

## THE CONSTANT CORNER

### OLDER ADULT BULLYING

The media frequently reminds us about the bullying problem in schools, but did you know that bullies are in senior housing communities, assisted living facilities, apartment complexes, and even the workplace. Every sector of our community seems to have this problem, so let's take a look at some of the signs of "relational aggression".

Bullying can range from subtle, such as spreading false rumors about someone, to aggressive, such as actual physical assaults. Women who bully tend to whisper and gossip, tease and taunt, or act with sarcasm, rudeness, and overly bossy behaviors. Men who bully tend to yell and scream at someone while standing face to face, push a person from a room, destroy property, or bump into another on purpose.

Individuals who bully reflect an underlying need for power and control. They have difficulty tolerating individual differences, lack all empathy, and have few positive social relationships. DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE LIKE THAT? Most of us, in the course of our lives, have experienced "a bully".

So here's what to do:

1. Speak up clearly and with authority, making your opinions clear but without aggressive motions.
2. Always maintain eye contact.
3. Seek true understanding of the individuals' insecurities.
4. Develop a "Code of Conduct" so that the behavior is not tolerated by anyone, including the administration of your building.

Remember: All people should be treated with consideration, respect, and recognition of each others' dignity. All behaviors have meaning, so make sure your interactions with someone who wants to bully you are not provocative. Maybe ignoring them altogether in some cases will be the most effective course of action.

From the desk of Officer Jane Constant

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