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MEDIA RELEASE

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DOES COMPLAINING ABOUT WORKPLACE BULLYING HELP?

New research in the University of Adelaide's School of Psychology aims to help organisations better manage complaints of workplace bullying.

PhD student Moira Jenkins is carrying out a study to see whether current complaint processes for addressing bullying in the workplace improve the situation or make it worse. She wants to find out what works successfully and what is going wrong when complaints aren't resolved.

"Most organisations now have bullying and harassment policies and complaint processes aimed at preventing and dealing with inappropriate behaviours like bullying. However evidence suggests that many employees who are bullied don't use these processes because either they are not confident it will help, or they are fearful of making things worse," said Ms Jenkins.

"In support of this, there have been a number of studies that suggest that targets of bullying who report the behaviour do no better than those who keep quiet, and in some cases they even do worse."

Ms Jenkins is looking for volunteers who have made a complaint about workplace bullying over the past year. She will interview them about the outcome of their complaint and their perceptions of the processes involved in resolving the complaint. Participants will also be asked to fill out a short survey. Confidentiality is guaranteed and nothing will identify individuals or workplaces.

"Despite bullying being recognised as a serious problem, we still don't have a good idea of what goes on in organisations when people do make a complaint. We don't know what aspects of the complaint procedures are helpful, and what aspects are not helpful" she said.

"I hope that the results of this study will help organisations better manage workplace conflicts and perhaps prevent subsequent problems for people who make complaints at work about this type of behaviour."

People interested in taking part in the study should contact Moira Jenkins by phoning 0412 733 453 or emailing moira.jenkins@adelaide.edu.au.

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