

A BRIEF SUMMARY AND COMMENT ON THE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PRESENTATION GIVEN BY
SHELLEY TERMARSCH ON SEPT. 26/12

The presentation began with a video featuring enactment of typical workplace situations showing examples of bullying and harassment in action. The examples given ranged from direct criticism of a worker by a person of higher authority, in the presence of his peers, to mimicking or jokes involving a fellow worker that has an apparent handicap. An ongoing discussion ensued involving the parties present, recalling examples of such bullying they had noted in their work experience.

For discussion, Shelly presented a number of actions that may be taken by the victim if he/she is bullied. Examples of these are: confronting the bully, politely stating his/her actions were not acceptable: reporting the problem to a higher authority in the workplace: or, simply giving an excuse to leave the situation. A table was provided in the "handout" following the presentation, listing 10 checkpoints to review to determine if you have been bullied. Examples from this table are: a person ignoring you, not saying hello or just plain avoiding you: spreading lies about you: yelling, pointing their finger at you during a heated conversation etc. A copy of this table (if you have not seen one) can be obtained by request from our CAO.

In relation to Council business, bullying may inadvertently be demonstrated or construed during discussion and debate over the many decisions members are confronted within the course of setting of policies or bylaws. By nature, some decisions necessary in the course of Council business can be contentious. At times there is a fine line between persuasion and harassment and the temptation to carry "hard feelings" from the Council table to one's private life. Old habits can die hard in some cases and this presentation may be a reminder that most of us can improve our behavior to contribute to a better atmosphere at Council.

Dave Foote