

Addressing Bullying in Non-Profit Fraternal Organizations:

Bullying, often thought to be confined to the playground and left behind in school, can occur wherever there are groups of humans with ranking systems and no governance.

According to Merriam-Webster, a bully is a "blustering, browbeating person" who is "habitually cruel, insulting, or threatening to others who are weaker, smaller, or in some way vulnerable". Bullying involves using force or coercion to intimidate, abuse, or harass someone. You may not think any of your members fit this description, but I assure you there is. It takes all kinds to make a group, and you will find strong-willed people without behavior guidance in your group unless you govern it.

Bullying in non-profit fraternal organizations can be a pervasive issue, affecting individuals and the organization as a whole. While bullying can occur across generations, research suggests baby boomers may be more likely to engage in bullying behavior in certain contexts. Understanding

Bullying in Non-Profit Fraternal Organizations

Bullying can take many forms, including verbal, physical, and psychological abuse. In non-profit fraternal organizations, bullying may manifest as:

1. Patronizing or condescending behavior: talking down to others, dismissing ideas, or belittling contributions.
2. Exclusion or marginalization: excluding others from decision-making processes, meetings, or social events.
3. Intimidation or threats: using power or authority to intimidate or coerce others.

4. Gossip or sabotage: spreading rumors, undermining others, or sabotaging their work.

Bullying: A Perspective Members may engage in bullying behavior due to:

1. Power dynamics: holding positions of power or authority, members may use bullying tactics to maintain control.

2. Resistance to change: members may resist changes in leadership, policies, or practices, leading to conflict and bullying.

3. Entitlement: some members may feel entitled to respect and deference, leading to bullying behavior when they perceive a lack of respect.

4. Alcohol or controlled substance-fueled bullies: some members may have a problem where the use of alcohol or controlled substances changes their level of socially acceptable behavior.

Consequences of Bullying Bullying can have severe consequences, including:

1. Decreased morale and productivity
2. Increased stress and anxiety
3. Turnover and attrition
4. Damage to organizational reputation

Addressing Bullying in Non-Profit Fraternal Organizations

To address bullying, organizations can:

1. Develop clear policies and procedures: establish zero-tolerance policies and procedures for addressing bullying.
2. Provide training and education: offer training on bullying, diversity, and inclusion.
3. Foster a culture of respect: encourage open communication, empathy, and respect among members.
4. Support affected individuals: provide support and resources for those affected by bullying.

By acknowledging and addressing bullying, non-profit fraternal organizations can create a safer, more inclusive environment for all members