

Case Study: Bullying Behaviours in the Workplace

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Agenda

1. **Characters:** Who were involved?
2. **Timeline:** What happened?
3. **Analysis:** What are the implications?

Characters - The Worker

- Recently appointed as team leader, competed with a previous manager
- Encountered resistance to change
- Received no prior training
- Attempted to seek help:
 - Appealed to immediate manager, then higher manager

Characters - The Team

- No cooperation
- Resented new team leader
- Loyal to previous manager
- Expressing bullying behaviour: 1) No common courtesy, 2) No assistance during busy period 3) Whispering and making vindictive comments 4) Disobey requests 4) Offensive comments
- Convened a team meeting to get rid of her
 - Gather complaints
 - Presented to higher manager

Characters - Immediate Manager

- Open and easy-going management style
- Obsessed with being seen by all staff as their friend
- Reluctant to interfere and downplayed the behaviour
- Provided no effective support:
 - Suggest she deal with the situation herself
 - Speaking offensively on occasions due to frustration
 - Supporting the team meeting which the worker was not invited to

Characters - More Senior Manager

- Directed the immediate manager to respond appropriately
- No follow up
- After the worker ceased work, provided formal grievance, investigation and dispute resolution procedures:
 - Management skill for worker
 - Counselling for members about ethics and code of conduct
 - Outline appropriate demeanour
 - Brief manager about their role
 - Performance management program

Timeline

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Character	New manager appointed	Complaint-forming Meeting	Report to manager	Aftermath	Worker ceased work
The Worker	Becomes the new manager, but faced	Not invited	Appealed for help to immediate manager and more senior manager	Agitated, anxious, depressed and withdrawn. Eventually	Made legal action, did not return to work. Received compensation

Analysis

- **Bullying:** The worker was subjected to bullying behaviour by the team (active) and the immediate manager (passive).
- **Effect:** The worker was agitated, anxious, depressed and withdrawn, eventually resigning due to psychiatric condition.
- **Legal Action:** The legal action and outcome was justified, with the worker receiving appropriate compensation for psychological injury.