



There Is a Bull in the Pen

You're told not to cry, whine or tattle.
So how do you cope?

by John L. Meyer, PhD

Being bullied from youth into his adult years, one employee decides it must stop.

Peter Pawley, a new assistant manager at the Crown Animal Clinic, sat at his desk lost in daydreams. He wondered how it had all started.

He put his feet up on the desk and stretched his less than 5-foot frame. He had reminiscences of his childhood when his older brother had bullied him into submission on most everything. He had been taught by his parents that he was not to be a crybaby, no matter how badly he was treated, and to learn to take teasing.

In grade school, when he was beaten up on his way to school and on his way home, his teacher taught him not to be a tattletale. In high school, where the beatings continued and his lunch money and property were stolen, he was threatened not to tell "or else."

Although he found comfort in belonging to a gang for a short time, he soon found that the gang forced on him a perverted loyalty to their leader and secrecy that was part of the honor code. "Snitches" and "rats" were considered scum.

It was not until he studied philosophy in college that Peter had a chance to think for himself about right behavior. He avoided connecting with the fraternity and sorority activities because he feared their exclusivity — excluding students because of "social incompatibility." He



In a nutshell, harassment is illegal but bullying is not.

knew he had been regularly excluded throughout his life because he did not fit in with the group.

When Peter arrived at the clinic, he was, at first, moderate in the pace of his work. He was, however, determined to excel and thus doubled his efforts.

Not being tied up in sports, entertainment, religious services, family or pet care, he was free to devote extra time to learning his new job and accomplishing more than was expected of him.

In spite of his good work, however, he detected what he thought was unwarranted criticism. His boss returned several reports with simply "Do over" noted on the top.

In addition, he heard several of his colleagues tease him about the volume of work he put out.