

Guidance for managers and HR Professionals

by Elaine Douglas

Quite often managers 'feel' that things are not right in an organization, but can not necessarily put their finger on what is wrong. There may be specific unpleasant incidents, such as members of staff being difficult or clashing with others – these are obvious and tangible signs. However, a lot of the time there are no blatant incidents, it is more a malaise or pervading sickness that characterizes an unhealthy organization. Identifying where it comes from or who is responsible is almost like trying to knit fog.

When this is the case, people find it very difficult to tackle the situation. They may well have problems in convincing senior management that there is indeed a problem because the evidence is thin or woolly, or examples of bad behaviour seem trivial and inconsequential.

The first thing to do is to trust your instinct. If you feel that things are not right then your judgement is probably correct. Gut instinct isn't something that is plucked out of thin air, it is an accumulation of past experiences and observations. In other words, you might not as yet be able to identify what is wrong, but you know something is.

The second course of action is to examine the situation in a more objective and analytical way. This is the search for evidence to support your hunch.

Managers have a responsibility to tackle bullying on two fronts. They must feel confident that they can deal with someone who makes a complaint about bullying in a professional, sensitive and objective manner; and they must be vigilant when it comes to identifying bullying behaviours and be able to know what to do if they occur. In other words, managers need to take both a reactive and preventative approach.

Earlier chapters have hopefully given some insight into why bullying occurs, but we need to look more specifically at what behaviours or traits managers need to look out for.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A DEPARTMENT/SECTION

In a department/section, the signs that bullying may be occurring are:

- Low morale, lack of team spirit.
- A general air of unpleasantness – these symptoms may develop if the department has recently had a change of leadership.
- Irritability, touchiness and lack of patience especially over minor issues – again, is this recent or long standing?
- Mistrust and suspicion between colleagues – this is especially significant if they used to be willing and helpful.
- Selfishness – people trying to protect themselves.
- Staff leaving or requesting transfers or sideways moves. Reasons given may seem plausible, as people are unwilling to admit that they are being bullied.
- People moving to a job which is below their capabilities – they may be looking for breathing space or have had their confidence undermined.
- Are people always watching their backs? Does hypersensitivity or hypervigilance pervade?

HOW TO SPOT A VICTIM OF BULLYING

The following are signs of a victim of bullying:

- Loss of self-confidence in someone who has always come across as capable and responsible.
- Physiological and psychological symptoms (often identified as stress related), including tearfulness, anxiety, depression, lack of motivation, illness and inability to sleep or eat properly. If an individual has not exhibited these symptoms before, then there is a problem.
- Family problems – especially with a partner, but could also be with children, stemming from changes in behaviour patterns and inability to cope.
- Behaviour which is out of character – this is easier when you have known a person well or for a long time.
- Phrases such as ‘What’s the point?’, ‘I don’t care’, ‘Things will never change’, ‘You can’t win’.
- Increasing use of abusive language stemming from anger, frustration and resentment of the situation.
- Unexplained absences from work and while at work.
- Mistakes, errors and poor performance in someone who is usually reliable.
- Apathy and dejection.

HOW TO SPOT A BULLY

The following are signs of a bully at work:

- Pointing out other people’s mistakes, quite often in public, while minimizing their own.
- Shouting, swearing at, abusing staff for trivialities in front of colleagues – or in private.
- Disregarding people’s rights, for example denying leave entitlement on flimsy grounds (or none at all), pressuring people to work long hours or return to work prematurely when off sick, setting unrealistic objectives and targets, changing

the goalposts.

- Looking out for themselves at the expense of others.
- Scapegoating individuals – constant blame, fault finding and nit-picking.
- Sending people to Coventry, ignoring them or ‘tutting’ when they enter the room.
- Selective memory – only recalling information and facts that are useful to themselves or show them in a good light.
- Untrustworthiness – making promises that aren’t kept, saying one thing and doing something else, setting others up to fail.
- Poor judgement – being unable to take a balanced view on issues.
- Poor listening skills, usually thinking through what they want to say to cover their tracks – disregarding the thoughts and feelings of others.
- Difficulty in acknowledging and valuing positive traits in others – jealousy of their achievements or circumstances.
- Finding it hard to say ‘thank you’ and exchange pleasantries with people (unless used as a manipulative tool).
- Taking credit for the work of others – inflating their achievements to bolster their ego while putting others down.
- A poor delegator, but will have no compunction about dumping work on others – often with unrealistic expectations and time frames.
- Will find it hard to take criticism, even if it’s constructive and will see it as a personal sleight or affront. Can be full of their own self-importance.
- Will find it hard to admit when they’re in the wrong and will not back down or retract what they have said or done.
- Usually a poor communicator with limited social skills. However, some bullies can be very smooth and plausible and extremely skilled at twisting things round to their advantage.

This is not an exhaustive list, but gives an indication of what to look out for and to identify specifics rather than generalities.

WHAT STEPS TO TAKE TO SORT THINGS OUT

A good starting point is to introduce an anti-bullying policy (as discussed earlier), making sure that there is commitment from senior management. Following the procedures and guidelines in Chapters 2 and 3 should help you to do this. Similarly, the surveys and questionnaires in the toolkit will give you the baseline data you need to strengthen the case for taking this action. If tackled carefully and thoroughly, the message given will be that the company/organization values its employees.

In addition to an anti-bullying policy there are three key areas which need addressing: training, support systems and appraisals. These require a top down/ bottom up approach in that they need to be tackled at an organizational, group and individual level.

Training and support systems

Staff should be aware of what the organization is doing to combat bullying. This can be done through a programme of awareness raising seminars and workshops. However, training should not just focus on the issues of bullying per se, it should be much broader and more comprehensive. Bullies often lack people management

skills and have not been trained in how to get the best from people. Their own interpersonal and communication skills are often weak, and they rely on methods which get results in the short term rather than learning more effective strategies which take into consideration the long-term view as well.

In a similar vein those who are victims of bullying often do not have the skills to deal with it. They may behave passively rather than assertively, or find it difficult to regain their confidence and self-esteem. They may have a misguided view of what good management is and could be inadvertently perpetuating the problem.

When people are aware of alternative ways of doing things, they are less likely to rely on what they perceive as 'effective strategies'.

In some ways the term 'training' is inadequate and misleading as it implies a narrow interpretation of what is actually 'learning'. When applied to technical skills it is useful, but when looking at ways to change behaviour, training needs to approach the issue from a wider perspective.

There are a number of approaches to learning and people development which do not solely rely on 'classroom' activities. In fact the traditional model of an intensive two- or three-day course has been proven to be only marginally effective, as what is learned in the training room does not necessarily transfer to the workplace.

An holistic model is needed, that is, a programme which evolves over time and which uses a series or combination of learning and support methods. Managers should consider using some or indeed all of the following.

Experiential workshops

In-house workshops promote group identity and cohesion and can offer a safe environment in which to tackle difficult and complex issues. A word of warning, however! A skilled facilitator will be needed who is familiar with group dynamics and can manage diversity and potential conflict.

The content of such workshops may vary but should contain a strong element of the importance of good interpersonal skills and communication. In some organizations these are seen as 'soft skills' and by inference are perceived as being less important than, for example, product knowledge. However, if an organization has problems with bullying or is supporting (albeit unwittingly) a negative culture, it is imperative that these subjects are tackled.

One-to-one coaching

Coaching per se is not necessarily a means to help an individual tackle bullying. However, if an individual has, for example, poor time management, is disorganized or has problems being assertive with colleagues, coaching on a one-to-one basis is a useful way to improve work competencies and reduce pressure.

This is usually undertaken by the line manager or sometimes an HR professional. Good coaching sessions focus on individual needs by establishing a personal development plan which addresses two or three development goals. It is an enabling process in that it empowers the individual to take control of the situation.

One-to-one mentoring

In a sense this is similar to coaching, but is seen as a process which supports learning and development in the individual's long-term career and possibly external

influences. It is an empathic and supportive relationship and is usually taken on by a senior member of staff who is not the individual's line manager. In a mentoring situation it may transpire that someone is not suited to a particular environment, for example high pressured sales. A mentor can then help the individual to look at possible alternatives. Someone who is being bullied in one situation might find that they would cope better in a different work environment entirely.

Psychometric tests

Psychometric tests analyse behaviour, personality and work styles. They are helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses and can be used as a starting point for individual or group work.

One-to-one counselling

This can focus on different levels, from providing a listening ear or a sounding-board, to tackling difficult and complex attitudes and behaviours. As part of the learning process it can be a very valuable tool. Some organizations offer employee assistance programmes (EAPs) which either give support over the telephone or face to face. If counsellors are used to support victims of bullying, or individuals who bully, they must be qualified and experienced. If staff within an organization take on a counselling role they must be aware of their own limitations and be prepared to refer to a specialist if necessary.

Work shadowing

Working alongside others can give individuals valuable insight into what their job entails. Quite often managers become too far removed from the nitty gritty of what happens on a daily basis and are out of touch. Stepping into the shoes of a junior member of staff can help alleviate pressure bullying as the realization dawns that expectations are unrealistic.

Buddy system

A 'buddy' system can be very useful for new staff or for someone who moves to a different department or takes on a new role. Similarly, having someone as a point of reference can prevent problems such as bullying happening in the first place. The 'buddy' is not necessarily a manager or supervisor (in fact in some ways it is better if they are not). Their job is more of a befriender and helper. This system can help the new person to settle in more quickly and give them someone to turn to if there are problems. Buddies need to be selected carefully in that they should be staff who have energy and enthusiasm. There is little value in using someone who is cynical and demotivated. The amount of time that the two spend together will vary from organization to organization, but it is helpful to set aside a specific time on a regular basis. Initially this could be weekly, or even daily, but will pan out to less intensive contact after a few weeks. It can be done informally over a coffee or lunch break which reinforces the parity of the relationship rather than the notion of expert and novice.

Focus groups

These can be convened for a number of purposes, for example examining specific work processes or looking into the feasibility of introducing new techniques or expanding the business. In the context of bullying, focus groups can look at attitudes in the organization or analyse the culture of a company or even a department. They can report findings to senior managers and/or put together recommendations. The purpose of the group will dictate its composition. In the context of using a focus group to help promote a positive culture within an

organization, it is useful to bear a few things in mind:

- 1 Have a clear set of goals. People need to understand what they are doing, why and by when.
- 2 Consider using a cross-section of levels within the organization, for example vertical grouping, or select staff from different departments.
- 3 Research indicates that group identity is enhanced when members have a purpose and meet frequently.
- 4 What will be the outcome? Will this be a consultative group which puts forward a series of recommendations, or will there be some decision-making element?
- 5 Will there be a designated leader or a division of responsibilities with a facilitator?
- 6 If using a focus group, spend some time researching the literature on group dynamics and processes. This will ensure that things run smoothly and potential pitfalls are recognized early on.

Using a focus group within an organization can be a very powerful tool. It involves and empowers staff from different levels and departments, and can help to break down any 'them and us' divisions.

The brief of the group should not only be clear, but be worthwhile. In other words whatever issue the group is looking into should have value and relevance, otherwise it will be perceived as shallow and superficial. This will do more harm than good. It should be taken seriously by the ultimate decision-makers in the organization, in the sense that something should happen as a result of the work that has been done. Expectations will be raised, and if nothing comes of it morale and enthusiasm will flag.

Appraisals

Many organizations have appraisal systems, but not all are useful and productive. Many companies and institutions regard their appraisal systems as being a nuisance, a waste of time and quite often counter productive. It is often a stick that is used to drive its employees, and although it purports to be a two-way process between appraiser and appraisee, this is not always the case.

Perhaps the first point that needs consideration is that an appraisal system which is only used annually usually has little impact. Comments that were made twelve months previously, or goals or targets that are set without any monitoring or evaluation, become meaningless. Unfortunately many of us have been through this process and it colours our judgement. If an informal appraisal interview takes place annually then it must be followed up with regular meetings between the manager and the employee. This should be done at least monthly when the situation can be reviewed, amendments made and new targets set. Regular contact can enhance the relationship between the manager and his or her staff.

If a manager has a large number of employees directly under him or her, then this ongoing process could be delegated to supervisors or team leaders. They can then report back perhaps on a quarterly basis. If the manager feels that the employee is reasonably competent in a number of areas, and yet reports from the supervisor suggest otherwise, there could be cause for investigating matters further.

With any appraisal process there must be uniformity and consistency. This means that anyone taking on the role of appraiser should receive training in the appropriate skills. In one organization I know of, one of the managers never rated

anyone above a 'B' grade (out of A to D). This was because he felt that not only could no one be perfect, but if the employee was in a junior grade it meant that they still had some way to go in terms of experience and advancement. In effect he was not rating the job itself, but placing the employee on a level according to the rank of the job. His colleagues worked differently, giving top grades if they felt the individual deserved it – within the job that they were being appraised for. Not surprisingly this created all sorts of problems within the organization, particularly as the manager concerned was the head of one of the larger departments.

Another important issue worth raising is the fact that most appraisal systems are manager/subordinate based. They rely on a more senior and/or experienced member of staff making a judgement about a junior member of staff. In some instances the junior can agree or disagree with the assessment, and grades or ratings may be changed accordingly, but there still remains this imbalance in terms of power. Over the last five to ten years there have been moves to introduce a more comprehensive system of appraisal. This is widely referred to and usually known as 'multi-rater' or '360 degree' appraisal.

In essence, what this means is that an individual is assessed or rated not only by their boss, but by their peers and juniors. There is also an element of ipsative (or self-) assessment. Anyone interested in implementing such a system would be well advised to look carefully at how it can be done. As with most things there are pros and cons (see Table 4.1).

The benefits of a 360 degree appraisal system probably outweigh the difficulties, especially when trying to eradicate bullying from an organization. It can help to overcome the thorny problem of how to tackle senior personnel who are bullies, but who have in a sense been allowed to carry on because there is no effective system of accountability.

If a bully is identified through this process, it will not be an easy task to get them to admit that their behaviour leaves a lot to be desired. There may well be surprise (whether genuine or feigned), denial and anger. Whoever takes on the role of working with such an individual, needs to be prepared for this.

Some useful pointers

The following may be useful in dealing with someone who uses bullying tactics. The information gleaned from the appraisal ratings of others should be taken as the basis for the discussion.

It is always easier to use data gathered from an assessment to get your point across, rather than making a comment yourself (the same applies when giving feedback from psychometric tests). In other words, it is better to say:

'The results of this appraisal seem to suggest that you have some difficulties with (delegating, setting realistic goals, communicating with others) etc.'

than

'You have a problem with ...'

Depersonalizing the feedback is easier for the person giving it, and less threatening for the individual receiving it. As a rule of thumb in any feedback situation, the following format should be used:

Table 4.1 Pros and cons of 360 degree appraisals

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives a much more comprehensive picture of an individual in a number of roles (boss, colleague, subordinate). • Identifies, for example, whether a manager is skilled at managing his staff or just gives that impression to his boss. • Applies to all staff. The MD or directors are not exempt, and their leadership/management styles are examined. • Identifies team players (or not as the case may be). • Can form the basis of more specific and targeted training and development. • Ratings are done anonymously (from junior ranks especially), so that people can speak freely. • More objective analysis than usual appraisal system – especially if external consultants are involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be very threatening to individuals, particularly senior levels who may not have been appraised for some time. • Needs to be thought through very carefully and as a development of the existing system. From no appraisals to 360 degree may be too much of a quantum leap. • External consultants may have to be employed to facilitate the process initially. • Can pinpoint specific behaviours which will need to be modified or developed, and therefore is not for those who do not intend to do anything. • More time-consuming than usual system, a lot of information is generated, which might prove to be unwieldy. • Will raise expectations that something good will come from it – not to be considered unless total commitment is there. • Who will give feedback to the MD? Again, possibly need to consider external professionals as it may not be politic to use

Positive – Negative – Positive

Positive – comment on the good things that have come out of the appraisal. Praise any areas that deserve positive comments – even bullies have their good points! It may be that the individual works very hard (albeit possibly not constructively) and puts in some long hours. Acknowledge the commitment.

Negative – here is the meat of the problem. Again, the results of the appraisal should be used to focus on areas of concern. 'The results of this appraisal seem to indicate ...' There may be many areas that the individual needs to work on, but you should try and focus on two or three general issues at this stage, for example communication, interpersonal skills, personal organization. It is not helpful to reel off a whole list of misdemeanours as you are likely to be met with resistance and non-compliance. You may well find this anyway, but you need to try and minimize the possibility. The purpose of this feedback is to move forward, not 'beat someone up'.

Take one of the points and identify a couple of behaviours that you can get the individual to look at, for example:

Communication

- 1 You seem to find it hard to tell people when they have done well at something.
- 2 You seem to be perceived as being rather distant and not easy to approach.

Please note that the original comments behind these two points may have been something like this:

- She always finds fault with our work, nothing we do is ever right.
- She's stuck up. She's not interested in us or what we have to cope with, all she

wants is the job doing.

By phrasing your comments in a less emotive way you are more likely to gain acceptance from the individual you are dealing with. If they refuse to accept this analysis they may say something defensive like:

'I don't agree with that at all, it's a load of rubbish. Of course I praise my staff'

or

'Who said that about me? They don't know what they're talking about.'

Keep calm! Make sure that your response is given in such a way that you are not going to get into an argument or heated discussion. The conversation might go something like this:

Interviewer:

'That's interesting, it sounds as if you don't agree with this analysis.'

Individual:

'No I don't, it's not true. All that stuff is distorted. It's only someone else's view, it's not what really happens.'

Interviewer:

'Okay, I take your point that this information is based on the perception of others. Can you give me some examples of when and how you comment on the work of your staff?'

Individual:

'Well, only the other day I told Sarah I was pleased with her work.'

Interviewer:

'That's good. What had she done, and why were you so pleased?'

Individual:

'Oh I can't remember now. It was something to do with getting something done on time – I don't know. That was last week, you know how busy we are, I can't think that far back.'

At this point the interviewer will have a good idea that either the individual is making it up or it did happen, but many moons ago! Asking for clarification or evidence to support their objections usually tells you whether it is real or whether they are trying to bluff their way out of a situation.

Let's continue the conversation ...

Interviewer:

'Right, it looks as though you do try and comment on the good work your staff do. How do you think you can develop that some more? What can you do to ensure that it happens on a regular basis?'

Now you can negotiate some targets. You might want to introduce the idea of

playing up the positive and minimizing the negative since people respond better to positive suggestions. Agree a time frame when you will meet again, making sure the individual is very clear about what you are asking them to do. Write it down and get a copy to them as quickly as possible. Sometimes with resistant behaviours it is helpful to make it into a 'mini' contract, which both parties sign. This is especially useful if the manager is going to do something to help the individual meet their targets.

Remember the acronym SMART (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 SMART objectives
Use these criteria when setting goals.

Specific

S

Measurable
Agreed
Realistic
Achievable

Positive, finish the session on a positive note. There may be something else that you can comment on work wise, or you may want to introduce something unconnected with work. For example, asking about their recent holiday, their children or even if they've seen the latest James Bond film or have been to a new restaurant. This helps to complete the interview on good terms and a positive note.

WORKING WITH A BULLY

If as a manager you are going to work directly with an individual who has been identified as a bully, you need to gauge their ability to engage in any kind of plan of action you may have in mind. There is little point in using any of the material suggested in the toolkit if they are not motivated to change. Unless they are ready to change they will go through the motions, but won't necessarily believe that they have a problem.

There are four levels of readiness that people go through during a successful behaviour change:

- 1 Oblivious – It is not that people are unwilling to look for solutions, they just don't see that there's a problem in the first place. They deny there is any need to change and resist any attempts to help them.
- 2 Contemplation – People at this stage begin to see that they need to change and have begun to think about how they might go about it. They will think about it and talk about it, but the motivation to actually do anything is half-hearted.
- 3 Preparation – In this stage people start to focus on finding new and better ways

to improve on a situation and are eager to generate solutions. Interestingly some individuals will be pushed into this state of readiness by a dramatic event. This might be a crisis in their personal lives, a disaster at work or the threat of losing their job. This is the time for putting together a specific and detailed plan of action.

- 4 Action – This is when visible change begins to take place. Individuals will have ‘bought into’ the plan and will start to change their thought patterns and behaviour.

It is worth pointing out that when working with a bully it might need something as dramatic as the real possibility that the individual could be sidelined into another department, lose their status, be offered a job with less responsibility and power or even face the threat of being dismissed, unless they change. This might sound harsh, but in essence the individual concerned is being given the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions – or face the consequences. They do have a choice.

However, if it becomes apparent that this is the only avenue open to you as a manager, the whole situation must be handled with tact and sensitivity. If threats are made, for example ‘If you don’t change you’re going to lose your job’, then your behaviour becomes no better than that of the bully.

HELPING THE VICTIMS OF BULLYING

The appraisal system can identify the victims of bullying in much the same way as it highlights the existence of bullies. However, victims of bullying can be identified in other ways such as by the individual approaching a manager directly (always assuming that their manager is not the source of the problem), through a third party (for example, a colleague or supervisor) or by confiding in someone they trust.

Assuming that as a manager you are part of the solution and not the problem, there are a number of things you can do to help the victims of bullying:

- 1 Please take what the individual says seriously. Bullying is emotional and sometimes physical abuse. It thrives in environments where people choose to ignore what is going on, or avoid getting involved. It relies on the victim keeping quiet (much the same as sexual abuse continues because of fear and shame), and not confronting what is going on. Remember also that bullying cuts across all levels within an organization. It can emanate from the managing director or even the office junior. Although it is more likely to be an individual in a position of power, this is not necessarily the case. Bullies acquire a following (be a bully or be bullied), but sometimes those in more lowly positions can make someone’s life a misery. Keep an open mind and don’t prejudge, you may not have seen any evidence to support the allegation, but this does not mean it hasn’t happened. Make sure that it is investigated thoroughly and fairly so that those who speak out feel that the problem is being addressed.
- 2 Make sure you allocate sufficient time in a private place with no interruptions for your meeting with the individual. If you cannot see them immediately agree a mutually convenient time to meet as soon as possible.
- 3 An initial interview should not focus on an assessment or analysis of the problem. It is about listening and encouraging the individual to talk and open

up.

- 4 Use counselling techniques in this and subsequent meetings. This means active listening, that is, checking and showing you have understood by paraphrasing, reflecting back and asking for clarification. Make sure you do not 'manage' the situation, by taking control through giving solutions.
- 5 Familiarize yourself with the material in this book that focuses on assessment and analysis. Look at models of behaviour, in particular the transactional analysis model and the PUCA model in Chapter 6. The tools for analysing behaviour, for example the questionnaires and surveys, will also help. These will give you the necessary grounding in understanding why people react as they do to events and situations. It will also help if you are dealing with a bully. Photocopy appropriate material for the individual concerned. Discuss the information with them; ask for their views and opinions. Help individuals to understand that there is nothing 'wrong' with them and it is not their fault. Be careful not to perpetuate the victim mode, you need to be encouraging them to take control of the situation, but with your support. Think of an analogy of scaffolding. It is built around the individual to give them support, you help them to gain strength and confidence and when they can stand alone, the scaffolding is dismantled. You must guard against creating dependency. Your job is to empower, not to take over – however tempting this might be.
- 6 It is more difficult to view bullies as possible victims, especially when their behaviour has caused so much pain and destruction. However, not all bullies are sociopaths with personality disorders. Some will respond to intervention, and will be able to assimilate new behaviours.
- 7 Use the questionnaire in the toolkit which identifies a person's preferred mode of response to threatening and challenging behaviour (see Tool 6). Ask the individual to complete it as honestly as they can, and use the information gained to identify which tools would be appropriate, for example improving confidence, assertiveness or relaxation techniques.
- 8 Work with the individual on a one-to-one basis, going through the material selected from the toolkit to ensure that they understand and feel comfortable with it. Reassure and support them. Never ask anyone to do something they are reluctant to do, look for alternatives and help them to build up their confidence bit by bit.
- 9 Meet with them on a regular basis. Initially this may be weekly, but as they become more confident and start to take control of their situation, it could be fortnightly or monthly.
- 10 Use the SMART technique (see Figure 4.1, page 52) to ensure that they achieve success. When in doubt, start with things that the individual feels can be more readily achieved, even if these are small steps. Once things start to improve, success will breed success.

Psychological debriefing

This is a technique which is used by psychologists and experienced counsellors and has its roots in clinical psychology. When someone has gone through a traumatic experience (trauma being defined here as out of the ordinary and unexpected), a trained psychologist would go through the incident with those involved as quickly as possible after it occurred. This is usually within 48 hours. Large-scale tragedies immediately spring to mind, such as Lockerbie, the King's Cross fire or Hillsborough, but it is a technique that can be used in less dramatic, but no less important or

difficult situations.

If a member of staff is physically assaulted at work or is psychologically intimidated and as a consequence they are shocked, upset and hurt it may be useful to consider debriefing. This can be done in a reasonably straightforward way if the incident involves external clients, but it is a bit trickier if it is an internal problem. You may want to consider an external service provider and using off-site premises to ensure confidentiality and discretion. However, it must be emphasized that psychological debriefing is a very specialized technique and needs to be done by someone who is qualified and experienced. Support may be available through an employee assistance programme (EAP), the health service or private practitioners.

SUMMARY

There are a number of things that managers can do both in a preventative way and in response to a disclosure of bullying.

Although it is possible for a victim of bullying to tackle this on their own, it can be very difficult to do so. The next chapter looks at how this can be done, but even if the victim does confront the bully and wants to sort it out themselves, it can be a nerve-racking experience. If you are a manager and suspect that someone is being bullied or is bullying, it might not be appropriate for you to intervene straight away. Your attentions may not be welcome and you could make the situation worse. It is better to draw people's attention to the fact that there is a resource available to them. A copy of this manual should be available for people to access freely – this may be in a library or resource centre, or in the staff room or rest room. Staff can be reminded of its existence during team meetings and so on, alongside any other material you want them to know about.

At a corporate level you will find more resources for dealing with bullying in your organization in the toolkit. The matrix at the beginning of the toolkit section (see pages 70–72) will help you to work out exactly which tools will be the most appropriate to use, and in what circumstances.