

MENTAL HEALTH

6 ways to be strong while working with toxic people

Working with a toxic person can heighten negativity and tension, but it's difficult to avoid them in office. Find out how to deal with toxic colleagues.



Know how to handle a toxic coworker. Image courtesy: Adobe Stock

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Every office has at least one person who will make rude or hateful comments, ruin the work of others or do something on purpose to irritate you. Sometimes you just ignore such toxic people, but that's not always the solution, especially if you are working together. When you are with a toxic person, it can be hard to respect yourself and be happy. This, in turn, heightens negativity and tension. Clearly, you should have strategies to be strong while working with toxic people. An expert shares how to deal with a toxic coworker so that your mental health and work don't get affected in a negative way.



Controlling behaviour is one of the most harmful characteristics of a toxic person. To limit your capacity to engage with the outside world, they might even try to stop you from contacting your friends, colleagues, and relatives.

Tips to deal with a toxic coworker

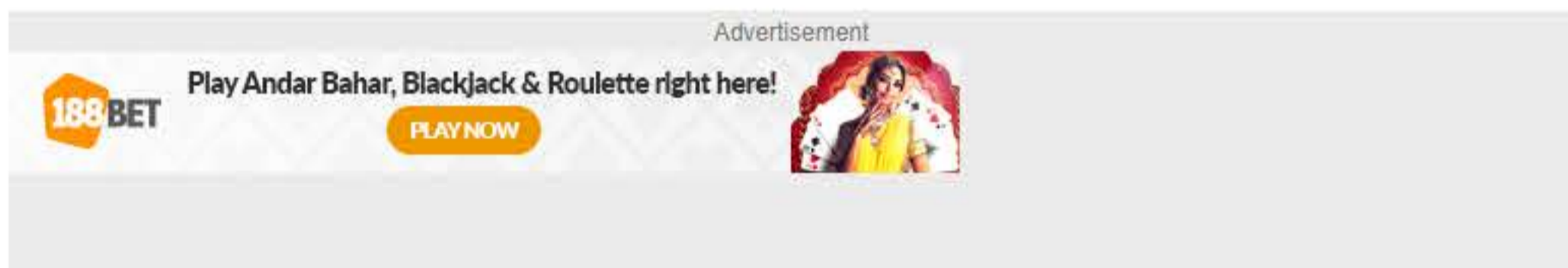
Health Shots checked with psychologist Dr. Malini Saba on [how to deal with toxic people](#) at work. Here's what she suggests:



You should have strategies to be strong while working with toxic people. Image courtesy: Shutterstock.

1. Don't complain

Attended a meeting with a toxic colleague? What's the first thing you do? Share with a coworker about what happened. Turns out, venting and trying to confirm your viewpoints with others is harmful, according to Saba. Be it complaining to your other colleagues via email or chat or to your partner when you go home, just discussing about it maintains your negative state. Complaining gives a toxic person more room in your life, so give [toxic people](#) less air time and focus on positive people and events.

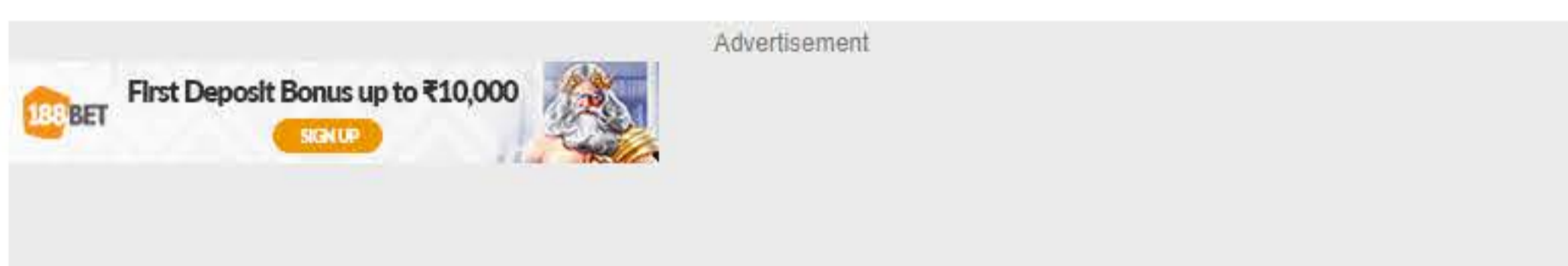


2. Preserve your moral power

Telling others that a colleague makes you feel horrible about yourself or that your boss wasted your day, suggests that you are not in control of your emotions. So, take control over your thoughts, emotions, and actions, advised the expert. Don't let the negative actions, attitudes, and intentions of others bring you down.

3. Handle yourself, not everyone else

You can spend hours on wishing a colleague would evolve into a team player or hoping a co-worker would shift to another department. However, wishful thinking simply wastes valuable resources like time and mental effort. Your colleagues are beyond your control, and you only have control over your reaction to them. Instead, use your resources effectively, regardless of whether you decide that confronting your co-worker is the best course of action or that it is preferable to bite your tongue.



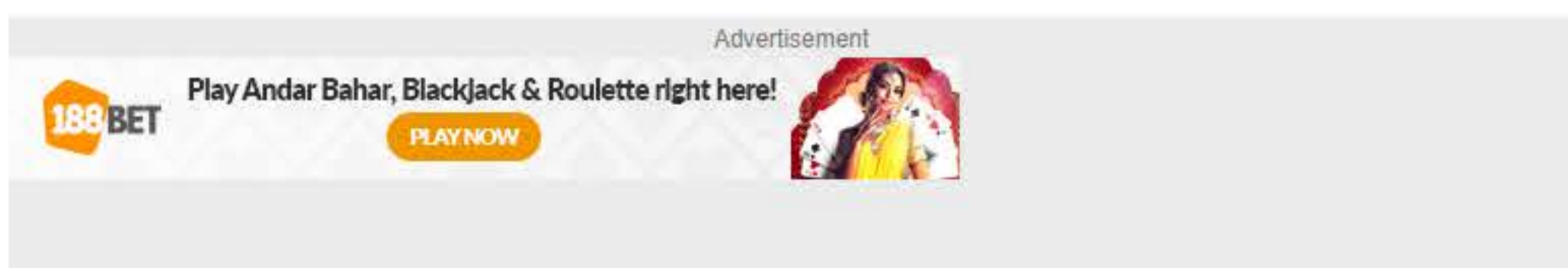
You should communicate directly with toxic colleagues. Image courtesy: Shutterstock

4. Communicate directly

Being passive around toxic people is not the right way. You can't change someone's personality, but you can always criticise their actions in a smart, not insinuating way, shared Saba. Direct communication and setting boundaries can reduce long-term [workplace stress](#). Also, prepare a response if the problems continue.

5. Employ healthy coping strategies

Dealing with a toxic colleague can be quite taxing, so it is crucial to develop appropriate coping mechanisms to remain resilient in the middle of a stressful situation. Saba said that you should take care of your body and mind, and that it is impossible to maintain mental strength if you consume an unhealthy diet and do not get enough sleep. To combat the bad effects of stress, engage in sufficient physical activity. You can also experiment with various coping mechanisms like gratitude and meditation. You should engage in several social and leisure activities so that your life does not centre on your toxic co-worker.



6. Look for help if needed

If you feel you are facing bullying or harassment in any way, open up to the company's human resources department. If your stress levels are interfering with your ability to function successfully, or if you are anxious or depressed, you should not shy away from getting professional assistance. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms to find out if he or she thinks you would benefit from seeing a therapist.

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