



Am I a Bully? A Self Assessment Tool

Do you ever wonder if you might be a bully? What would you do if you were accused? These questions will assist you with a personal inventory. Self insight is key when it comes to prevention of workplace disruptive behaviours. When we are willing to explore concerns regarding our actions, reactions, and behaviors, we are well on our way to clarity and authentic confidence. Try to keep an open mind as you review each question carefully. Be honest with yourself. Consider asking those who know you best. Those who you can trust to give you honest and constructive feedback. Awareness and personal growth are essential to developing strong skills, and healthy relationships. This self assessment tool is for all employees. It is especially important for organizations to create a cohesive, competent, confident, leadership team. Your leadership style, skills, and responses, set the tone for a healthy work culture. Thanks to neuroplasticity, we now know that negative or disruptive behaviors are usually not hard wired. This means, anyone at any age, can improve their e.g., communication, leadership, conflict management style. Anyone can heal, enhance their skills, and grow. For those diagnosed with a personality disorder, this becomes more complicated, therefore more information and/or resources will be required.

With qualified support and/or self-help tools, there is a variety of options and resources that can help you make positive changes.

- **Do you yell, raise your voice, or swear at other staff members?** How often?
- **Are you able to apologize** (be authentic & accountable), and correct and/or learn from your mistakes?
- **Do you expect your leaders or colleagues to be accountable**, and then avoid being accountable yourself? Do you walk your talk? Practice what you preach?
- **Do you intentionally ignore, dismiss, or exclude other staff members?** Even just a little? If yes, what does this person (people) trigger in you? Are you aware that these actions reflect an insecurity and/or lack of professional skills? If you are a leader, you are a role model. *Your staff is watching you. It is important for you to know that your actions impact the work environment.*
- **Do you make insulting or humiliating comments that embarrass and cause harm** to staff or peers? Stated or implied? *Examples: a) I hate the sound of your voice, b) are you stupid? c) how did you get this job? d) you can always leave if you do not like it here.*
- **Do you talk negatively about your staff behind their backs?** Gossip? *If you are a leader and talk negatively with staff about other staff, knowing that this is unprofessional, you need to ask yourself why you risk your status of employment and reputation in this way. For anyone who gossips and betrays others, we need to ask ourselves, what need does this fill? There is no justification or excuse to ever make gossip acceptable, ok, or normal.*
- **Do you have favorite staff member or members**, and make this obvious to others? Do you ever stop and think about what message you are trying to send to others, and why? Once you understand your trigger, purpose, or goal, you can find more positive, constructive, respectful,



and skillful methods to accomplish a constructive goal. This will prevent a formal complaint against you, and a healthier work environment for all.

- **Have people complained about you?** How often? Are these complaints showing a pattern? What are you willing to do about this?
- **Do others walk on eggshells around you?** Would you know? If yes, are you all right with this? You need to be aware that this is a risk factor, and that this type of fear creates an unsafe, unhealthy work environment. What are you willing to do about this?
- **Does your staff respond confidently in meetings?** Are they free to act like themselves with you? Are certain staff unusually quiet or closed in meetings? Do you notice? Do you prefer it this way? Why? *It will be important to learn the difference between shy and/or introverted staff members versus those who feel harmed e.g., diminished, unsafe, and isolate.*
- **Leaders, do you 'win' discussions with statements like:** "I'm the boss," "I am the owner," or "I am the expert around here". You will need to examine your purpose for using comments that diminish others and shut them down. This is a tactic often used by insecure leaders.
- **Are you known for being overbearing,** dominating, loud, and/or controlling? Have you assessed why you are this way? Have you justified this by saying, 'this is just the way I am'? This is no longer an acceptable excuse. We now have scientific evidence that you can change. Your behaviours are not hard wired. *Why wait until you are forced to be accountable? Avoidance may be a barrier that keeps you stuck in this behaviour. We have safe and supportive remedies for those who are overbearing, dominating, controlling, and avoidant.*
- **Have you ever received feedback** stating that you communicate in passive aggressive ways? Sometimes people have been doing this for years and simply lack insight. It is important for you to self monitor, learn about passive aggressive tendencies, and self correct.
- **Do you use the following examples of negative management tools** e.g., threaten, intimidate, micro-manage, micro-aggressions, or subtle acts of oppression? Would you know? Would you like to know? There are safe, confidential, supportive resources to assist you. *Asking for outside feedback is a sign of strength, authenticity, and confidence.*
- **Do staff members make complaints about you?** Is there any consistency or themes in these complaints? Do you want to make things better for them? Do you care about the impact of your behaviour on staff, the overall work environment, or the organizations clients?
- **If you are a leader, do you know your own leadership style?** How would you define your style? If you cannot explain it in terms of an actual style e.g., democratic, situational, inclusive, then you need to ask yourself, why not? How do you measure effectiveness? Make 'Leading with Emotional Intelligence' your foundation! This will ensure you are self monitoring, self insightful, confident, and aware of your strengths and triggers. *There is a variety of free leadership and conflict management style questionnaires on the web. Continued professional development courses will also be positively powerful!*



- **Are you transparent in your leadership and decisions?** If not, why not? Studies show that employees thrive when their leaders are transparent.
- **If someone rubs you the wrong way**, questions you, or disagrees with you, do you feel resentful? Ever plan to get even e.g., sabotage them? Research shows us that these tactics do happen. These actions are signs of insecurity, a lack of self insight, and a lack of tools or skills, to self regulate. Finding out the answers to why one would react this way means developing confidence, self compassion, and more effective ways to respond.
- **Do you "feel the need" to control** your staff? Would you consider examining why and finding other ways to lead?
- **Do you often feel inadequate?** Do you feel threatened when a staff member or colleague shows skills in areas that you may not feel confident in? *Can you accept that you do not need to be great at everything? That you can take responsibility for your own professional development and improve your own confidence? Praising your staff or peers' knowledge and skill is a sign of strength and confidence. We are all just human. Choose to grow and develop, no one has it all.*
- **Are you part of a clique that dismisses or avoids others?** Does this group talk negatively about others? Is it a closed group? You may want to question why you feel the need to belong to a group that creates negativity and toxicity. *Like minded groups with shared interests will always form; however, they need to be healthy and open to others visiting.*
- **Do you tell your staff, or colleagues that others are talking about them?** Is this under the guise of support? What is your intention? We can tell you that the outcome will always be 'damage to their psychological safety.' Ask yourself, why would I want to do this to someone?

We have experience working with those who have been accused of workplace bullying and harassment. This includes cases that are substantiated, and cases that are malicious. Sometimes cases that are substantiated or unsubstantiated, turn out to be errors made by investigators who for example, lack trauma informed training, are unskilled, or biased. Until we have a professional regulatory body that establishes a basic criterion for investigations, and mandatory trauma informed training for investigators specifically assigned to cases of workplace psychological harassment, and/or psychological violence, unfortunately we will see mistakes being made. With this lack of formally established expectation for investigators, when mistakes are made, we see further harm and wrongdoing. We also see no options or protection for the employee who has been wronged.

Anyone accused will need and deserve support, information, and tools. If you wish to process this further with an objective, experienced professional, call for a confidential, safe, and supportive consultation.



Bravo to anyone who completes this self inventory tool!

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