

EEO TRUST

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Bullying and harassment

- Bullying is four times more prevalent than sexual harassment. Verbal abuse is the most common form of workplace bullying.
- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men in New Zealand report having experienced sexual harassment.¹ For 70% of women, this harassment occurs at work.
- Over 90% of sexual harassment complaints to the Human Rights Commission are made by women.
- The most common way of dealing with harassment and bullying is to leave the workplace. Staff turnover is estimated to cost employers 50 -150% of a person's salary.
- More sexual harassment complaints were made to the Human Rights Commission by employees from small organisations with no sexual harassment policy than by employees from large organisations with policies.
- Internationally, it is estimated that bullying accounts for 30 -50% of all employee stress related illness.²

Best practice

www.wave.org.nz – Workplaces against violence in employment.

The WAVE website provides information on workplace bullying, harassment, discrimination, and physical violence. The website also provides guides on dealing with bullying, handling complaints, and legal issues.

The website also provides best practice information on prevention strategies and steps which include:

- Developing a full harassment policy which outlines what is unacceptable behaviour and how staff can deal with complaints, and names of contact people
- A formal step by step complaints procedure
- Awareness training for all staff
- External/independent support
- HR processes

¹ For points 1 and 2, refer to <http://www.wave.org.nz/>

² Refer to Olsen, Haydn. *Workplace bullying: what New Zealand workplaces should know.*

WAVE also offers workshops or training seminars, both externally and in-house, to educate employers and employees on bullying and harassment.

Olsen, Hadyn. 2005. *Workplace bullying and harassment: a toolbox for managers and supervisors*. Auckland: CCH.

WAVE was launched by Hadyn Olsen, who has recently written a book on workplace bullying and harassment. This book is designed to be a toolbox for managers and supervisors on how to respond to bullying and harassment problems within the workplace, as well as how to develop control mechanisms, and complaints procedures. The book also provides information on the dynamics of bullying, including why employees do not report incidences, and also comments on the legal responsibilities of the employer.

What do you know about bullying and harassment in your organisation?

Eg:

- Does your organisation have a bullying and harassment policy? Does this policy have a section on handling complaints?
- How are employees told about this policy?
- What is considered to be unacceptable behaviour in your organisation? Who the contact person is in your organisation for concerns or complaints?
- What is the complaints procedure in your organisation?
- Does your organisation provide an EAP?
- Does your organisation provide training to managers or staff on bullying and harassment?