

## Unit 7

**1** Read the article about bullying in the workplace quickly and match the people's names (1–6) with the types of company/institution they represent (a–e). Two people work for the same type of company/institution.

- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Amy Edmondson      | a Parliament                   |
| 2 Laura Cox          | b Consulting firm              |
| 3 Linda Aiello       | c Technology company           |
| 4 Emilie Colker      | d Design company               |
| 5 Wim Vandekerckhove | e Higher education institution |
| 6 Wendy Addison      |                                |

**2** Read the article again and answer the questions.

- Why did nurses make fewer mistakes even though they didn't have very positive feelings about their workplace?
- What problem does Susan Fowler's case illustrate?
- What aspect of people's achievements should be analysed before they are promoted to managerial positions?
- Why are 360-degree-style appraisals sometimes unreliable?
- What kind of training is recommended to help workers deal with bullying?

**3** Read the definitions of verbs that can be examples of bullying. Then find a verb in the article for each definition. The first letters have been given to help you.

- to make someone or something seem small or unimportant – b\_\_\_\_\_
- to describe someone or something as a very bad type of person or thing, often unfairly – b\_\_\_\_\_ (somebody as a troublemaker)
- to make someone's life unpleasant, for example by frequently saying offensive things to them or threatening them – h\_\_\_\_\_
- to make someone feel ashamed or stupid, especially when other people are present – h\_\_\_\_\_
- to refuse to accept someone as a member of a group – o\_\_\_\_\_

**4** Find the nouns (1–5) in the article and decide which of them is not a person. Then match them with the definitions (a–e).

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 whistleblower | a the quality of being honest and telling the truth, even when the truth may be unpleasant or embarrassing                         |
| 2 candour       | b an insulting word for someone who has a low rank – often used humorously   |
| 3 underling     | c someone working for an organisation who tells the authorities that people there are doing something illegal, dishonest, or wrong |
| 4 high-flier    | d someone who watches what is happening without taking part  |
| 5 bystander     | e someone who is extremely successful in their job   |

**5A** Complete the phrasal verbs with a word or phrase in the box. Then find the verbs in the text.

out to up up to

- 1 pander \_\_\_\_\_ 2 root \_\_\_\_\_ 3 dry \_\_\_\_\_ 4 kiss \_\_\_\_\_

**5B** Match the phrasal verbs in Exercise 5A with the definitions (a–d).

- to come to an end (e.g. of a supply)
- to try to please someone in order to get them to do something for you
- to find out where a particular kind of problem exists in order to get rid of it
- to give someone anything they want in order to please them, even if it seems unreasonable or unnecessary

**6** Choose the correct option in *italics* to complete the sentences.

- As a manager, don't be afraid to speak openly to your team about their performance – always discuss it with them with *underling* / *candour*.
- Our competitors have paid out significant sums to silence would-be *whistleblowers* / *high-fliers*.
- Instead of boosting her employees' morale, she tends to speak to them in a way that *harasses* / *belittles* their importance.
- If the prime minister doesn't intervene, foreign investment may *dry up* / *root out*.
- We can't create an ideal customer for our products; all we can do is *pander* / *bystander* to the customers we have.

# Nurture a workforce that values ideas and contributions

## Banish workplace bullying and strengthen your organisation

While investigating the relationship between nursing performance and team working, Harvard academic Amy Edmondson made a curious discovery. Her data showed that the lower a team's morale, the fewer errors its nurses made.

That was surprising – until the penny dropped. Nurses who were constantly criticised and belittled by managers had merely learnt to hide mistakes.

That discovery in the 1990s, which Professor Edmondson describes in a new book *The Fearless Organization*, prompted her research into 'psychological safety'. When workplaces are ruled by fear, she says, workers stop learning, innovation dries up and pandering to power replaces candour and useful debate.

Organisations may be aware of the damage caused by bullying, but it is hard to root out. Whistleblowers regularly report difficulties in highlighting problems, while a new study by City & Guilds Group, which promotes skills in the UK workforce, reveals that bullying is widespread. The research found that 52 per cent of UK staff employed by large global organisations have encountered bullying.

Many organisations publish dignity and respect policies. Yet, as an independent inquiry into bullying and harassment of House of Commons staff highlighted last year, policies are worth little without institutional commitment. The UK report, led by Dame Laura Cox, said that people remain silent because they fear being 'disbelieved', 'ostracised' and 'branded a 'troublemaker'.

They may also lack faith in the reporting process and doubt the organisation's willingness to act, especially if the bully or abuser is considered a high-flier. That was Uber engineer Susan Fowler's experience after she reported her manager to HR for alleged sexual harassment.

Taking action over managers who humiliate or harass others sends a message to the whole organisation. It is also

a reminder to selection panels to pay heed to the character of those they promote into management.

For some organisations that may mean looking at how star performers achieve their success, says Linda Aiello, who heads international HR at Salesforce, the U.S. technology company. 'As [people] go through the organisation, "the how" and the behaviours that surround [achievement] become more and more important.'

So-called 360-degree-style appraisals that gather feedback from team-mates and juniors should in theory stop the rise of colleagues who kiss up to superiors and kick down underlings. Yet allegations by former Facebook employees that staff forge opportunistic friendships around appraisal time, highlight that such practices can be gamed.

Emilie Colker, executive director at international design company Ideo, recommends collecting feedback continuously, not just at bonus time, and noting who co-workers want to work with on their projects. Over time it becomes apparent that 'certain people are asked for a lot'.

At the same time, Wim Vandekerckhove, reader in business ethics at the University of Greenwich, recommends systematically recording complaints and concerns. 'If a pattern becomes visible it may be that the manager needs an additional skill, or it may be that being a manager isn't for them.'

To build a high-achieving culture based on teamwork, Ideo emphasises via statements and promotion policies that employees' success will also depend on helping others. 'Even if you're a rock star you still won't progress unless you're making other people successful,' Ms Colker says.

Employers can help teach workers how to challenge mistreatment, says Wendy Addison, founder of consultancy SpeakOut SpeakUp. 'Bystander training', for instance, teaches how to be an ally when others need help, and how to ask co-workers for back-up.