

**Saying No to Bullies: A Workplace Response**  
**Texas Municipal Human Resources Association Annual Conference**  
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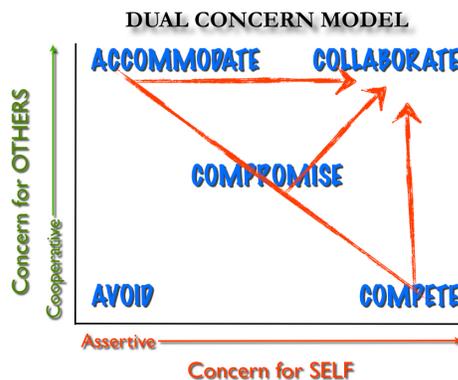
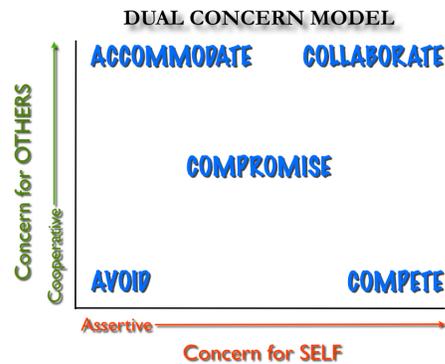
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1. Is workplace bullying really a problem?
  - a. Approximately 1 in 6 employees has experienced some form of workplace bullying.
  - b. At that incident rate, workplace bullying takes place three times more often than illegal discrimination and 1,600 times more often than workplace violence.
  
2. What is workplace bullying?
  - a. “Workplace bullying” is the repeated, deliberate, disrespectful behavior of one employee (the bully) toward another employee (the target) that harms the targeted individual.
  - b. Bullying behavior is, by its very nature, unreasonable and cannot be negotiated.
  - c. Bullies use aggressive, unreasonable behavior to get what they want.
  - d. Even though aggressive and unreasonable, workplace bullying behavior is often masked within the established rules and policies of an organization.
  - e. Workplace bullying is repeated behavior.
    - (1) It is not an isolated incident.
    - (2) It is not unintentional sensitivity.
  - f. Workplace bullying is harassment.
    - (1) A “harasser” is generally defined as one whose behavior violates a legal standard, e.g., behavior focusing on race, gender, disability.
    - (2) While bullies may also bring attacks in legally-defined areas, most bullies focus on the competence and popularity of the target.
  
3. In talking about bullying, why do we refer to “targets” rather than “victims?”
  - a. The term “victim” implies total helplessness on the part of the recipient.
  - b. A bully-aware workplace can displace helplessness through strong policies and procedures.
  
4. Are all difficult people bullies?

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<sup>1</sup> The content expert for this presentation is Valerie Cade, CSP, MACRR. Valerie is the founder of Bully Free at Work and is a much sought-after consultant, trainer, and author. Details regarding Bully Free at Work are included at the end of this outline.

- a. A workplace bully utilizes repeated, deliberate, disrespectful behavior to gain an advantage or power over another individual. If this tactic has been successful in the past, the bully will not change his/her pattern of behavior.
  - b. A difficult person may be self-centered, but their actions rarely indicate their desire to harm or control someone else.
  - c. When confronted with consequences and choices, difficult people are likely to negotiate and alter their behavior in their own best interest.
5. Can bullies ever be transformed into something other than bullies?
- a. Generally speaking, bullies cannot be changed without addressing their issues of identity and self-worth.
  - b. If a target or an organization effectively addresses the bullying behavior, a bully may suppress his/her tendencies when (s)he learns that the behavior is not rewarded.
  - c. If a target effectively addresses the bullying behavior without the collaboration of the organization, the bully will simply shift his/her attention to another target.
6. Can bullying be addressed in the same ways that other conflict is managed?
- a. The Dual Concern Model



- b. Collaboration – mutual action taken for mutual gain – can only take place in environments where all parties concerned are willing participants. If an employee is unwilling to cooperate, the organization must remove the employee or engineer a situation in which the bully is totally controlled.
7. What factors create and maintain a workplace bully?
- Most bullies grapple with significant issues of identity and self-worth.
  - A bully feels threatened by smart, competent, and kind people.
    - Bullies actually fear people who they perceive as being more competent or better liked.
    - To alleviate their fear, bullies try to control their targets by taking power away from them.
  - Bullies gain satisfaction when hurting others – in fact are addicted to this satisfaction – and do not feel any remorse or shame as a result of their behavior or its effect on the targets.
  - Bullying behavior can be retaliatory or preemptive. A bully wants to obscure performance and does not want to be compared with the target and others on a level playing field.
  - When this satisfaction is being realized, the bully feels he/she is in control and is in power.
8. How does bullying take place in an otherwise, civilized workplace?



9. What is the impact of bullying in an organization?
  - a. Morale erodes and the culture becomes tainted with fear.
  - b. Effective team work is diminished as both targets and observers seek safe working environments (working alone or in self-selected groups away from the bully).
  - c. The organizational atmosphere moves from cooperative to secretive.
  - d. Employees, both targets and observers, leave the organization.
  - e. Absenteeism and illness increase.
  - f. More indirect conflict arises.
  - g. Loyalty to the organization and the organization's mission is lost.
  - h. In some cases, employee theft, misbehavior, and sabotage increase.
  
10. How should organizations prepare to address workplace bullying?
  - a. Organizations should educate employees, managers, and executive staff in regard to bullying.
  - b. Employees should be engaged to assist in creating and enforcing workplace bullying policies.
    - (1) Clearly define appropriate and inappropriate behavior.
    - (2) Clearly state the consequences of bullying behavior.
    - (3) Name a senior leader as the contact point for reporting bullying behavior or to discuss related issues.
    - (4) Use managers and leaders as role models and involve them as trainers and coaches.
    - (5) Provide a complaint process.
  - c. Workplace bullies should be held accountable.
  - d. Don't hire employees who are bullies.
  - e. Promote and reward positive workplace behavior.

#### RESOURCES:

1. Bully Free at Work  
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