



Brandeis
UNIVERSITY

Dignity at Work Task Force
of the Faculty Senate

**Nature and
Consequences of
Workplace Bullying**

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I. INTRODUCTION¹

The voluminous research on Workplace Bullying reveals a core of clear, strong findings that hold across employers, across industries, across countries, and across time. Workplace Bullying is widespread, especially in academia, and its consequences for institutions and employees are severe. In at least twenty countries it is legally prohibited (see Appendix A). New Zealand formally lists Workplace Bullying as a health hazard.

Part II of this document provides a definition based on thirty existing legal definitions and addresses common confusions about this form of abuse. Part III reviews the ways that workplace bullying compromises an institution's ability to achieve its goals. Part IV reviews the ways that workplace bullying compromises the health of targets and witnesses. Part V summarizes the ways the U.S. institutions normally respond to workplace bullying. An accompanying document provides recommended policies and procedures.²

II. DEFINITIONS, PATTERNS, AND PREVALENCE

Workplace Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person in the same circumstances would consider unreasonable. It includes behavior that is belittling, intimidating, humiliating, offending, or disempowering. The behavior must have the cumulative purpose or effect of harming an employee's health, reputation, career success, or ability to perform.

This definition represents a synthesis of 30 legal definitions currently in force worldwide. Like the majority of those definitions it stresses persistence rather than severity and it lists potential psychosocial consequences. However, this definition adopt unusual protections for respondents (those subject to complaints) and for the University. Appendix A provides a review of the common elements among definitions and a comparison with the definition above.

Three important behaviors are protected by this definition of Workplace Bullying:

- Occasionally-insensitive language or conduct. Everyone will occasionally be uncivil at work; such behavior does not constitute bullying if it's rare and of low intensity.
- Appropriate workplace supervision carried out respectfully and fairly. This includes: setting aggressive performance goals; determining fair committee assignments; coaching or providing constructive feedback; investigating alleged misconduct; disciplining an employee for substantiated misconduct.

¹ The Dignity at Work Task Force was created by the Faculty Senate to propose policies and procedures for addressing Workplace Bullying that involves faculty members. The Senate had concluded, after dealing with cases on an *ad hoc* basis, that adjudicating such grievances requires expertise and structured procedures.

² <https://www.brandeis.edu/faculty-senate/pdfs/dignity-at-work-recommended-policies-and-procedures.pdf>

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Because Workplace Bullying can take myriad forms, researchers identify its presence using the “Negative Acts Questionnaire, Revised” (Appendix B) which includes 22 behaviors. These, and those listed elsewhere, fall into three categories:

1. Outright abuse, such as
 - Insulting or humiliating the target, especially in front of others
 - Blocking or providing insufficient opportunities for advancement
 - Being shouted at or being target of spontaneous anger.
2. Passive-aggressive abuse, such as
 - Failing to respond to inquiries or requests, or responding with a substantial unjustified delay
 - Withholding necessary information, excluding from important discussions
 - Treating someone as invisible.
3. Mobbing: Workplace Bullying carried out by a group, which includes outright and passive-aggressive abuse plus
 - Spreading rumors, gossip, or innuendo
 - Exclusion from professional and social events
 - Stonewalling target who inquires about why or seeks redress.

As research has accumulated over the decades, it has become clear that the conventional image of a workplace bully is only partially accurate. A workplace bully is sometimes a boss who screams insults at subordinates in front of co-workers – but only sometimes. In fact,

1. Workplace bullying is primarily defined by the *persistence* of negative behavior rather than its severity.
2. Workplace bullying is typically covert, meaning it involves difficult-to-document behaviors like withholding managerial support, unreasonable demands, exclusion, and false accusations. Co-workers are not usually aware.
3. Though typically invisible to others, workplace bullying is common, especially in academia.
4. Workplace bullying does not usually arise from differences in opinion or personality conflicts. Workplace bullies tend to be unskilled managers threatened by skilled subordinates, individuals with “trait anger,” or individuals with personal pathologies.
5. Targets are usually blamed but rarely responsible. They are not usually prickly, opinionated, or overly sensitive, though they are typically accused of displaying these qualities. Further, targets have few levers for self-defense: Pushback triggers aggressive retaliation in part because HR, management, and co-workers are rarely supportive.

The rest of this section reviews these points in order.

A. DEFINED BY PERSISTENCE, NOT SEVERITY

Every rigorous definition of workplace bullying stresses two things: The aggression must be persistent and it need not be severe. To illustrate, here are comments from one of the founding researchers in this area:

Many of these single acts may be relatively common in the workplace and, when occurring in isolation, may be seen as signs of merely uncivil behavior [However], when persistently directed towards the same individual(s) over a longer period of time, they may turn into an extreme source of social stress ... capable of causing severe harm (Einarsen et al., 2009).

Formal definitions of workplace bullying consistently stress persistence. Here is a selection:

- The ***persistent*** exposure to interpersonal aggression and mistreatment from colleagues, superiors or subordinates (Einarsen et al., 2009)
- ***Repeated***, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators (WBI, 2017)
- ***Repeated*** and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety (Employment New Zealand, 2017).

Persistence is damaging partly because humans react more strongly to negative than positive interpersonal interactions (Kanouse and Hanson, 1972). “It takes numerous encounters with positive people to offset the energy and happiness sapped by a single episode with one [bully]” (Sutton, 2007, p. 31).

Individuals are especially vulnerable to negative interactions in the workplace. Any threat to one’s job is perceived, consciously or subconsciously, as a threat to the survival of self and family. Work is also critical to one’s self-respect (Kile, 1990; cited in Einarsen and Raknes, 1997).

Persistence is damaging because it brings fear: targets are constantly aware that more degradation and humiliation is on its way. With severe bullying, fear becomes terror (Leymann, 1990).

Finally, persistence is damaging because targets realize they are trapped: their professional livelihood requires daily exposure to the bully. Indeed, experts often highlight parallels between workplace bullying and domestic violence: “Being bullied at work most closely resembles the experience of being a battered spouse. The abuser inflicts pain when and where she or he chooses ... [and] the target is kept close to the abuser by the nature of the relationship between them” (WBI, 2017).

Targets are often bullied by multiple perpetrators, a phenomenon known as mobbing. Typically a single bully is joined by others over time, so the number of bullies tends to rise with the length of time the bullying has been allowed to continue (Zapf and Gross, 2001). Notably, bullying among faculty tends to last many years: in one study roughly half of faculty bullying situations were found to last for more than three years (Keashly and Neuman, 2010). Though evidence is scarce, this suggests that mobbing is common in academe.

B. OFTEN COVERT SO OTHERS ARE UNAWARE

Bullies commonly avoid censure by attacking in ways that are only apparent to the target. Some bullies reserve outright attacks for private settings. Others rely on passive-aggressive attacks such as failing to provide managerial support or needed information or exclusion from important meetings (Baron and Neuman, 1996). Academia conforms to this pattern. Bullying among faculty typically involves “threats to professional status and isolating and obstructive behavior (i.e., thwarting the target’s ability to obtain important objectives)” (Keashly and Neuman, 2010 p. 55).

Because bullies carefully mask their attacks, co-workers and supervisors are generally unaware that workplace bullying is taking place.

C. COMMON, ESPECIALLY IN ACADEMIA

Many people are surprised to learn that between one-quarter and one-half of employees become targets at some point in their careers. Nonetheless, studies in many countries over many years find this same range of prevalence.³ Severe and long-lasting bullying is experienced by roughly 3% of employees (Zapf et al., 2011).

Workplace bullying is especially common in academia. In a 2012 study of U.S. four-year colleges and universities, 62% of respondents had either been bullied or witnessed bullying within the past 18 months (Hollis, 2012). These findings are corroborated for institutions of higher learning around the world, as summarized in Keashley and Neuman (2010).

The prevalence of bullying in academia is not widely recognized because targets are extremely cautious about speaking up. For reasons outlined later in this document, speaking up usually makes things worse (Gunsalus, 2006).

D. NOT PERSONALITY CONFLICTS OR DIFFERENCES IN OPINION

According to the evidence, workplace bullying is typically an abuse of power. In the U.S. roughly three-quarters of bullying involves the mistreatment of subordinates by supervisors (Namie and Namie, 2011). The majority of bullies are low-skill managers who feel threatened by high-skill, highly empathic subordinates (The Tim Field Institute, 2017). Other bullies are acting out their own personal pathologies (Baron and Neuman, 1998); among other characteristics, bullies tend to exhibit “trait anger” (Kant et al., 2013; Glasø et al., 2011).

The significance of power imbalances is highlighted by the fact that minorities and women are disproportionately represented among targets. In the U.S., 33% of black, Hispanic, and Asian employees report experiencing workplace bullying, a percentage that is statistically higher than the 24% of white employees who report that experience (WBI, 2014). Women are bullied more frequently than men (see, e.g., Rospenda and Richman, 2004).

³ In the U.S., for example, 37% of workers report being bullied at work, according to 2007 Zogby (WBI/Zogby, 2007). Findings in McAvoy and Murtagh (2003) illustrate this consistency: among U.K. nurses and junior hospital doctors roughly 38% experienced bullying in the previous year.

Mediation typically causes more harm than good when applied to workplace bullying (Ferris, 2004). Mediation can only succeed if both parties have equal standing, but workplace bullies usually target their subordinates (Namie and Namie, 2011). Further, mediation cannot protect targets from harm. If someone is being attacked on the street, society steps in to protect the victim and stop the attacker; mediation would be irrelevant. If someone is attacked psychologically the remedies are similar: protect the victim and stop the attacker. Mediation is not only irrelevant, it puts the target at further risk: given the professional power of supervisors over subordinates, the target cannot safely raise concerns in a mediation setting (Keashly and Nowell, 2010).

E. TARGETS USUALLY BLAMED, LITTLE PROTECTION

Contrary to conventional wisdom, targets typically do not invite bullying by being prickly and opinionated. “[T]argets are generally non-confrontational people who do their best to avoid trouble rather than the prickly or opinionated people implied by the phrase ‘personality differences’” (Namie and Namie, 2009, p. 13). Targets tend to be “very principled, non-political workers” (WBI, 2014). Less than 5% of targets file lawsuits; the majority never file complaints even internally (WBI/Zogby, 2007).

Targets are commonly informed that they can stop bullying by pushing back. But in fact pushback reliably intensifies bullying by triggering retaliation, often in the form of character assassination.⁴ Co-workers then join the bullying effort, convinced by the false accusations. Retaliation following pushback often causes the target to lose his/her job: Targets of bullying experience lower job retention and are often disproportionately unable to remain in the workforce.⁵ Depriving the target of their livelihood is evidently the intent of retaliation after pushback; indeed, leading experts call this response “expulsion” (Leymann, 1996; Glambek et al., 2015) or “elimination” (The Tim Field Institute, 2016a).

Personality and coping strategy can moderate the effects of a brief interval of low-level bullying. Unfortunately, no personality or coping strategy protects targets from intense bullying or bullying of long duration (Reknes et al., 2016). On average, bullying lasts substantially longer than average at universities (Hollis, 2012).

III. HARM TO INSTITUTIONS: COSTS, RISK, PRODUCTIVITY

Prohibiting workplace bullying protects employees and improves conventional measures of institutional success. “Bullying destroys teams and causes disenchantment, demoralisation, demotivation, disaffection and alienation. Organisations become dysfunctional and inefficient ...” (WBI, 2017). Perhaps surprisingly, tolerating bullies is not neutral but instead promotes bullying by creating the widespread impression that it is acceptable. Careful estimates show that the institutional costs of tolerating bullies far outweigh the benefits, even when the bully is a superstar (Housman and Minor, 2015).

⁴ <http://www.workplacebullying.org/multi/pdf/WBI-2013-Industry.pdf>. In one illustrative study, 70% of 1,600 targets responding confronted the bully and the bullying stopped for only 4% of them.

⁵ Bullies rarely lose their job (Glambek et al., 2016).

This section examines the four costly consequences of workplace bullying for institutional success:

- Higher health-care costs
- Higher legal expenses and risks
- Higher turnover, reduced ability to recruit, damaged reputation
- Lower productivity and creativity.

A. HIGHER HEALTH-CARE COSTS

Workplace bullying has severe health consequences for targets and witnesses, as outlined in Section III, consequences that are at least as severe as the consequences of sexual harassment (WBI, 2010). Targets naturally increase their reliance on physical and mental health services (Rospenda, 2002). In a 2010 survey of US workers, 71% of respondents reported having been treated by a doctor for work-related health symptoms; 63% reported seeing a mental health professional. Targets are significantly more likely than average to become disabled and receive disability benefits (Glambek et al., 2015). Witnesses, especially those who are female, are more likely to develop depressive symptoms over the following two years (Nielsen et al., 2012).

B. HIGHER LEGAL RISK AND EXPENSE

Legal claims based on work-related stress have been increasing in frequency since the mid-1990s (Thorpe, 2001), based on the premise that institutions have an obligation to protect employee health and safety at work.

A policy of tolerating bullies compounds this legal risk. It is known that bullies generally choose a new target soon after their existing target quits (Field, 2009), and it is known that bullying has severe health consequences. By implication, the next target can claim that the institution knowingly put their health at risk by failing to respond appropriately to any previous complaint.

C. HIGHER TURNOVER, DAMAGED REPUTATION

Roughly one-quarter of targets and one-fifth of witnesses quit (Rayner, 1997, cited in Sutton, 2007; Berthelsen et al., 2011). As a rough estimate, replacing a lost employee costs 1.5 times that person's salary (WBI, 2017). This loss is compounded because targets tend to be the ones from whom institutions benefit the most: high-skill, high-empathy straight shooters (WBI, 2017).

If workplace bullying is not addressed, an institution's reputation can be tarnished by external reports of mistreatment. Targets will share their experiences with colleagues at other institutions, seeking the support they failed to get from colleagues and management.

A reputation for bullying undermines an institution's ability to recruit and retain talent (WBI, 2014). Non-profits with such a reputation are presumably less attractive to donors.

D. LOWER PRODUCTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

Just observing rudeness is enough to compromise a worker's productivity: after exposure to rudeness an individual's performance declines in creative as well as in routine tasks (Porath and Erez, 2007). But targets and witnesses must also devote time and effort to self protection. The associated absenteeism and other forms of wasted time are conservatively estimated to cost roughly \$7,000 per employee per year at U.S. four-year colleges and universities (Hollis, 2012).

Workplace bullying also compromises an institution's effectiveness through the destruction of trust (Dirks et al., 2001). Once an institution has tolerated bullying, the damage generally worsens as bullying spreads throughout the workforce and becomes more intense.

Trust in an employer is vital for institutional effectiveness. Without trust, employees will not undertake altruistic, cooperative behaviors, such as sharing information across the organization (Bonacich & Schneider, 1992) or claiming only one's share of limited institutional resources (Messick et al., 1983; Tyler & DeGoey, 1996). These behaviors are essential to achieving collective goals even though they do not fit any narrow job description (Kramer, 1996, p. 382). A successful university needs faculty to staff committees, to teach well instead of just adequately, to mentor junior colleagues, etc.

Institutional trust disappears when bullying is tolerated because bullying is "inconsistent with the normative expectations of a civil society" (Twale and DeLuca, 2008). The perception of hypocrisy is especially acute at academic institutions, which publicly espouse values of integrity and social justice.

Institutional trust also disappears because bullying violates psychological contracts (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994, p. 256). An employee who works hard and does a good job perceives an institutional obligation to be treated with dignity; a target of bullying is repeatedly humiliated, instead. Psychological contracts are integral to the success of institutions like universities that are service-oriented, that put a strong emphasis on values, and that hire employees early in their careers and support their development over decades (Rousseau, 1990, p. 391).

Disengagement is the approach experts recommend to targets for self-protection (e.g., Klein, 2005). Professors seem to recognize this (Huston et al., 2007): many faculty at the top of their game in terms of research and teaching withdraw from unavoidable professional activities within their institution. At one university roughly one-third of research-productive senior professors were disengaged (Huston et al., 2007). Disengagement is most likely among those who are least careerist and thus most dedicated to the institution (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994).

Spreading and spiraling: When workplace bullying is tolerated it tends to spread and intensify. Upon learning that their behavior is acceptable, bullies become more aggressive (Bandura, 1973). Co-workers learn the same lesson, and some of those become bullies themselves. Bullies tend to hire and promote other bullies (Sutton, 2007), strengthening the dominant culture. The dominant culture is also strengthened by the silence of those with empathy and integrity, who know they would not get support from management (O'Reilly and Roberts, 1976). Many such individuals leave the group or the institution, leaving behind a different workforce (Rayner,

1997). Fear comes to dominate interpersonal interactions, undermining cooperation (Deutsch, 1973) and individual problem-solving and performance (Boss, 1978; Zand, 1972).

In the vivid words of Tim Fields: “When bullies act with impunity, the institutional culture comes to be dominated by fear and self-seeking behavior. Communication shrivels and what’s left is CYA e-mails and the like. Innovation and cooperation become risky and thus rare. ... The serial bully’s inefficiency and dysfunction ... can spread through an organization like a cancer” (quoted in Vaknin, 2017).

IV. SEVERE CONSEQUENCES FOR TARGETS AND WITNESSES

In most developed countries workplace bullying is considered a “health hazard” (Worksafe New Zealand, 2017) because it severely damages the physical and psychological health of targets and witnesses. Indeed, Workplace Bullying causes trauma, according to the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress (2016). Many of the adverse health consequences for targets are listed in Appendix C.

Workplace Bullying is more damaging to target health than either gender- or race-based harassment (Raver & Nishii, 2010). Bullying triggers stress and anxiety in roughly two-thirds of targets (e.g., WBI, 2003); chronic stress is experienced by roughly 40% (Vartia, 2001). A strong causal link from bullying to stress remains after controlling for job demands, gender, initial symptoms, and other relevant factors (Reknes et al., 2014). Chronic stress associated with bullying commonly brings tension, migraine headaches, and even panic attacks (WBI, 2003). It also compromises the immune system, which increases the risk of infectious disease. In the long run, chronic stress is associated with hypertension, cardiovascular disease (Kivmäki et al., 2003), Parkinson’s, type-2 diabetes, cancer (Ahola et al., 2012), and Alzheimer’s disease (Gregoire, 2013), an effect that is especially strong in women (Slezak, 2012).

Because stress affects mood, targets of bullying commonly display heightened irritability, frustration, anger and hostility (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994); many show decreased interest in their appearance, in punctuality, in their own efficiency or productivity (Field, 2009); some targets become defensive or suspicious and withdraw socially (Mills et al., 2008). In the extreme, the chronic stress associated with bullying contributes to bipolar disorder, suicidal ideation (Nielsen et al., 2016), and sometimes suicide (Leymann, 1996).

Bullying is consistently found to cause or intensify depression and associated symptoms such as fatigue. Approximately 40% of targets experience depression, well above the 14% depression rate for non-targets (Butterworth et al., 2013). Depression in the workplace becomes apparent as low morale, uncooperative behavior, absenteeism, safety risks, and accidents (NIH National Worksite Program, 1995). Workplace bullying brings increased consumption of alcohol among both men and women (Richman et al., 1996).

The health effects of workplace bullying vary according to the nature of the psychological attack. Stress is most strongly associated with an unfair or offensive assessment of one’s work (Vartia, 2001). Depression is most strongly associated with direct personal denigration – most

notably being treated as invisible – and with attacks on a person’s privacy (Zapf et al., 1996, cited in Vartia, 2001).

As summarized by Reknes et al. (2014), psychological theorists have developed at least two hypotheses to explain why workplace bullying is so severely damaging to the health of targets. It could be because workplace threats bring intense fear and worry, which trigger a physiological fight-or-flight response (Ursin and Eriksen, 2004). The fear and worry are compounded by the target’s awareness that s/he is effectively trapped. In addition, bullying – as a series of traumatic events – challenges beliefs that provide the foundation for mental health: “(1) the world [i]s benevolent, (2) the world [i]s meaningful and, (3) the self [i]s worthy” (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

These psychological strains are typically compounded by a lack of options. Confronting the bully generally provides no relief. Bullies rarely admit the nature of their behavior and their inability to recognize target concerns is harmful in itself (Namie, 2013).

Nor do targets benefit from institutional support. Indeed, targets who support from authorities often experience a second round of bullying or “institutional betrayal,” as previously-neutral colleagues and administrators deny the existence of a problem, attack the target as the offender, and support the bully (Smith and Freyd, 2014; The Tim Field Foundation, 2016a). Many targets, especially faculty targets, become ashamed that the bullying bothers them (Lewis, 2004). Others experience “a feeling of desperation and total helplessness, a feeling of great rage about lack of legal remedies, great anxiety and despair” (Leymann, 1996). This psychological damage is more acute at institutions that claim to be guided by strong values (Hollis, 2012).

Witnesses to workplace bullying experience the same list of health difficulties as targets but less acutely. One-quarter of witnesses experience moderate to severe stress, a figure that falls between corresponding levels of 40% for targets and 14% for others (Vartia, 2001). Witnesses commonly experience depression (Emdad et al., 2013), sleeping problems, head-ache, strain, fatigue, and lack of energy (Vartia, 2001). The experiences of witnesses are sufficiently severe that they quit at almost the same rate as targets (Rayner, 1997).

The adverse effect of workplace bullying on mental health are long-lasting. Even five years later these effects remain statistically significant after controlling for initial mental health status, demographic factors, and job factors (Einarsen et al., 2015).

V. EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

At present most U.S. institutions respond to bullying with denial, support for the bully, and retaliation against the target (e.g., Rayner, 2003). Most U.S. targets report no support beyond family and friends (WBI, 2014).

By implication, institutions injure targets by withholding support despite their affirmative responsibility to protect worker health. The consequences of institutional bullying are no less severe than those of individual bullying. As noted by one investigator: “staff who have been badly treated can become isolated, and disadvantaged in their ability to obtain appropriate

alternative employment. In short, lives can be ruined by poor handling of staff who have raised concerns” (Francis, 2015).

This section reviews institutional policies and procedures at various levels: The law, HR departments, managers, co-workers.

A. THE LAW

In contrast to most other industrialized democracies, the U.S. has no national or state prohibitions against workplace bullying.

At Brandeis University, as at most other universities, existing policies and procedures only cover forms of violence that are already prohibited by U.S. law. Laws against discrimination and harassment can be applied in only about 20% of workplace bullying cases (WBI, 2014).

B. HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENTS

The myriad sources consulted in preparation of this document are unanimous: HR departments generally suppress reports of workplace bullying and/or side with the bully. A target should “expect personnel/human resources to disbelieve [the target] and deny the bullying...” (the Tim Field Foundation, 2017). The first advice for targets in *The Bully At Work* is: “Do not trust HR – they work for management ...”, (Namie and Namie, 2009, p. 231). One academic expert suggests, in the title of a thoughtful inquiry, that HR is a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” (Rayner, 2003).

The absence of support from HR departments applies equally to the academy. The response of HR to bullying complaints was positive at only two of nine four-year institutions studied in-depth by Hollis (2012).

This narrow perspective misses the broader truth highlighted by the research reviewed in Part II: failing to acknowledge and discourage the bullying is more costly to the institution than an activist policy. Indeed, prohibiting workplace bullying simultaneously protects employee health and maximizes conventional measures of institutional success.

Many researchers discuss why HR generally chooses not to support targets. A particularly compelling reason stems from a conflict of interest between HR personnel and targets. The primary goal of the HR function has been, for decades, to become a “strategic partner” of management (Ulrich, 1997). Roughly three-quarters of bullies are supervisors (WBI, 2014), so “employee advocacy” by HR generally does not promote this goal (Lawler and Morhman, 2003).

Experts highlight additional reasons why HR departments have historically tended to side with the bully:

- HR departments are short on time and resources, and workplace bullying cases are inevitably lengthy and complex. Bullying is a *pattern* and many instances of behavior will need to be verified for any given case. In addition, bullies tend to portray themselves as victims and their countercharges require additional investigation (Gunsalus, 2006).

- Bullying cases are typically brought to HR only after the problem is acute, by which time even the most patient target will have displayed impatience or some other negative response. Due to the Fundamental Attribution Error, a well-documented psychological phenomenon (Malle, 2006), observers will attribute this response to personal shortcomings rather than severely adverse circumstances.
- HR representatives assigned to investigate are often of lower rank within the institution than the bully or the bully's protecting manager. A finding of fault could therefore be job-threatening to the HR investigator.
- HR representatives are not protected against retaliation if they stand up for a bullied employee because workplace bullying is not illegal in the U.S. (Kumin and Schroeder, 2017).
- Bullying is not typically a high institutional priority
- Archetypal bullies excel at charming, deceiving, and/or frightening others.
- HR employees may not be informed because textbooks, training courses, and existing policies focus on the harassment prohibited by law and have not covered workplace bullying. This ignorance is highlighted in the comments of an online expert.
 - “[A]n HR person is likely to start with the assumption that the person [bringing a bullying complaint] is exaggerating the problem. ... However, if multiple people are coming with the same complaint, you really need to investigate” (Lucas, 2010). Because bullies typically choose just one target, the requirement that complaints arise from multiple individuals leads naturally to the dismissal of legitimate bullying concerns and to the treatment of targets as culpable.

In the last few years, workplace bullying has become a topic of increasing interest among HR professionals, which is encouraging. If the conflict of interest described above is not alleviated, however, the power of knowledge to change practices may be limited.

C. MANAGERS

The consensus among experts is that managers are even more likely than HR departments to suppress a bullying complaint or retaliate against the target. Indeed, experts estimate that 70% to 80% of bullies are supervisors.

D. COLLEAGUES

Though experts stress that bystander inaction promotes bullying (WBI, 2017), co-workers rarely intervene. Many colleagues are simply ignorant of what has transpired, but even witnesses rarely speak up, often because they feel trapped and fearful (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996; American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, 2016). Witnesses who empathize with the target and recognize the moral offense of bullying also recognize the costs of speaking up: they could lose the support of colleagues or become a target themselves. “Researchers in the U.K. found that more than one-third of witnesses wanted to intervene to help victims but were afraid to do so” (Sutton, 2007, p. 33).

According to research, as bullying continues many of a target's co-workers choose to side with the bully, so bullying turns into mobbing (Duffy and Sperry, 2014): "When there's conflict in the air, most people want to be on the winning side, or the side they think will survive" (The Tim Field Foundation, 2016b). Siding with the bully could also reflect the fundamental attribution error. "[T]hose around regularly assume that the cause of the problem lies in the deviant personality of the victim (that is, one observes the victim's defensive behavior and from that draws the conclusion that the victim is suffering from a personality problem)" (Leymann, 1996, pp. 121-122).

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Appendix A. Standard Structure and Content: Legal Definitions of Workplace Bullying

Synthesis of the 30 legal definitions discoverable over a multi-day online search. The most common words highlighted in **bold**.

	Feature	Percent of 30 legal definitions*	Words in legal definitions	Brandeis Faculty
1	Identified as form of harassment	67%		--
2	Stress persistence	77%	Persistent , repeated, consistent, systematic, recurrent, pattern continue over a period,	Persistent pattern
3	Broad characterization (often 1 word)	97%	Unwelcome, Unwanted, Offensive, Objectionable, Unreasonable, Inappropriate Vexatious, Abusive, Hostile, Improper Use of Authority, Derogatory, Negative, Reprehensible	Unwelcome
4	Standard of judgment	37%	Known or ought reasonably to know Reasonable person standard	Reasonable person standard
5	Provide more specificity	97% Average number: 4.5	By category: 1. Humiliate , Embarrass 2. Belittle , Condescend, Demean, Insult, Degrade 3. Intimidate , Threaten 4. Offend , Victimize 5. Violates dignity or personal integrity	1. Humiliate 2. Belittle 3. Intimidate 4. Offend 5. Disempower
6	Protects respondents by specifying risk or reality of harm	33%	Constitutes threat to health & safety Adversely affects worker's health Endangers job, undermines performance ... Make workplace harmful	Cumulative purpose or effect of harming an employee's health, reputation, career success, or ability to perform
7	Protects management by listing specific acceptable managerial actions	13%	Example 1: Excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment. Example 2: A manager can make decisions about poor performance, take disciplinary action, and direct and control the way work is carried out. Reasonable management action that's carried out in a reasonable way is not bullying.	Workplace Bullying also does not include appropriate workplace supervision carried out respectfully and fairly. This includes: setting aggressive performance goals; determining fair committee assignments; coaching or providing constructive feedback; investigating alleged misconduct; disciplining an employee for substantiated misconduct.

* Jurisdictions of legal definitions: Alberta, Australia, Belgium, British Columbia, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Manitoba, Netherlands, New Brunswick, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Norway, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Poland, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, UK.

Appendix B: Negative Acts Questionnaire, Revised

1. Someone withholding information which affects your performance
2. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work
3. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence
4. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks
5. Spreading gossip about you
6. Being ignored or excluded
7. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes, or private life
8. Being shouted at or being target of spontaneous anger
9. Insulting behavior
10. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job
11. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes
12. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach
13. Repeated criticism with respect to your work and effort
14. Having your opinions ignored
15. Practical jokes carried out by people you do not get along with
16. Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines
17. Having allegations made against you
18. Excessive monitoring of your work
19. Pressure to not claim something to which by right you are entitled to
20. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm
21. Being exposed to unmanageable workload
22. Threats or actual violence or physical abuse

Appendix C: Health Consequences of Workplace Bullying

In a sample of 1,000 volunteer respondents to an online survey (WBI, 2003), the following share of individuals reported the following health consequences:

a.) Overall Ranking of the Prevalence of Symptoms, most to least frequent

1. Anxiety, stress, excessive worry (76%)
2. Loss of concentration (71%)
3. Disrupted sleep (71%)
4. Feeling edgy, irritable, easily startled and constantly on guard (paranoia) (60%)
5. Stress headaches (55%)
6. Obsession over details at work (52%)
7. Recurrent memories, nightmares and flashbacks (49%)
8. Racing heart rate (48%)
9. Needing to avoid feelings, thoughts, and situations that remind you of trauma or a general emotional "flatness" (47%)
10. Body aches--muscles or joints (45%)
11. Exhaustion, leading to an inability to function (41%)
12. Compulsive behaviors (40%)
13. Diagnosed depression (39%)
14. Shame or embarrassment that led to dramatic changes in lifestyle (38%)
15. Significant weight change (loss or gain) (35%)
16. Chronic fatigue syndrome (35%)
17. Panic attacks (32%)
18. TMJ (jaw tightening/teeth grinding) (29%)
19. Skin changes, e.g., shingles, rashes, acne (28%)
20. Use of substances to cope: tobacco, alcohol, drugs, food (28%)
21. Asthma or allergies (27%)
22. Thinking about being violent towards others (25%)
23. Suicidal thoughts (25%)
24. Migraines (23%)
25. Irritable bowel syndrome (colitis) (23%)
26. Chest pains (23%)
27. Hair loss (21%)
28. Fibromyalgia--inflamed joints and connective tissue (19%)
29. High blood pressure/hypertension (18%)
30. Ulcers (11%)