

# *Workplace Bullying*

*Must*  
Unions ~~Can~~ Lead

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WORKPLACE  
**BULLYING**  
INSTITUTE

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Local 1981/AFL-CIO



Jan. 13, 2013 Winter Advocacy Retreat

**“Bullying is Invading the Workplace!”**

More than 37 percent of U.S. workers have experienced bullying at work. So, as union advocates, how do we prevent the rise of workplace bullying and respond to it when it occurs.

To get a handle on what bullying looks like, unions have to consider bullying warning signs like continuous criticism, silent treatment or credit not be given to a worker. Then unions have to develop the strategies to deal with it and restore control to the situation.

While 73 percent of workplace bullies are bosses, Lynn Adler, NSO Vice President for Program, reports that she is getting more and more requests for bullying prevention training within affiliates and among members. “It’s a disturbing trend. Maybe it’s a sign of the difficult times union members are facing, but as union advocates, we’re doomed if we turn on one another,” Adler said.

***[nationalstaff.org](http://nationalstaff.org)***

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# UNION SOLUTIONS

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## *How Unions Can Lead*

- Negotiate Anti-Bullying protections into Agreement terms
- Grieve/Arbitrate bullying incidents; Represent, don't defend, destructive member
- Create Expert Members Team to serve Members; amend Constitution
- Push employer to create new policy AND ENFORCEMENT procedures, then hold employer ACCOUNTABLE
- Use Union clout to advocate for State laws -- the HWB
- Tell the world that Unions are against Abuse At Work!



# *Re-Frame the Language*

- \* Abusive work environment theory -- if the conditions for zero-sum competition exist, and a few employees recognize those opportunities to exploit others, and the aggression is explicitly or implicitly rewarded, a bullying culture is created and sustained
- \* Dignitarian doctrine -- employer may not infringe on an employee's privacy, sense of personal integrity or well-being, duty of care obligations for employers regarding the assurance of physical and psychological safety - dignity is fundamental

# *Ideal CBA Terms*

- Definition for clarity, including health harm & self-harm
- Illustrations, examples (including, but not limited to)
  - What it is not; preservation of non-abusive exercise managerial rights
  - Sources: managers, peer coworkers
- Prohibitions extend to Senior-Level Execs
- Investigations by neutral 3rd parties, minimize HR role
  - Require informal solutions before formal
- **NO MEDIATION**



- NO retaliation for any participants in fact finding
- No punitive transfer of grievant for safety
- Notification of investigation outcome for all participants
  - Consequences of confirmed violation reported only to grievant & defendant
- Consequences increase in severity with repeated confirmed violations, eventual termination
  - Misuse of grievances = violation
- Managers who condoned bullying required to attend training & risk demotion, reassignment, termination



**WORKPLACE  
BULLYING  
UNIVERSITY**

***3-Day Graduate-Level Education  
Quarterly in Bellingham, WA  
or On-Site for Unions***

## ***Your Union's Expert Members Team Trained to Serve Members***

*Some  
Services  
Chosen  
by Union  
Expert  
Teams*

- Information source on the topic
- Clarification about the experience
- Validation of affected members
- Coaching
- Trainers/Educators
- Interveners



# Union Presidents at NPC WBI Freedom Week Oct. 2012





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*workplacebullying.org*

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