



# Working with Toxic People

How to identify, avoid and cope with toxic people at work

A toxic person is someone without self-insight or empathy and knowingly manipulates, sabotages and targets others for their own benefit.

This factsheet is not about that person who ate your yogurt, forgot to refill the photocopier, or stole your pen right off your desk. These people may make your life miserable and possibly are narcissistic, yet these annoying individuals can usually be dealt with by bringing the issues to their attention.

Toxic people are individuals who are not nice people and do not care how their actions or their words impact others in the office. They can be psychopathic in nature with no self-insight, no empathy and manipulate and lie to get what they want.

“Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a worker (or group of workers)”

[www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

## Taking Action

### As an Employee

- Address the issue with the person
- Talk to a senior staff member or your manager
- Speak to someone outside of your organisation
- Access Employee Assistance Counselling
- Be willing to walk away from the situation or position

### As a Leader

- Consider personality dynamics when creating your team
- Remember everyone comes with baggage or trauma
- Listen to your employees
- Understand performance management processes
- Set professional boundaries

### As an Organisation

- Have clear processes and procedures
- Seek internal and external support
- Have a no tolerance policy
- Employee mental health should outweigh the cost of losing skills
- Take action when issues arise

**“If we can’t identify the Psychopath, we are destined to be their victim”**

*Robert Hare*

## Things to Consider

### Bullying can cause:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Absenteeism
- High Staff turnover
- Loss of skills
- Reduced motivation
- Increased employer costs

### What makes you vulnerable to toxic people:

- Past trauma history
- Past experiences of bullying
- A caring empathic personality
- Poor coping strategies
- Low level of support

### How to shield yourself:

- Maintain professional distance at work
- Know your employers’ processes
- Build your own protective shield
- Be willing to walk away

*Are needing assistance with a toxic workplace issue?*

**Contact us at:**

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