



# **Creating a Wonderful Environment - Stopping and Preventing Workplace Bullying**

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drhindahancock.com](mailto:office@drhindahancock.com)

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As a sole professional you are responsible for what happens in your practice. This involves the way that people treat each other. Stopping and preventing workplace bullying is an important aspect of protecting your business and you therefore need to understand it and the strategies that will be effective.

Lately, the emphasis in North America in general and health care in particular has been on the concept of employee wellness using a holistic approach. In order for us to achieve this, it is important to understand and then alleviate any barriers that would prevent employees from experiencing wellness. Workplace bullying provides a strong threat for individual employees as well as organizations as it can jeopardize the psychological and financial wellbeing of those involved. Rick Brenner, of Chaco Canyon Consulting in Boston, Massachusetts, whose work focuses on improving personal and organizational effectiveness, claims:

Workplace bullies are probably the organization's most expensive employees. They reduce the effectiveness not only of their targets, but also of bystanders and of the organization as a whole (2004). The problem is not isolated to one country or continent. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), for example, used workplace surveys to research workplace bullying and the results were shocking: Over half the respondents (53%) to the union survey report an unhappy oppressive workplace, and 54% say that the intimidating behaviour; shouting, ordering and belittling people happens in their workplaces. Almost a third report abusive language. The ACTU estimates that: 350,000 people are subjected to long term bullying in Australia, while 2.5 million experience some aspect of bullying over the course of their working lives. Workplace bullying may be costing Australian businesses up to \$3 billion annually. And the problem can be found in every country of the world.

There are many definitions of the term workplace bullying but everyone agrees that there are three different groups who contribute to this and who can ultimately help to stop the problem. They are the bully, the target and the organization that allows it to occur.

As a sole professional you will need to understand issues and strategies to deal with workplace bullying and prevent a toxic environment from occurring. This will allow you to create a healthy workplace which has zero tolerance for abuse. Information and training are available for those who do not have much knowledge about workplace bullying. Perhaps you could benefit from researching this and ways ensure that you and your employees are safe.

Business is an adventure that sometimes faces threats from outside and within. Your job is to protect it from harm.