

Workplace bullying - is a systematized form of violence, mainly psychological, the perpetrator of which is a collaborator (superior, subordinate or colleagues)

The hallmark of bullying behavior is that it is repetitive and lasts for a certain period of time.

Important: the occurrence of single hostile behaviors does not necessarily mean that there is bullying.

Features of bullying:

- it is continuous, permanent and lasts for a long time.
- it is intentional in nature - to harm or destroy the employee (although it happens that these behaviors may be unconscious).
- the relationship between the parties is one of dependence - official subordination, better "acquaintances", longer seniority, higher position in the group.
- accumulation of unethical behavior - accusations are usually generalized "everything is wrong" and internally motivated "because you are a bad employee" rather than the fact that the situation was difficult.
- no previous objections - the employee did not get entries in the file, reprimands, etc. (e.g., under a previous supervisor; he had previously been a rewarded employee).

Types of mobbing:

- vertical - when the mobber is a superior and the victim is a subordinate (occurs most often)
- horizontal (horizontal or group) - when the mobber is a group of co-workers or members of a group to which the victim of the mobbing belongs or on which the victim depends
- ascending - when the mobber is a subordinate (occurs most rarely)

Bullying behavior:

Heinz Leymann (1996, 2001) grouped the ways used by perpetrators into five categories that relate to personal and professional functioning, and can be exhibited by either one person or a larger group of them:

- actions that impede the communication process
 - Limiting or obstructing the ability to speak
 - Continuous overstatement of speech
 - Responding to speech with shouting and challenges
 - Constant criticism of one's work and personal life
 - Harassment over the phone
 - Using verbal and written threats
 - Presenting demeaning and offensive gestures

- Use of allusions and veiled criticism

- actions that negatively affect social relations

- Supervisor's avoidance of contact with the person, conversations with the person
- Limiting the person's ability to speak
- Physical and social isolation of the person (e.g., placing the person in a separate room with a ban on communicating with others; prohibiting employees from contacting the isolated person)
- Ostentatious ignoring and disregarding (treating "like air")

- activities violating the image

- Gossiping
- Spreading rumors
- Slandering
- Suggesting mental disorders, referring for psychiatric examination
- Joking and ridiculing private life
- Parodying the way you walk, talk, gesture
- Attacking political views or religious beliefs
- Mocking and attacking on the basis of nationality
- Mocking disability or infirmity
- Verbal abuse in the form of vulgar nicknames or other humiliating expressions
- Insinuations of a sexual nature, making sexual proposals, courting

- actions striking at professional position

- Forcing tasks that violate personal dignity
- Questioning decision-making
- Not assigning any tasks to be carried out
- Assigning meaningless, unnecessary tasks
- Assigning tasks below qualifications and competence
- Assigning tasks that are too difficult, beyond competence and ability
- Continuous assignment of new tasks to be performed (with an unrealistic deadline or amount of work to be done)
- Eventually taking away tasks handed over for execution
- Issuing absurd and contradictory orders

- health-hit activities

- Recommending work that is harmful to health, unsuited to a person's capabilities and without providing adequate safeguards
- Threats of physical force
- Physical abuse
- Sexually motivated actions, sexual abuse
- Contributing to material losses caused by a person
- Causing psychological damage to material damage caused by a person
- Causing psychological damage to a person's place of work or residence

Sexual harassment - "any unwanted behavior of a sexual nature or relating to the sex of an employee, the purpose or effect of which is to violate the dignity of the employee, in particular to create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or derogatory atmosphere towards him. This behavior may consist of physical, verbal or non-verbal elements" Labor Code

Type I harassment - quid pro quo, or something for something, also known as sexual blackmail (sexual coercion)

- refers to a situation of inequality of power - the perpetrator, as a superior person, uses power to force favor for his demands of a sexual nature

- giving in to them or refusing to do so is the basis for making personnel decisions against the object of harassment (such as hiring, promotion, raise, extension of employment contract)

Type II harassment - creating hostile working conditions in the form of unwanted sexual attention ("unwanted sexual attention")

- non-coercive dating solicitation

- repeated attempts to make contact

- intrusive e-mails, phone calls

- Unwanted favors, gifts

- minor attempts at physical contact such as "accidental touches"

- constant imposition with one's presence

- emancipation of sexually explicit materials (posters, emails)

Type III harassment - humiliation on the basis of gender (gender harassment)

- sexist remarks, relating to gender

- remarks or jokes of a sexual nature, derogatory comments about appearance, intimate life

- comments that disqualify a person on the basis of his or her membership in a particular gender

- harassment for deviating from the typical gender role

Consequences of exposure to bullying

Physical health

- increased somatic symptoms in the form of: tension headaches, stomach complaints, tension pain in pink muscle groups, general fatigue, sleep disturbances, arrhythmia symptoms

- lowering of general immunity (resulting, for example, in more frequent colds)

Mental health

- depressive disorders
- anxiety disorders: social phobia, panic anxiety, generalized anxiety syndrome
- abuse of psychoactive substances (mainly drugs and alcohol)
- suicidal thoughts and attempts

Occupational functioning

- decreased motivation to work
- decrease in work efficiency
- reduction in job satisfaction
- professional burnout
- change in relationships with co-workers
 - more frequent interpersonal conflicts
- strong desire to change or leave the job
- routine in performing tasks
- lack of trust in managers, which affects lower efficiency at work, less commitment to the tasks performed and more frequent non-compliance with the rules of professional ethics

Organizational costs

- absenteeism
- staff turnover
- decrease in quality of work
- decrease in work efficiency
- decrease in productivity
- deterioration of the company's image

Additional costs

- medical care
- early retirement
- litigation costs
- damages/compensation

Individual formal ways to counter bullying

Dealing with suspected experience of mobbing:

1. Analyze the situation for bullying behaviors, that is, behaviors that last for a long time, happen frequently and violate personal dignity. Analyze them against the list of bullying behaviors developed by Leyman.
2. Discussing the observed situations with a trusted person from the workplace.
3. Recording the course of bullying behavior, its place, time, circumstances and the presence of others.
4. Gathering documentation confirming the actions that violate dignity (confirmations and written responses, copying documents if possible and legal).
5. Attempt to clarify the situation with the person who presents the bullying behavior (orally or in writing, in the form of a so-called "call to stop").
6. Informing superiors about experiencing bullying (preferably in writing - in paper or e-mail form).
7. Informing the health and safety inspector, trade unions, social labor inspector.
8. Seeking help outside of work (at the State Labor Inspectorate, Associations helping victims of bullying, Medical Clinics).
9. Filing a lawsuit with the Labor Court.

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