

Have You Ever Been a Target of Weight Bias?

What should you do if you feel you have been treated unfairly because of your weight by a co-worker or supervisor?

If you have experienced inappropriate negative attitudes, verbal comments, or other unfair actions due to your weight by someone in your workplace, there are several options to consider.

1. You may want to start by checking to see if your place of work has a workplace bullying policy and complaint procedure. This may be available in company handouts to new employees, on webpages, newsletters or notice boards.
2. Speak to someone at work:
 - a. If you feel victimized by your co-workers, and feel comfortable doing so, bring your problem up with a supervisor.
 - b. If your supervisor is the person treating you unfairly, or you do not feel comfortable speaking to a superior, there may be someone available through work, such as a Human Resources Officer or a Union Official, that you can seek advice from.
 - c. Depending on the situation that you experienced, you may also consider approaching your colleague to express that your feelings were hurt by his/her comments or actions.
 - d. If you choose one of these options, you may want to first write down the events that occurred and your feelings or concerns, so that you can clearly express yourself when having this conversation.
3. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to anyone at work, or if you feel like you need additional support, try talking to a friend or family member about the incident. It can be very helpful to talk through a painful situation with someone you trust and who cares about you. Having support from a family member or friend can help you cope with the negative event and help you move on.

Other forms of support may be available to you, which may be especially helpful if you feel down, depressed, or upset following the encounter. You may want to seek support from a psychologist or social worker, who can talk to you about your feelings and help you identify healthy strategies to cope with the situation. You may also consider joining a support group with other individuals with

overweight. It can be helpful to talk to others who may have experienced stigma in their own lives.

Some Helpful Resources

1. **The Workplace Bullying Institute** – a website with good resources for targets of bullying as well as employers and unions.
<http://www.workplacebullying.org/>
2. **No Workplace Bullies** – a website with numerous resources for targets and employers, including research articles, podcasts and webinars.
<http://www.noworkplacebullies.com>
3. **Bullying Statistics** – This organization has a page of useful statistics about workplace bullying.
<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/workplace-bullying.html>
4. **Bully Busters** - a campaign against workplace bullying that coordinates national legislative initiatives to stop workplace bullying and also provides education and action strategies for bullied individuals.
<http://www.bullybusters.org/>