement, reduced absenteeism and higher productivity. Improving wellbeing leads to greater morale, tautoko/ support of each other, and higher job satisfaction. Check out our Five Ways to Wellbeing at Work Toolkit.

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7   O'Driscoll, M. P., Cooper-Thomas, H. D., Bentley, T., Catley, B. E., Gardner, D. H., & Trenberth, L. (2011). Workplace bullying in New Zealand: A survey of employee perceptions and attitudes. Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 49(4), 390–408. https://doi.org/10.1177/1038411111422140

CREATING ENVIRONMENTS THAT DON'T ALLOW BULLYING TO FLOURISH

Workplaces that prevent bullying have:

Strong and well-communicated policies and processes regarding bullying

Leadership commitment to preventing bullying and intervening when it occurs

Positive communication

Practices that affirm diversity

Policies should include but not be limited to:

- A definition of bullying
- Clearly explained organisational commitments to bullying prevention
- Clear expectations around communication and role clarity
- Clear processes for reporting and managing complaints
- Clear communication and direction around available support.

Once a policy is put in place, it's important to walk the talk. From a Māori perspective, for example, tikanga/custom cannot be applied unless underlying values genuinely inform those actions. If your organisation doesn't have a current policy, WorkSafe NZ has an example template here.

Leadership commitment to preventing bullying

A wide cultural response to bullying is essential, and leaders and managers play a vital role in this. It is more important than ever for organisations to prioritise inclusion and psychological safety in the workplace.[8]

To prevent bullying, leaders should clearly communicate and model the expectations of the organisation and these expectations must be set out by the organisational policy. Leaders and managers should access training so they have a clear understanding of the factors that may increase the likelihood of bullying and the confidence to create environments and teams that are bullying-free. It's important for leaders to be equipped and supported so they can have conversations regarding expected behaviour and know how to manage complaints that may arise.

Further ways to reduce the risk of bullying

1. **Positive, mana-enhancing communication reduces the risk of bullying.** Working Well – Positive Communication at Work is a resource designed to build a culture of positive communication together, based on having clear intentions, asking more – telling less, valuing relationships and making it safe to speak up.

2. **Discuss what bullying is and expected behaviours with teams on a regular basis**. Sometimes people will have a feeling something's not quite right but might dismiss it or not feel confident enough to ask for support. Talking about expected behaviours and identifying bullying will help people be more aware of any unacceptable behaviours.

3. **Have a range of ways people can speak up.** It's important people feel safe to raise issues and have more than one person they know they can talk with. These could include a health and safety representative, another manager, a close colleague or even an external EAP counsellor.

Affirming diversity

Studies suggest people who bully are more likely to choose targets who are of a different ethnicity, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation, or those who have a disability.[9]

Here are some useful resources to help you develop policies and procedures that work toward a more diverse and inclusive workplace:

- Rainbow Rights
- Inclusive Education (policies, systems and procedures – for schools but relevant for workplaces)
- Diversity Works NZ
- Inclusive Education (safe, inclusive environments – for schools but relevant for workplaces)
- InCommon toolkit to strengthen cross-cultural connections
- Treaty workshops and other resources
- Te Reo resources for the workplace
- Māori employee experiences in the workplace
- Creating mentally healthy workplace environments for Māori
- Sign up for a Māori word of the day or week
- Open Minds guide for managers

8   Tappin, D., Forsyth, D., Gardner, D., Ashby, L., Bentley, T., Bone, K., Catley, B., D'Souza. N, Blackwood, K., Port, Z., Brougham, D., Cordier, J. (2020). The New Zealand Workplace Barometer Psychosocial safety climate and worker health – findings from the 2019 NZ Workplace Barometer. Massey University. https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/school_of_management/HWG/2019%20NZ%20Workplace%20Barometer%20Report.pdf?4F8C97BE38957D8837515989FB7DE418

9   Gardner, D., Bentley, T. A., Catley, B. E., Cooper-Thomas, H., O'Driscoll, M. P., & Trenberth, L. (2013). Ethnicity, workplace bullying, social support and psychological strain in Aotearoa/New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 42 (2), 84 - 91. https://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/9483

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR RAINBOW EMPLOYEES

In Aotearoa, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other sexuality, and gender diverse identities experience higher rates of bullying. Discrimination and social exclusion based on sexuality or gender identity can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

Organisations can work towards a more inclusive workplace for rainbow employees by encouraging all staff to use pronouns correctly. Pronouns are words that we use in place of someone's name. The most common pronouns in the English language include he/him, they/them and she/her. Other languages, such as te reo Māori, have gender neutral pronouns as the default.

Sharing your own pronouns and asking others what pronouns they would like you to use when referring to them shows that you are not making assumptions about the language that is correct for them. Below are some tips for using pronouns in the workplace:

- Some people might use different pronouns in different settings, depending on who they are out to. It's important to check in with people on the pronouns they prefer you to use in various settings.
- Practise using neutral language such as 'they' and 'them' if you are not sure what the correct language is for someone.
- If you know a person's correct pronouns, make sure you always use them, even if they are not there to hear it.
- Normalise the sharing of pronouns by adding them to your email signature, sharing them in meetings or including them next to your name in online meetings.

If you accidentally use the incorrect pronouns don't get defensive, over-apologise, talk about how hard it is to get it right, or avoid practising. Instead, correct yourself and practise using the correct pronouns.

For more advice on how to use pronouns, take a look at these resources from InsideOUT and MyPronouns.org.

For further guidance to support you in creating an inclusive environment for the rainbow community, you can get in touch with RainbowYOUTH or InsideOUT.

HOW TO BE AN UPSTANDER

Almost 40% of people have witnessed bullying.[10] Upstanders are people who notice bullying behaviour and address it to help someone who is being bullied. Bystanders, in contrast, are people who notice bullying behaviour but don't – or cannot – help.

These five steps can help you be an Upstander and take safe and effective action. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to being an Upstander and it's not easy to work out how to help safely. Every bullying situation is different, so think about which option(s) will work best for you.

Tautoko/support the person experiencing bullying:
- Tautoko the person being bullied, even if you just stand beside them and let them know you've got their back
- Let the person doing the bullying know you've noticed the behaviour and that it's not acceptable
- Encourage them to ask for help, go with them to get help or provide them with information about where to go for help
- Show them our 'Getting help and advice' fact sheet
- Let them know they're not alone and you're there for them.

Don't support or engage in the behaviour:
- Make it clear to your hoamahi/colleagues that you won't be involved in bullying behaviour
- Don't encourage bullying behaviour by harassing, teasing or spreading gossip about others, verbally or on social networking sites
- Don't acknowledge, reply or forward messages or photos that could be hurtful or embarrassing to a colleague.

If you feel safe, call the person out on their bullying behaviour:
- Be direct, calm and confident, and let the person know their behaviour isn't okay
- Use your words to show aroha and kindness to those involved. It may be hard at the time, but it can make a huge difference.

Leave and act:
- If you don't feel safe to intervene, it's best to take a breath and think about what you can do to help
- Later you might want to talk to the person being bullied and ask what might help, or have a quiet word with the person doing the bullying behaviour.

Get tautoko/support or help:
- You might want to go with the person who is being bullied to HR or their relevant manager
- If your organisation has policies around bullying prevention, this might help you figure out what to do next and who is best to talk to.

Clear policies and practices, known and shared values and expected behaviours, and leaders who role model these values/behaviours, will help people feel confident to be an Upstander at work. When Upstanders are confident to take safe and effective action to support the person experiencing bullying, there is a greater possibility that bullying can stop.

For more information about how to be an Upstander, click here.

Further advice for employees who experience bullying at work

There are a range of services and resources available to employees who experience bullying at work:
- Employees can advise their employer that they have experienced bullying behaviour using WorkSafe's reporting and assessment forms.
- They can also access the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Early Resolution Service. This is a free phone-based service which helps workplaces to resolve issues early, quickly and informally.
- Employment New Zealand has advice on formal and informal steps employees can take if they feel bullied in the workplace.

10 Forsyth, D., Ashby, L., Gardner, D., … Tappin, D. (2021). The New Zealand Workplace Barometer Psychosocial safety climate and worker health – findings from the 2020 NZ Workplace Barometer. Massey University. https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/school_of_management/HWG/The%202020%20New%20Zealand%20Workplace%20Barometer%20Report%20FINAL.pdf?5D42AA029903C7C6B61C5F948507BCE6

TEAM EXERCISES

Embrace diversity through kōrero

We know that embracing diversity and allowing people to bring their whole selves to work can help create a mentally healthy workplace culture that has zero tolerance for bullying.

One way you can celebrate diversity in your team is by getting to know each other and connecting with curiosity. When we get to know each other as whole people and not just as job roles, we develop respect and trust. Our Diversi-tea Kōrero Starter cards are an easy way to begin a kōrero and learn more about your hoamahi/colleagues.

Why not use these cards over morning tea or to start/end your team meeting? By giving each other our time and attention, we make an investment in our relationships and help to build a safe, supportive and strong workplace.

Look out for our updated Diversi-tea Kōrero Starter cards and workplaces Zoom activity here.

The triple filter test

The triple filter test can be used as a filter to stop rumours from circulating within the workplace and as a reflective tool for any interactions people are having. Before we talk about someone else (whether about their work, their behaviour or something else), there are three questions we can ask ourselves:

- Is it true?
- Is it good or kind?
- Is it useful?

Using our worksheet, people are encouraged to reflect on a recent interaction when they may have relayed information about someone else or when they have had a conversation that didn't go well. This exercise can be done in a team meeting or individually.

Download the worksheet here.

Values and behaviours

Organisational values set the scene for the way people are expected to behave at work. Taking time to talk with your team about what those values are and what the expected behaviours look like is a great way to create shared understandings. This will also help people recognise when those behaviours are not happening and to act as an Upstander.

The worksheet contains exercises to help your people understand your organisation's values and how they are expected to behave at work.

GETTING HELP AND ADVICE

For more information about bullying at work, take a look at this resource from WorkSafe. Managers and employers can access best practice guidelines with WorkSafe's 'Preventing and responding to bullying at work' resource.

Need further help or advice? See here.