

Stress and Bullying Workshop

Health toolkit explained

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Presentation will briefly cover

- Work-related stress – theory
- Workplace Bullying – background and theory
- Case studies – bullying, stress, 'other'.
- Legal issues

Work-Related Stress (WRS)

- Stress is a psychological/physiological state
 - Psychological – how?
 - Physiological - how?
- Work – ‘in the course of employment’
 - Not just core function but while engaged in paid activity
- Work-related – defined as caused or made worse by
- So, WRS is a mental change accompanied by biological changes which are negative, on-going, threatening to our health and which are directly associated with our employment situation.

Workplace Bullying

- Task Force – 2001 – defined it as `repeated...inappropriate (to the situation) actions.
- Adjustment in working conditions not bullying
- Bullying involves relating – speaking, doing, directly to the person and indirectly to them and to others about them
- Subjective – how I interpret what is done or said.
- Objective – were those words said or not, were those actions done or not.
- Crucial for your workplace– ensure people get along well enough to do the job/ not dread coming to work.

Case 1 Bullying Case

- Complaint from Paula about treatment by Maeve
- What happened?
- 3 things
 - Maeve (manager) queried her arrival time at meeting
 - Maeve stopped her access to monthly dept meeting
 - Maeve stopped overtime payments for out of hours
 - Doctor certified that Paula out sick due to stress
- What do you do as employer?

Case 1- General

- Assess complaint from Paula –is it verbal, direct to you or through 3rd party, in writing?
- Paula felt threatened, undermined, worse to come? Wanted to highlight her plight - safeguarding
- Reaction - ensure managers/supervisors know that once 'bullying' is complained, a reasoned reaction is made.
- Why?
 - To prevent your exposure/prevent this bullying/other bullying
 - To ensure appropriate behaviour is seen to be done
 - Radox!

Case 2 Robert Vs Mick

- Bullied over period of time, 14 incidents, broad spectrum – direct speech, isolation, spreading rumour, undermining.
- Written complaint – what are the steps?
 - Read/assess/analyse - >meet ..assess facts/aim..radox
 - Informal /formal ->process..COP/Methodology/records
- Huge, over-arching difference is approach/method of working- roles/methods needing clarification.
- Informal- (Advise Mick) Meet re on-going issues, conflict, problems – set tone/issues/future aims)
- Leadership – set up and agree process for work/plan and agree/monitor/meet/review.

Case 4 Stressed Worker

- Complaint from sales executive – targets impossible, area too big, no backup, product not available, isolated.
- Complaint indicates 'stress'.
 - Is there medical cert?/ how long on-going?/How long in position?
 - What recruitment process in place?
- Management response has to be appropriate -questions to ask
 - Is the work what that person was recruited for
 - Are others able for that target level?
 - Has geographical area changed?
 - What does line manager indicate? – any other issues?
 - Is there a risk assessment needed?
- Response – 1 – indiv..support sht term/coping abilities?
- Response – 2 – job..change aspects of it if unreasonable

Legal

- Complaints re behaviour -S. 8 and 8 (2) b `improper behaviour at work..health and safety fall-out
- Risk Assessment S 19 and 20 – and vulnerable employee(s)
- Legal need to act reasonably.
- Employees must
 - Tell you
 - Tell you what it is (causal agent)
 - Tell you how it is (affects)
 - It must be directly cause effect relationship
 - Must be unreasonable of you.

Summary

- Psychosocial Hazards in workplace concern mental wellbeing and mental processes
- Can affect all workers..and differently
- Risk assessments must take account of individual factors and must include psychosocial issues
- Process is as important as policy – all hinged on communication – brief record
- Backup are COPs, Act, laws, RCs etc
- Most employees don't seek out conflict/stress!