

Annette - Accessing advocacy, union, or legal support for a workplace problem.

- Annette:** Hi, my name is Annette Erickson.
I am 47 years old and I'm a self-employed counsellor, career coach, and PhD candidate.
In the past, before this current work I'm doing, I was a career guidance counsellor at university's, colleges and in schools as well.
And then before that I had many different jobs.
And in one of those jobs, I would like to speak about.
- Annette:** One of my first jobs, which was which was something I was very interested in. I thought, this is my career.
You know, I'm set for life. I want to do this.
But unfortunately, I ended up being bullied a lot by senior management.
And as you can imagine, that had a very negative impact on my mental health. I was crying to and from work every day.
At the same time, I knew it was wrong, but I wasn't quite able to speak up because I knew I was different, but I also knew it wasn't right to treat me this way just because I was different.
- Annette:** So I was able to speak to a friend one day.
Who told me that I needed to get out of that job, and she was very adamant about it, but I was scared at the same time.
So, we found a person who was able to advocate on my behalf, who was able to, to mediate and terminate the contract in a way where I got out in a safe way, in a way that suited me.
- Annette:** And I think that's something that was really important to me because I knew I hadn't done anything wrong.
But at the same time, I also knew that this employer would not let me go out in the way that would work best for my mental health.
So, I think that's worth remembering as well. That that, we need someone to advocate for us if we can't do it ourselves.
- Annette:** I learned the hard way, as many of us do.
And I think what helped me was finally there was I was able to talk to someone about it and I was able to get the help that I needed and now I speak up.
Now I say constantly, I'm an autistic.
I'm proud of it.
I see it as a way of me actually being able to deliver the best possible results because of who I am.
- Annette:** But that's how far I have grown now to be my late forties.
Is it's taken a long time.
And I think, you know, from this experience, one tip I would share with all of you is that if you are in a similar situation, please reach out and get someone

to advocate on your behalf so you can be in a supportive and positive working environment because we all deserve that and we should all have that.