

# How to deal with a TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

according to science

Does the thought of work stress you out? Do you feel depressed or overwhelmed while you're there? Do you have a hard time disconnecting yourself from your job when at home?

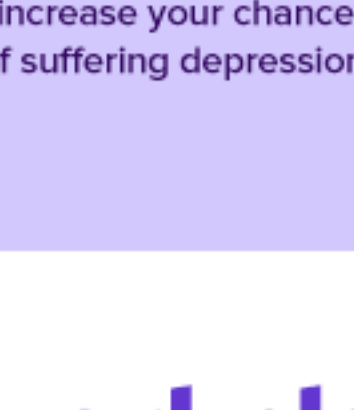
If you answered "yes" to these questions, you may be working in a toxic work environment.

## 3 ways a toxic workplace will negatively affect your life



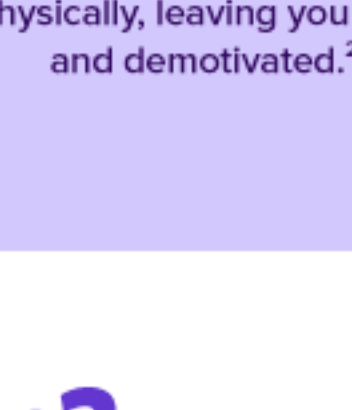
### It can make you sick

High levels of stress hormones can put you at a greater risk of heart attacks and strokes.<sup>1</sup>



### You are more likely to experience depression

A constant source of psychological distress can significantly increase your chances of suffering depression.<sup>3</sup>

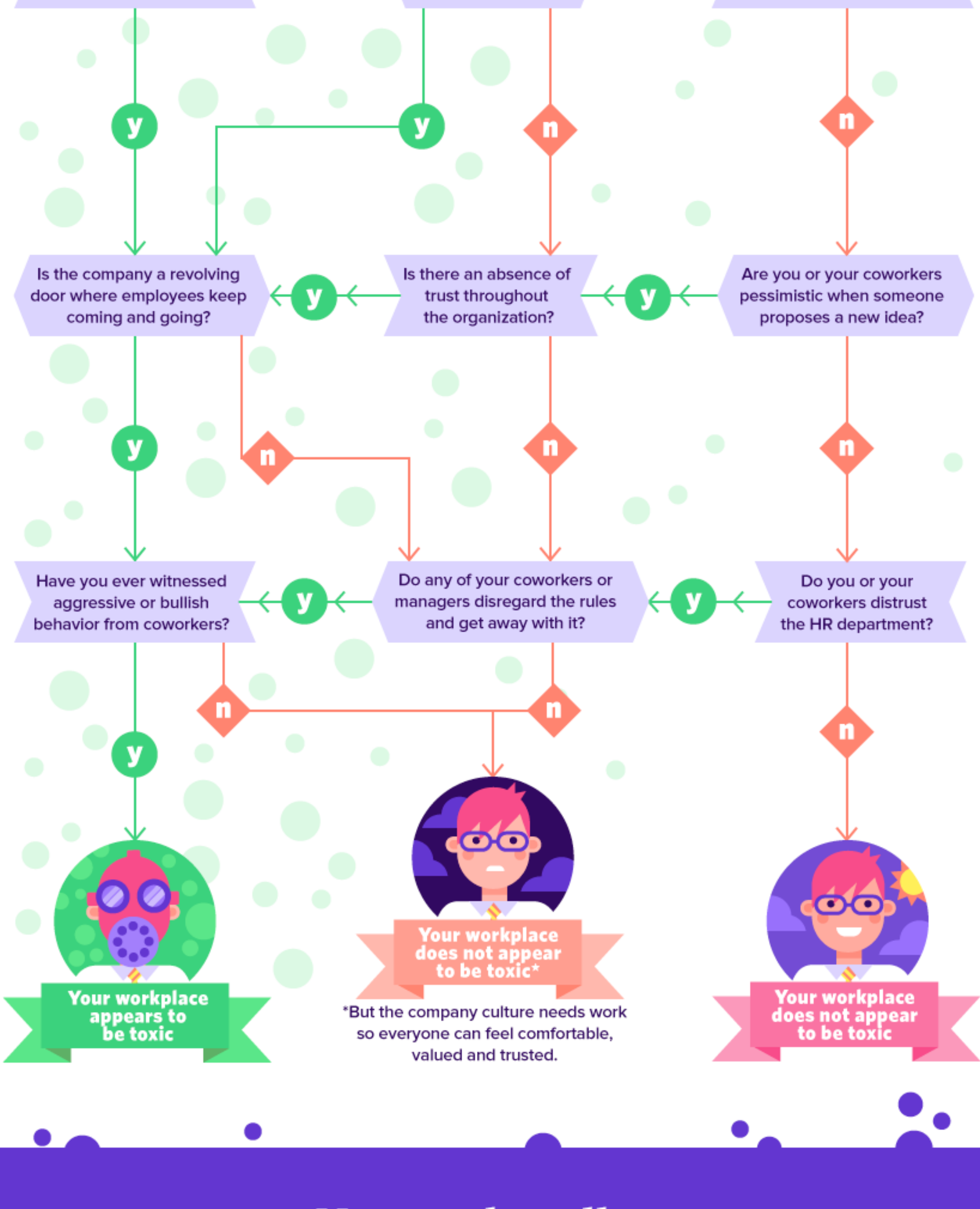


### You may feel less motivated

Being surrounded by negativity can drain you mentally and physically, leaving you tired and demotivated.<sup>2</sup>

## Is your workplace toxic?

Sometimes it's hard to tell if you work in a toxic environment or you just hate your job. To help you decide, follow this flowchart and figure out if your workplace is indeed toxic.



## How to handle a TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

It's not always possible to just walk out of a bad job. Sometimes you have to tough it out, until something better comes along. Try out the tips below to make your toxic workplace more bearable.

### Before you go to work

1

#### Don't check your emails before work

It's likely anything work-related will put you in a negative mindset. By engaging with work earlier than you should you are needlessly spending more time in this negative and stressful state.<sup>4</sup>

**Pro tip:** Use a separate alarm clock to prevent you from looking at emails when you wake up.

2

#### Start your days with small "wins"

Small "wins" such as exercising or leaving for work on time prime your brain to achieving more "wins." This routine leads to a mindset focusing on positives instead of negatives.<sup>5</sup>

**Pro tip:** Make your bed. This act of organization helps you control your day and leads to larger accomplishments and routines.

3

#### Create a gratitude list of everything you like about work

Putting together a list of all the positive benefits of work keeps your brain from dwelling on negatives and puts you in a positive mood.<sup>6</sup>

**Pro tip:** Start small and simply list five things you like about your job. Once you've established the positives, you can expand upon them in future gratitude lists.

### While you're at work

1

#### Stay away from coworkers who create conflict

If you are aware of particular colleagues who instigate conflicts, stay away from them. Their conflicts cause stress and can lead to workplace negativity.<sup>7</sup>

**Pro tip:** Do not suddenly avoid coworkers who create conflict. Instead slowly lessen your contact with them. This tactic will prevent resentments from developing.

2

#### Make friends

Friends can provide you with a support system in which you can share your feelings in a productive manner. This will make your workplace seem less toxic.<sup>8</sup>

**Pro tip:** Befriend coworkers who try to stay positive in this negative environment. An upbeat friend can help shield you from the worst of the office.

3

#### Document everything

Keep a record of negative and positive interactions. If you have to file a complaint, this will ensure you have the information you need.<sup>8</sup>

**Pro tip:** Don't document daily events in front of managers or coworkers. This could make them paranoid or resentful towards you.

4

#### Seek ways to improve yourself

By learning new work skills you stay motivated and build your skillset for future job opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

**Pro tip:** Focus on strengthening a skill that you find to be lacking. Feeling more confident in your skills can help strengthen your defences against a toxic environment.

5

#### Practice reframing

When confronted with a negative interaction, try to think of it as a learning experience. Viewing things objectively can help reduce your stress as it lessens the emotions you invest in an interaction.<sup>10</sup>

**Pro tip:** When a challenge arises, take a deep breath to prevent yourself from immediately considering the negative aspects of the situation. These few seconds will help you reframe the challenge in your head and allow you to focus on a positive outcome.

6

#### Create a positive workspace

A positive workspace can make you feel safe amongst the chaos of a toxic environment. Personalizing your workstation will give you a sense of ownership making you feel more in control.<sup>11</sup>

**Pro tip:** Tidy your workspace and keep clutter to a minimum, this creates a sense of control and positivity.

### After you leave work

1

#### Create distance from your job

It's important to separate yourself from your job, because it creates distance between the stress of work and the comfort of home.<sup>12</sup>

**Pro tip:** When you get home detach yourself from work by exercising or engaging in a hobby that you enjoy. These activities put the day behind you and the routine separates you from work.

2

#### Create an exit strategy

Ensuring that you have a plan on how to leave your job should it become too stressful, will stop you from feeling trapped in your current workplace.<sup>8</sup>

**Pro tip:** Keep your resume and cover letter updated. This allows you to quickly apply for other jobs, and prevents you from procrastinating during your job hunt.

3

#### Practice healthy coping techniques

When you develop a routine of healthy coping techniques, such as reading, exercise or meditation, you create a boundary between yourself and the toxic work environment.<sup>13</sup>

**Pro tip:** When you get home after a stressful day take a shower or a bath. This coping technique will take your mind off work, and is a healthy way to wash the day off of you.

If you're working in a toxic environment we encourage you to use these tips to help you with your stressful situation.

If you find that these tips aren't helping you deal with your toxic workplace, maybe it's time to update your exit strategy and look for a new place of work.

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