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## August 2011 *LifeSolutions* Corner

**“I am really tired of being put down by one of my co-workers. She calls me “the newbie,” and several times I’ve overheard her call me “the dumb newbie.” She refuses to answer my questions or rolls her eyes, implying that my question is stupid. She often says I should have known the answer. I thought only kids were bullied on playgrounds! I hate coming to work anymore. I actually called off one day when I knew I’d have to work with her. Any advice on how I can handle this? I like my job and don’t want to quit.”**

Unfortunately, bullies are one thing both playgrounds and workplaces have in common! You are experiencing the stress that workplace bullying can cause. Bullying in the workplace is more than just the occasional rude remark. It is more than “bad manners.” It is a pattern of behavior that serves to put down, embarrass, or disempower another person. This is *not* acceptable workplace behavior!

What can you do? Here are some choices to consider:

- ◆ **Talk to a colleague you trust**, someone who can be supportive. Your colleague may offer some examples of how she or he dealt with a bully and may be able to help you think more clearly about responding.
  - Don’t be deterred from doing something if you hear, “Oh, that’s just the way she is.” Again this behavior should not be tolerated! You have the right to work without being bullied.
- ◆ **Talk with the bully in a private place — if you feel safe and if you feel you can do this in a calm, matter-of-fact manner.**
  - Know that you’re not the problem — you didn’t invite this abuse or cause it to happen.
    - Keep that in mind while you’re talking to the bully.
  - Describe the behaviors that you want the bully to stop. Give specific, detailed examples.
    - You may want to keep a diary of incidents to help you prepare for this meeting.
- ◆ **You could share a few of the 30 Dignity & Respect tips** employees created 2 years ago.
  - Some relevant examples might be: “Be a relationship builder.” “Communicate respectfully.” “Remember, we all make mistakes.” This puts your discussion in a bigger frame that may help to keep the discussion calm.
- ◆ **Go to your supervisor** with the details and specifics of this bullying behavior and ask for help.
  - Tell your supervisor any steps you have already taken to address the problem.
  - Your supervisor can provide support and develop a plan of action to address the bully’s behavior and protect you from retaliation.
- ◆ **Go to Human Resources.** They can discuss options with you and outline how they can support you in dealing with this situation. (Don’t forget to take your incident documentation to the meeting.)

And as always, call or come to *LifeSolutions*. We’re here to support you as you consider all of your choices for responding to the bully’s difficult behavior. We listen, provide encouragement, and assist you to come up with a plan that feels comfortable for you. Call us today at **1.800.647.3327**.

In addition, you can find information about bullying on our website at [www.lifesolutionsforyou.com](http://www.lifesolutionsforyou.com). Click on the *WorkLife* portal, enter your company code and type “bullying in the workplace” in the Site Search function.

Nothing in this information is a substitute for following your company policies related to information covered here.

