



7.10 Common Bullying Behaviors and Responses Activity

Try This!

Review and discuss the following common bullying behaviors in situations at work. Ask the mentee to role play the part of the bully and you give the appropriate response to stop this behavior. Switch roles. Encourage the mentee to make a note of responses to try in their workplace.

Bullying Behavior:

Sabotage (deliberately setting up a negative situation, such as “She sent me to get something that took forever to find, and then it was too late to be used.”)

Appropriate Response:

“There is more to this situation than meets the eye. Could you and I meet in private and explore what happened?”

Bullying Behavior:

Withholding Information

Appropriate Response:

“It is my understanding that there was much more information available regarding this situation and I believe if I had known that, it would have affected my actions.”

Bullying Behavior:

Infighting (bickering with peers)*

Appropriate Response:

“This is not the time or place.”

“Please stop.” (Physically walk away or move to a neutral spot.)

*Always avoid holding a contentious discussion in non-private places.

Bullying Behavior:

Scape-goating (attributing all that goes wrong to one individual)

Appropriate Response:

“I don’t think that’s the right connection.”

Bullying Behavior:

Backstabbing (complaining to others about an individual and not speaking directly to that individual)

Appropriate Response:

“I don’t feel right talking about him/her when I wasn’t there (or I don’t know the facts). Have you spoken to him/her?”



Bullying Behavior:

Non-verbal Innuendo (raised eyebrow, face-making)

Appropriate Response:

“I see from your facial expression (or I sense) that there may be something you wanted to say to me. It’s okay to speak directly to me.”

Bullying Behavior:

Verbal Affront (covert or overt snide remarks, lack of openness, abrupt responses)

Appropriate Response:

“The individuals I learn the most from are clearer in their directions and feedback. Is there some way we can structure this type of situation?”

Bullying Behavior:

Undermining Activities (turning away, not available)

Appropriate Response:

“When something happens that is different or contrary to what I thought or understood, it leaves me with questions. Help me understand how this situation might have happened.”

Bullying Behavior:

Failure to Respect Privacy

Appropriate Response:

“It bothers me to talk about this without their permission.”

“I am not comfortable talking about this and don’t believe this should be repeated.”

Bullying Behaviors:

Broken Confidences

Appropriate Responses:

“Wasn’t that said in confidence?”

“That sounds like information that should remain confidential.”

“He or she asked me to keep that confidential.”