

Not him again... How to deal with conflicts in the workplace.

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As a rule, it is virtually impossible to live and work together without conflict. Minor disputes and differences of opinion, though, are usually quickly resolved. Heated discussions can even spur on creativity and productivity in the work process. However, if the conflict and the problem persist over a longer period of time and are pursued by one person in particular, we then speak of bullying in the worst case.

Bullying in the workplace.

In practice, both colleagues and managers may resort to bullying. The causes can be due to hierarchies, an unclear allocation of rights and responsibilities, chronically over-demanding or under-demanding tasks, as well as envy and competitive pressure. As part of their so-called duty of care, employers must ensure that health, dignity and integrity are safeguarded at the workplace.

Consequently, if an employee becomes aware of cases of bullying within the company, he or she is obliged to intervene.

Workplace bullying can range from the constant withholding of important information and the spreading of rumours through to direct physical assault.

As a general rule, it makes sense to keep a written record of events including the place, date and, if necessary, witnesses in order to be able to submit precise information and evidence at a later date. Directly addressing any rumours that arise can often nip them in the bud. Remain objective and do not allow yourself to indulge in insults and taunts. If the problem cannot be solved despite discussions to clarify the situation, it is advisable, in the case of bullying among colleagues, to ask the appropriate manager for assistance or to enlist the help of external mediators.

Do certain spaces encourage arguments?

Even if bullying or disputes are usually a problem between individuals, friction can be intensified by rooms with negative connotations. The potential for conflict arises particularly when people work together in very close quarters, and in the worst case it can become a permanent state of affairs.

Precise rules are also a must in the hotly debated [open-plan office](#). Temperature, noise levels or the smell of sausage-filled rolls - there are plenty of points of contention here. This makes it all the more important to communicate openly with your colleagues working at the same desk as you, and to address problems face-to-face.

However, if a certain basic volume of noise can no longer be negotiated, then it is advisable to use special room dividers or elements that absorb the sound and provide a quieter and more private environment.

Basically, the best way to prevent disputes is not to take every statement made by your counterpart too seriously. [Humour](#) can be a real miracle cure here. Admit your own mistakes and learn to laugh about them. This can defuse situations and even turn some problems into something positive.