

# **Out of Bounds: The Legal Ramifications of Toxic Cultures in Sports, Education & Business**

**February 9, 2019**

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## **A. Common Denominators in Toxic Environments**

1. Fear/intimidation & anxiety
2. Absence of accountability in relationships
3. Lack of empathy & respect
4. Failure to abide by organizational principles

## **B. Ramifications of Toxic Environments**

1. Fear/unwillingness to report or protest inappropriate behavior
2. Disengagement
3. Disruption of team unity OR unhealthy team bonding
4. Inability to achieve outcomes consistent with program goals
5. Increased absenteeism
6. Health issues such as anxiety, depression, high blood pressure and other stress-related conditions
7. High turnover
8. Dysfunction which increases over time as behavior patterns become ingrained
9. Institutional failure resulting from loss of personal/professional perspective

## **C. How to Address Toxic Environments**

1. Visible, hands-on leadership AT THE TOP
2. Promote diversity and inclusion at all levels
3. Discipline and/or remove problematic employees
4. Establish multiple pathways for complaints about inappropriate conduct
5. Draft and implement clear policies defining appropriate behavior
6. Be consistent in enforcing workplace/team rules
7. Educate EVERYONE (including top leadership) on workplace/team policies & applicable laws such as Title IX, sexual harassment & discrimination, etc.
8. UPDATE training on a regular basis
9. Conduct frequent performance reviews or team exit interviews
10. Conduct anonymous surveys
11. Hold everyone accountable for maintaining an appropriate environment

Report to The University System of Maryland of an Independent Investigation of the University of Maryland Football Program, [download the PDF](#).

[The Report of the Independent Investigation of Dallas Basketball Limited](#)

Joe Notartomas, [Maryland Football Part Three: D.J. Durkin Out as Head Coach of the Terrapins Following the Independent Commission's Report](#)

Chai R. Feldblum & Victoria A. Lipnic, EEOC, Report of the Co-Chairs of the EEOC Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace 28, [download the report](#).

Robert Andrews, [Toxic Coaching – Out With The Old In With The New](#)

Michael Housman, Dylan Minor, [Toxic Workers](#), Harvard Business School, (2015)

Liz Ryan, [Ten Signs Your Workplace is Toxic – Whether You Know it or Not](#)

Amy Gallo, [How to Manage a Toxic Employee](#), Harvard Business Review

Erika Anderson, [9 Ways To Deal With Difficult Employees](#)

Forbes Coaches Council, [Seven Ways Leaders Can Deal With Toxic Employees](#)

Tricia Emerson, [How To Change A Toxic Culture](#)

New York State Senate Bill 02261, filed 1/23/19, [available online](#).

[The Healthy Workplace Campaign](#)