

# Positive and productive workplaces

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As a senior executive it's important that you are a positive role model for your team and that you lead by example. Leaders and managers are primarily responsible for being aware of work health and safety trends in your workplace, allocating adequate resources to addressing WHS issues and ensuring your agency is meeting their safety obligations.

Ethical behaviour among leaders is associated with higher employee motivation and commitment, a greater willingness to report problems to management, less sick leave, and higher engagement and productivity.

Preventing psychosocial hazards, including bullying, is a legislative duty under the **Work Health and Safety Act 2011** and the **Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017**. You must take a risk-based approach to managing psychosocial hazards, pursue prevention as the preferred strategy, and follow your agency processes if your employees report feeling unsafe. It is also important encourage your people to openly discuss challenges they are facing and support them through these processes.

## Workplace bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety. The NSW Government takes a zero-tolerance approach to workplace bullying.

It is a risk to health and safety because it may affect the psychological and physical health of workers. As a senior executive it is important to take steps to prevent it from occurring and responding quickly if it does is the best way to deal with workplace bullying. You should familiarise yourself with your agency's internal policies and procedures on preventing and responding to workplace bullying.

Some examples of potential workplace bullying include:

- abusive or offensive language or comments
- aggressive and intimidating behaviour

- belittling or humiliating comments
- practical jokes or initiation
- unjustified criticism or complaints
- deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities
- withholding information that is needed for work.

The annual **People Matter Employee Survey** collects data from each agency on employee experiences of bullying and discrimination. You should familiarise yourself with your agency's survey data to better understand current experiences.

## Responding to and preventing workplace bullying

As a senior executive, you have an obligation to create and maintain a positive workplace environment.

There are key steps you can take to create a positive workplace environment:

- promote and role model your agency values
- communicate code of conduct obligations and set a clear understanding of expected behaviours
- support a 'speak up culture' where employees feel safe to provide low key, informal feedback about behaviour they find to be unreasonable or unacceptable
- encourage employees to raise concerns about the workplace at an early stage, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted on appropriately
- facilitate a culture of listening, where employees seek out views that are different to their own, ask for feedback on the way they interact, and listen openly to feedback.

There are resources available to help you create and nurture a positive and productive workplace culture:

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### **Positive and productive workplace guidelines**

Use these to help you identify and respond to workplace bullying.



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### **Managing psychosocial hazards at work**

Use this guide to better understand what other workplace factors might be contributing to workplace bullying



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### **Creating a mentally healthy workplace**

Use this practical, step-by-step advice to create a mentally healthy workplace.



## **Behaving ethically**

This guide will help you develop ethical cultures, leadership and workplace practices, and assist you to demonstrate ethical conduct.

