



What is Meant by Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Bullying can be described as offensive, intimidating, or malicious behavior intended to undermine, humiliate, or harm the recipient. It often involves an abuse or misuse of power, whether positional, social, or physical, and is generally intentional. Examples include persistent verbal abuse, spreading false rumors, or unjustly undermining someone's work or character.

Harassment

Harassment refers to any unwanted behavior that adversely affects an individual's dignity. It may involve a single incident or persistent conduct. The key factors are whether the behavior is hostile, intimidating, or demeaning and whether it creates an environment that is offensive, degrading, or humiliating to the recipient.

Under the **POSH Act, 2013**, harassment includes physical, verbal, or non-verbal acts that create an intimidating work or educational environment. Additionally, harassment can be reported by individuals who witness offensive behavior, even if it is not directly aimed at them.

Key Considerations in Identifying Bullying and Harassment

Differences in attitude, culture, and personal background can influence how behavior is perceived. What one individual may see as harassment or bullying might not be perceived similarly by another. However, when determining if bullying or harassment has occurred, the *impact* of the behavior on the recipient, rather than the perpetrator's intent, is paramount. Behavior deemed unacceptable by normal standards will be the focal point.

Examples of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment can include, but are not limited to:

- **Verbal Abuse:** Insulting or offensive remarks, racist, casteist, or sexist slurs.
- **Unwanted Physical Contact:** Ranging from inappropriate touching to serious assault.
- **Exclusionary Behavior:** Isolating an individual from social or professional interactions.

- **Offensive Material:** Sharing derogatory content via email, social media, or other platforms.
- **Power Misuse:** Asserting authority aggressively or making derogatory comments about performance.
- **Discrimination:** Setting unreasonable expectations about an individual's abilities or interfering with disability aids or accommodations.
- **Ridicule and Intimidation:** Publicly belittling someone or creating a hostile environment.
- **Incitement of Hatred:** Wearing symbols or distributing material that incites racial or communal hatred.

Encouraging Reporting

We urge everyone to report incidents of bullying or harassment. Reporting helps create a supportive and inclusive environment and enables corrective actions.

You have the option to report an incident anonymously, which allows us to log it for trend monitoring purposes. However, please note that anonymous reports limit our ability to take direct action.