

CONDO CONCEPTS

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THE CONDO BULLY

How to deal with condo bullies

Bullies aren't only found in the playground, you can encounter such personalities in all aspects of your life. But the one place you don't expect them is at your home. Sadly, bullying is a constant reality that condo board members and managers encounter in their jobs.

Uttered threats, personal and on-line harassment, physical intimidation, these are but a few of the bullying incidents that condo managers are subjected to. Some take it really personally and hurl expletives, and in my personal experience some even go as far as writing the board to try to get me fired.

It is sad, but as condo managers we wear several hats and must have leathery-tough skin, because it is what is required in dealing with diverse personalities, including bullies.

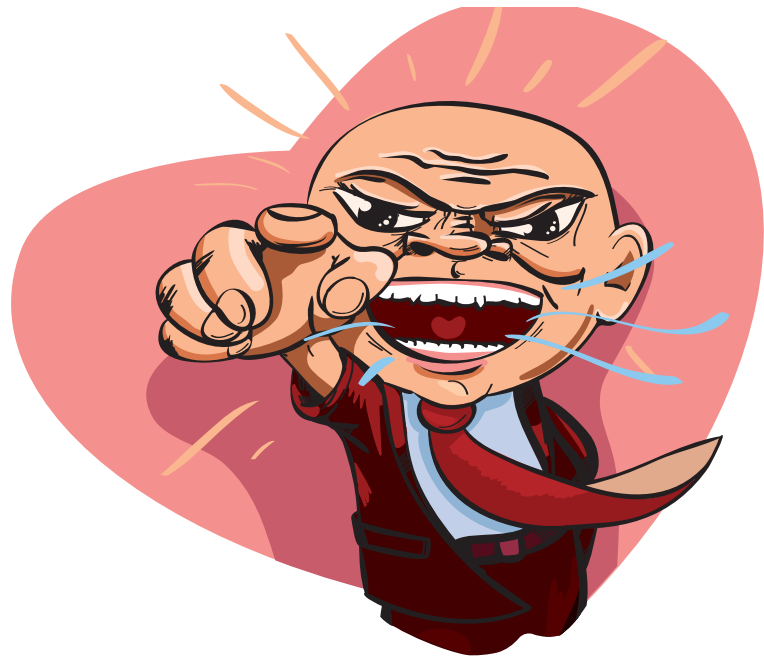
We usually hear or read about bullies in the context of schools or the playground or sometimes in an office setting. But what about the bully who grows up and becomes your neighbour or a board member? Here are some tips to help you deal with this type of situation.

1. Boards can establish codes of conducts for their board meetings which could curtail bullying behaviour:

- Limit the length of time for each speaker.
- No abusive language or insulting remarks against anyone.
- No personal attacks.
- No yelling or interruptions when someone is speaking or during the meeting.
- It is important to put the code of conduct in writing and circulate a copy to each board member.

2. As managers, we know that words can easily be misunderstood, personalities clash, and not all individuals will see reason in what we say.

Taking the following steps may help alleviate some of the stress and pressure that might come from having to deal with difficult people:



- Address the issue immediately in a non-confrontational manner. Ignoring the situation does not make it go away, it may make it worse.
- Be willing to accommodate, if possible.
- Agree to disagree. If you cannot establish some common ground, move on, no need to argue about it endlessly.
- State in a clear manner that abuse, insults, threatening remarks or yelling will not be tolerated and that discussions can be held when both parties are calm and relaxed.
- Don't try to rush the situation, be patient and let them work through the problem with you.

Keep in mind that not all behaviours can be controlled. If you fear for your safety, contact the proper authorities. As a management company, having procedures in place to deal with complaints, concerns and abuse is essential. If personality conflicts arise at board level, the board should consider changing the contact person.

Remember that abuse of the manager or board is abuse of the corporation and can be damaging in nature. Until next time. **CL**

Maria Bartolotti is the owner-manager of New Concept Management Inc. She has developed a strong reputation for rendering timely and efficient services to the condominium industry. Maria believes that her company's success hinges on her hands-on approach to condominium management as well as maintaining open lines of communications with her clientele. Maria is actively involved in her industry. For more information, visit www.newconceptmanagement.com