

Workplace Bullying

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This case may be used by current adopters of:

S. L. McShane *Canadian Organizational Behaviour*, 5th ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2004); S. L. McShane & M. A. von Glinow, *Organizational Behavior*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005); S. L. McShane & T. Travaglione, *Organisational Behaviour on the Pacific Rim*, 1st ed. (Sydney: McGraw-Hill Australia, 2003)

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Mary works for a large Australian bank. Mary and fellow staff members are advised that because of changing economic conditions, and the need to ensure that the bank meets shareholder expectations, the bank will undertake organisational restructuring. Staff are advised that a number of branches will close and that job losses of about 8,500 will be covered by voluntary redundancy. Some staff react to the bank's announcement by going on sick leave.

The change process particularly embitters Mary's manager, who has worked for the bank for 25 years. Once an affable, likeable manager, he now shouts and swears at staff, lacks patience, is intolerant, abuses people, and becomes autocratic and terse in his managerial style. When speaking to some of his staff, particularly those who have chosen to accept the bank's voluntary redundancy package, he is sarcastic. He yells at them to complete set tasks, chastises them for minor errors, criticises them in front of other staff members and customers, and generally "makes life difficult".

Mary considers that she has a strong work ethic, but finds it increasingly difficult to work with her manager. The manager's behaviour leaves Mary suffering from a "combination of anxiety and depression" that eventually manifests in chest pains. Mary says, "I thought I was having heart attacks every day and I had to actually go and get some medical help". Mary admits that she paints herself as a victim, is bitter, anxious and depressed, and is at a loss to understand why.