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Targets Are Not Believed

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TARGETS ARE NOT BELIEVED

A major obstacle for targets of workplace bullying is that they are often not believed and their accusations about the bully go unnoticed. In an organization where workplace bullying exists, targets are frequently accused of making the overall work environment more difficult and of being the "troublemakers" in the organization.

Workplace aggressors and bullies are calculating and spend time cultivating relationships with others who can support their bullying behavior. When targets are off doing their job, aggressors are busy manipulating and building relationships in the environments with those in power and other potential aggressors. For example, a workplace aggressor may report to their supervisor or co-workers that the target is in fact the one who is not doing their job or that the target is causing trouble. This sets up the target to be viewed as the person causing the problems. So, when a target does report the bullying to a supervisor or co-worker, they are not believed because the bully has already planted the seeds that the target is the problem and the aggressor is actually a good colleague and worker.

The aggressor has established the foundation of lies and untruths about the target positioning themselves to be eyes and ears of the office. The bully has placed themselves as being a reliable source of information with their supervisors and co-workers and the go to person to inform to the boss what is going on in the office. Some of which is likely to be true, but other information will be embellished and in some cases direct lies will be made up stories about the target. Therefore, the system is already skewed in the favor of the aggressor and away from the target. Aggressors become trusted members for the supervisors, whereas targets are not.

Being a target of workplace aggression is an extremely emotional and upsetting. As a result, targets are regularly put into positions where they are on the defensive. They are always being attacked and as such, repeatedly respond in seemingly confrontational ways. Targets defend their actions when they are bullied. Thus, making them look guilty.

A target may repeatedly feel the need to show their supervisor or coworkers how the workplace is treating them unfairly and may try to point this out in emails and meetings. In an effort to identify the workplace aggression and expose the workplace bully, targets end up making it worse for themselves. The aggressors have spent time developing relationships with their peers and have created the illusion that the target is the troublemaker, people, therefore, view any response by the target to out the bully as whiny and insecure. The target is not a reliable source of information and certainly not believable.

Targets need to fully understand the culture of the workplace bullying environment before they report. A complete analysis of their workplace should be done, and analysis of the benefits and risks of reporting is vital. Targets should develop a plan before they report the bully to increase the likelihood that they are believed and that the organization will intervene on their behalf. For more information, please visit www.jankircher.com