

Coping with Cyberbullying in the Workplace

Cyberbullying in the workplace is a serious issue which can have significant emotional consequences. In today's digital world, harassment doesn't stop when you leave the office.

For many Australian workers - especially those in frontline roles such as customer service, healthcare, justice or community support - client vulnerability, projection and dissatisfaction can sometimes escalate into online abuse. Social media posts, false reviews, or public shaming campaigns can leave workers feeling anxious, helpless, and exposed.

Recent data highlights the scale of the problem. The eSafety Commissioner reports that **over 50% of Australian adults have experienced online hate or harassment**, with abuse via social media being the most common channel. Globally, a 2023 UNESCO report found that 1 in 3 adults worldwide has experienced cyberbullying, and workplace-related digital harassment is on the rise due to increased online interaction and visibility.

For workers in public-facing roles, this harassment can feel personal and invasive. Social media platforms enable targeted abuse, negative reviews, and defamatory posts that may persist online indefinitely. The psychological impact includes heightened anxiety, disrupted sleep, emotional exhaustion, and withdrawal from both online and professional spaces.

Cyberbullying can impact your mental health, causing stress, sleep issues, loss of confidence, and fear of retaliation. It can also affect team morale, workplace culture, and safety.

Acknowledging the harm is important. What you're experiencing is not "just part of the job." Abuse is never acceptable.

IF THIS HAPPENS TO YOU: WHAT TO DO

- 1. Don't Engage Emotionally Online.** Avoid responding to the person harassing you. Online retaliation often escalates the situation. Keep interactions professional if you must respond, ideally through your workplace's official channels.
- 2. Document Everything.** Take screenshots, save messages, and keep records. This may be needed for internal investigations, legal support, or reporting to platforms.
- 3. Report It Internally.** Speak to your manager, HR, or Converge EAP. Many organisations have social media response protocols to ensure your wellbeing and safety is prioritised.
- 4. Use Platform Tools.** Report abusive content and block the user where possible. Most social platforms have options to remove or hide abusive comments and posts.
- 5. Protect Your Privacy.** Limit personal details available online and in the course of your day to day role. Adjust your social media privacy settings to restrict who can contact or view you.
- 6. Seek Mental Health Support.** Don't underestimate the toll cyberbullying can take. Access Converge EAP. You deserve support that ensures your wellbeing and enables objective assessment of risk, safety and important strategies.
- 7. Ask for Role-Based Protections.** If your role involves regular public interaction, ask whether your workplace has safeguards (such as shared accounts, social media policies, or manager-led responses to complaints).

FINAL THOUGHT

Cyberbullying is not a sign of weakness on your part—it's an abuse of digital platforms. Your emotional safety matters just as much as your physical safety. Speak up, reach out, and know that you are not alone.

If you or a colleague is affected by cyberbullying, contact Converge at **1300 687 327**.



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