

ADULT BULLYING

You may not hear a lot about adult bullying, but it is a problem. Read this article to learn more about different types of adult bullies and get some ideas on how to deal with an adult bully. Adult bullying is a serious problem and may require legal action.

One would think that as people mature and progress through life, that they would stop behaviors of their youth. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Sadly, adults can be bullies, just as children and teenagers can be bullies. While adults are more likely to use verbal bullying as opposed to physical bullying, the fact of the matter is that adult bullying exists. The goal of an adult bully is to gain power over another person, and make himself or herself the dominant adult. They try to humiliate victims, and "show them who is boss." ☒

There are several different types of adult bullies, and it helps to know how they operate:

- 1. Narcissistic Adult Bully:** This type of adult bully is self-centered and does not share empathy with others. Additionally, there is little anxiety about consequences. He or she seems to feel good about him or herself, but in reality has a brittle narcissism that requires putting others down.
- 2. Impulsive Adult Bully:** Adult bullies in this category are more spontaneous and plan their bullying out less. Even if consequences are likely, this adult bully has a hard time restraining his or her behavior. In some cases, this type of bullying may be unintentional, resulting in periods of stress, or when the bully is actually upset or concerned about something unconnected with the victim.
- 3. Physical Bully:** While adult bullying rarely turns to physical confrontation, there are, nonetheless, bullies that use physicality. In some cases, the adult bully may not actually physically harm the victim, but may use the threat of harm, or physical domination through looming. Additionally, a physical bully may damage or steal a victim's property, rather than physically confronting the victim.
- 4. Verbal Adult Bully:** Words can be quite damaging. Adult bullies who use this type of tactic may start rumors about the victim, or use sarcastic or demeaning language to dominate or humiliate another person. This subtle type of bullying also has the advantage - to the bully - of being difficult to document. However, the emotional and psychological impacts of verbal bullying can be felt quite keenly and can result in reduced job performance and even depression.
- 5. Secondary Adult Bully:** This is someone who does not initiate the bullying, but joins in so that he or she does not actually become a victim down the road. Secondary bullies may feel bad about what they are doing, but are more concerned about protecting themselves.

Workplace bullying can make life quite miserable and difficult. Supervisors should be made aware of adult bullies, since they can disrupt productivity, create a hostile work environment (opening the company to the risk of a lawsuit) and reduce morale.

It is important to note, though, that there is little you can do about an adult bully, other than ignore and try to avoid, after reporting the abuse to a supervisor. This is because adult bullies are often in a set pattern. *They are not interested in working things out and they are not interested in compromise. Rather, adult bullies are more interested in power and domination.* They want to feel as though they are important and preferred, and they accomplish this by bringing others down. There is very little you can do to change an adult bully, beyond working within the confines of laws and company regulations that are set up. **The good news** is that, if you can document the bullying, there are legal and civil remedies for harassment, abuse and other forms of bullying. But you have to be able to document the case.

Adult bullies were often either bullies as children, or bullied as children. Understanding this about them may be able to help you cope with the behavior. But there is little you can do about it beyond doing your best to ignore the bully, report his or her behavior to the proper authorities, and document the instances of bullying so that you can take legal action down the road *if necessary*.

<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/adult-bullying.html>