October is National Anti-Bullying Month

According to a 2014 Workplace Bullying Institute survey, 37 million U.S. workers reported being subjected to "abusive conduct." What's more, 69% of the bullies are men (commonly in managerial positions) and 60% of the victims are women.

We are all warned about bullies on the playground, but not about bullies in the workplace. Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that is intentional, hurtful both physically and psychologically, and/or threatening and persistent. It occurs when there is an imbalance of strength.

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, workplace bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators that takes one or more of the following forms:

* Verbal abuse
* Offensive conduct/behaviors (including nonverbal) which are threatening, humiliating, or intimidating
* Work interference - sabotage - which prevents work from getting done

One isolated incident does not constitute workplace bullying. Bullying behavior is generally:

* persistent and prolonged in nature;
* carried out by one or more persons against one or more targets;
* conscious behavior with the intention to harm the target;
* has a devastating influence on the emotional well-being of the victim or target.

According to LegalCareers.com, workplace bullying is on the rise. While statistics vary, some studies reveal that nearly half of all American workers have been affected by workplace bullying, either as a target or as a witness to abusive behavior against a co-worker. Law firms and the legal workplace are, unfortunately, a breeding ground for bullies.

The fast-paced, adversarial nature of litigation and other legal work attracts bullying personalities. Bullying personalities are typically over-ambitious, opportunistic, combative, powerful and competitive. (<http://legalcareers.about.com/od/careertrends/a/Workplace-Bullying-Bullying-Facts-And-Figures.htm>)

Many workplaces have launched anti-bullying initiatives, and many states are lobbying for anti-bullying legislation (although bullying is four times more common than either sexual harassment or racial discrimination on the job, it is not yet illegal).