

## Addressing Bullying and Abusive Conduct in the Workplace

### Definition

**Bullying** is a form of conduct that is abusive and unjustified by UCSF's legitimate business/educational interests. Bullying is defined as behavior of an individual and/or group of individuals that a reasonable person would find hostile, offensive, oppressive and/or humiliating. A single act shall not constitute bullying, unless especially severe or egregious.

- Spreading malicious rumors and misinformation
- Teasing and practical jokes
- Belittling, humiliating, degrading language
- Circulating embarrassing photos
- Name calling, insults, epithets
- Yelling and screaming
- Isolating, excluding, or marginalizing others
- Undermining and sabotage performance
- Interference with personal property
- Unwarranted physical contact

### Be PROACTIVE before abusive conduct occurs

**Raise awareness** of the importance of fostering a respectful workplace.

- Identify and be mindful of your own unconscious biases.
- Have conversations at work about shared values.
- Establish workplace norms for respectful behaviors.
- Create a plan for handling abusive conduct when/if it occurs.
- Bring **respectful behavior** to your workplace.
- Say hello and goodbye to everyone.
- Offer feedback.
- Ask for help sooner rather than later.

### If you are a MANAGER/SUPERVISOR

**Intervene.**

Step 1 - Acknowledge the impact of the problem.

*"I've received several complaints about your behavior and this cannot continue."*

Step 2 - Document patterns and set consequences.

Step 3 - Offer help, support, and coaching.

- Avoid rationalizing or minimizing.  
*"Nobody's perfect." or "That's just how (Coworker) is."  
"Don't take it personally." or "You're overthinking this."*

## If you WITNESS abusive conduct

Be an **active bystander**. An active bystander will:

- Use the three Ds – Direct, Distract, or Delegate.
- Speak up using “I” statements.  
*“I feel uncomfortable when I hear you yell at (Coworker).”*
- Focus on the impact of abusive conduct.  
*“I know it’s not your intention, but I’ve noticed your words are making others feel unsafe.”*
- Offer support.  
*“I saw what happened. How are you doing?”*
- Document. Take notes and keep records.

## If you EXPERIENCE abusive conduct

**Document** your experiences.

- Make a plan.
- Keep a record.  
*Who, What, When, Where*
- Tell someone.  
**Anyone** may report bullying/abusive conduct to the [Whistleblower Hotline](#) at 415-476-3851 or [EthicsPoint](#) at 1-800-403-4744. Reports to the Whistleblower Hotline or EthicsPoint may remain anonymous.

For specific concerns regarding:

- *Intimidation, Threats, or Acts of Violence*: [UCPD](#) (9-911 or 415-476-6911) or [FSAP](#) (415-476-8279), ask to speak with a member of the [Threat Management Team](#)
- *Sexual Harassment/Violence or Workplace Discrimination*: [Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#)
- *Faculty and Non-Faculty Academics*: Department Chair or Division Director
- *Staff*: [ELR@ucsf.edu](mailto:ELR@ucsf.edu) or via phone at 415-353-4012 or 415-353-4107
- *Students*: [Student Life’s](#) Student Conduct Officer at 415-502-3302
- *UCSF Community Members*: Manager on duty
- *Patients and/or Family Members*: Manager on site or [Patient Relations](#)

Practice **self-care**.

- [Faculty Staff Assistance Program \(FSAP\)](#)
- [Student Health and Counseling Services](#)
- [Spiritual Care Services](#)
- Healthcare provider

## If you are ACCUSED of abusive conduct

Be **accountable** for your own behavior. If you are accused of abusive conduct:

- Stay open and curious.  
*“What are you noticing about my behavior that feels harmful?”*
- Work to understand your triggers.
- Consider an apology.
- Seek training, guidance, and support.

UCSF Policy 150-27: Violence and Bullying: <https://policies.ucsf.edu/policy/150-27>