

# Norcross MD Advocacy

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## Betrayal of the Workers: Corporate as an Enemy, More on Harassment



### Corporate Betrayal

The simplistic overview of **corporate betrayal** is a conflict that spurs from dysfunctional hierarchy of power within a business. As we all know, with great power comes great responsibility, often those with power are not able to manage the responsibility part of the privilege.

Problems such as **workplace gaslighting,**

**workplace harassment,** and of course, **corporate betrayal,** influence upwards of 2 out of every 5 workers around the world<sup>1</sup>. In the United States alone, over 1 in 5 employees report feeling some sort of extreme sadness or anxious feelings while at work<sup>2</sup>. These negative emotions can be harmful in many ways to workers, we're here to explore exactly how.

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<sup>1</sup> Nearly 45% say they've worked for an abusive boss. Reliable Plant. (n.d.).

<https://www.reliableplant.com/Read/5387/nearly-45-say-y've-worked-for-an-abusive-boss#:~:text=The%20grade%20school%20bully%20may,Stephen%20J.>

<sup>2</sup> Workplace Mental Health - survey of U.S. workers reveals impact on ... (n.d.-b).

<https://workplacementalhealth.org/mental-health-topics/depression/survey-of-u-s-workers-reveals-impact-on-productivi>

The dangers of a workplace environment can come in many different forms. Whether it be coming from your superiors or your colleagues around you, anyone can be subject to these threats. In this newsletter, we'll discuss the topic of corporate betrayal as well as harassment and gaslighting in the workforce, including the dangers of such threats as well as what to do to avoid and overcome them.

## Corporate Betrayal: Danger from Above

Let's outline exactly what corporate betrayal would look like. If a superior were to give one of their subordinates a plan on how to execute a project but pins the blame on the subordinate worker if the project did not work out, that's the basic idea of corporate betrayal.



The abuse of authority over a subordinate in a workplace, as illustrated in this example, is a widespread problem all over the world. Close to 45% of American workers alone have reportedly experienced an abusive superior in their careers at some point. This dysfunctional system of power leads to many problems in the business as well as the careers and wellness of those affected. Victims of corporate betrayal have said to **feel unsafe** and **powerless** in the successes of their own career. This leads to **decreased levels of motivation** as well as **efficiency** in the business. Workers not only feel as if the failures of the business are on their shoulders but also that the successes of the business should not be felt by them but rather their superiors who often take credit for the later achievements.

Corporate betrayal is a real problem that influences the careers and lives of so many, but what can be done if you're faced with the problem yourself? There are a few solutions to these problems:

- Talk to another superior who you have more trust in, either someone higher than the person in question or equal to that
- Talk to a human resources representative as a neutral position to handle the situation

- Talk to your co-workers. If they've experienced the same things, then you can not only feel less alone but you can also then take that to someone else
- Forgive but don't forget. Move on from the problem at hand but attempt to take more leadership roles to move above the person in question



## Workplace Harassment

While things like corporate betrayal can be very harmful to the careers and well being of workers, it is oriented around solely those above victims of such. **Workplace harassment** differs from corporate betrayal in this way. Defined accurately by the Ontario Human Rights Commission as unwelcome and/or repeated words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating or demeaning to a worker or group of workers.

Clearly workplace harassment can take many forms, and as stated before, it can also be done by just about anyone in the office. Whether it be a co-worker, a superior, or even a subordinate, harassment is a danger that influences around 1 in 7 of all working women and around 1 in 17 of all working men, overall influencing about 24% of all workers with sexual, physical, and emotional harassment<sup>3</sup>. This problem is the most prevalent of the 3 discussed in this month's newsletter, so if it is such a danger, what can there be done to handle it? According to Impactly, there are several things to be done:

- **Record all incidents of harassment** including, the names of the people who follow you, their position in the company, and the type of harassment they face. First, provide the time, date, location, and name of the witness, and collect as much information and evidence as possible, because it will only help your case

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<sup>3</sup> Dimovski, A. (2023, May 20). *26 shocking sexual harassment in the workplace statistics*. What To Become. <https://whattobecome.com/sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace-statistics/#:~:text=One%20in%20seven%20women%20and,to%20harassment%20in%20the%20workplace.&text=Workplace%20harassment%20is%20very%20common%2C%20but%20it%20is%20rarely%20reported.>

- **Ask the witness to talk to your colleague** and make sure they will help you confirm your testimony. If you are being bullied or stalked, others are likely to do the same. Unite and help each other
- **Schedule a meeting with your manager or employee representative**, bring the event log and any witnesses, and practice what you want to say before the meeting. If your bully is your manager, consult the human resources department or supervisor's superior
- **Make sure you handle your complaint well** - The last thing you need to do is for the harassment to continue, or your complaint will be ignored. When you see nothing is done, you have the right to continue. Do not stop until your complaint is resolved and necessary action is taken

## Gaslighting

A term that has come more into light, pun intended, as of the last decade is this concept of gaslighting, and it has become a problem in our world more and more through that time.

**Gaslighting** refers to the deliberate manipulation of one's mind by another or others to shift blame or accountability, and to spin the victim's grasp on reality by making them believe one thing

as opposed to another. In a world growing in toxicity, we see it in our societies among friends and peers but we also see it in the workplace. Earlier in this newsletter, we discussed the topic of corporate betrayal and how the spinning of blame and the greed for credit often takes over the ethics and the achievements of a business through this manipulation. Gaslighting plays a crucial part in this problem.

Gaslighting in the workplace and corporate betrayal, while similar, do have their differences.

Gaslighting in general focuses more on manipulation of the victim while corporate betrayal is more so oriented around the manipulation of others in a way that harms the victim. The problem that is closely oriented with gaslighting is how it harms **the emotional side** of the victim in a larger way. The victim is put at risk of **losing confidence and efficiency** in their job and career. The victim is also put at risk of **receiving backlash from superiors** for their presumed performance at work and **could lose their job** as a result.

We tie this in with our previous two topics of corporate betrayal and workplace harassment because of how they not only relate to each other in the risks and problems themselves but also the ways to



handle them. The solutions listed above regarding harassment are great solutions when dealing with gaslighting as well, since gaslighting is a form of emotional and psychological harassment and abuse.

All three of these issues are big problems that have grown as the corporate world has grown over the last century. Thankfully, victims of these issues are seeing more justice for the abuse they've taken. Businesses have begun programs to not only raise awareness of these problems but to also address them and attempt to eradicate them little by little. Hopefully, in a time further down the road, those guilty of these problems can be fully held responsible for this abuse, and victims can feel more peace when at work and trying to expand their career. While it is a widespread problem impacting a large percentage of workers, the future has looked brighter in the fight to address these issues.

Further resource links:

*Solutions to harassment in the workplace.* Online Diversity and Sexual Harassment Training for Companies. (n.d.).

<https://www.getimpactly.com/post/solutions-to-harassment-in-the-workplace>

*How to recognize and report workplace harassment.* Business News Daily. (n.d.).

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/9426-workplace-harassment.html>

*Part III.0.1: Workplace violence and workplace harassment: Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.* ontario.ca. (n.d.).

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/guide-occupational-health-and-safety-act/part-iii0i-workplace-violence-and-workplace-harassment#:~:text=Workplace%20harassment%20can%20include%20unwelcome,worker%20or%20group%20of%20workers>.

*Betrayed in the workplace? 7 steps for healing.* CCL. (2023, April 19).

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/betrayed-workplace-7-steps-healing/>

*Bad bosses: Dealing with abusive supervisors - knowable magazine.* (n.d.).

<https://knowablemagazine.org/article/society/2018/bad-bosses-dealing-abusive-supervisors>