

Dignity and Safety at Work

Findings from the Research on Workplace Bullying

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Workplace bullying is prohibited by law in most developed countries (Namie, 2014).² Lawmakers from the Antipodes to Canada to Continental Europe have responded with firmness and compassion to research showing that this form of psychological violence severely damages institutions and their employees.

Research on workplace bullying, which began in Scandinavia in the 1980s, now includes hundreds of studies covering workplaces worldwide. Part A of this document defines workplace bullying and describes its prevalence. Part B reviews the many ways in which workplace bullying undermines the effectiveness of an institution. Part C reviews how workplace bullying compromises the health of targets and victims. Part D summarizes the way U.S. institutions normally respond to workplace bullying.

A. Definition, patterns, and prevalence

Workplace bullying is one-sided psychological violence. When carried out over long periods of time, as is typical for academia, this violence has shattering consequences for targets and undermines an institution's effectiveness. As research has accumulated over the decades it has become clear that the conventional image of a workplace bully only partially accurate. A workplace bully is sometimes a boss who screams insults at subordinates in front of co-workers – but only sometimes. Instead:

1. Workplace bullying is primarily defined by the *persistence* of aggression rather than its intensity.
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 usually unaware.
3. Workplace bullying is common, especially in academia.
4. Workplace bullying does not usually arise from differences in opinion or personality. Workplace bullies tend to be unskilled managers threatened by skilled subordinates or individuals with personal pathologies.

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² Canada has provincial laws against bullying and anti-bullying policies in the federal occupational health code.
<http://www.healthyworkplacebill.org/faq.php>

5. Targets are usually blamed but rarely responsible. They are not usually prickly, opinionated, or overly sensitive. And they have few levers for self-defense: Pushback triggers aggressive retaliation; HR typically sides with the bully; management and co-workers are rarely supportive.

The rest of Section A reviews these points in order.

A.1 Workplace bullying is primarily defined persistence rather than intensity.

Every rigorous definition of workplace bullying stresses two things: The aggression must be persistent and it need not be intense. The importance of persistence is stressed throughout the academic literature. 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 (Einarson 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, 2014)
- **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 (Leyland, 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, 2016a).³

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, 2008). Though evidence is scarce, this suggests that mobbing is common in academe.

A.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 usually unaware.

Bullies typically avoid censure by attacking in ways that are only apparent to the target.⁴ Some bullies reserve outright attacks for private settings. Others rely on passive-aggressive attacks such as failing to provide managerial support or needed information, behind-the-back character assassination, or exclusion from important groups (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, it is typically difficult for co-workers are often unaware that workplace bullying is an issue.

A.3 Workplace bullying is 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.⁵ 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).

³ <http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/problem/definition/>

⁴ Yamada (2012).

⁵ 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.

A.4 Workplace bullying does not arise from differences in opinion or personality. Workplace bullies tend to be unskilled managers threatened by skilled subordinates or individuals with personal pathologies.

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 (WBI, 2007). 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).

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).

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).

A.5 Targets are usually blamed but rarely responsible. They are not usually prickly, opinionated, or overly sensitive. And they have no levers for self-defense: Pushback triggers aggressive retaliation; management and co-workers are rarely supportive.

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.⁶ 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

⁶ <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.

workforce.⁷ Depriving the target of their livelihood is evidently the intent of retaliation after pushback; indeed, leading experts call this response “expulsion” (Leyland (1996; Glambek et al., 2015) or “elimination” (The Tim Field Institute, 2016a).

There is no personality or coping strategy that protects targets from bullying. Glasø et al. (2015) show that moderate-to-severe bullying has acute health effects regardless of a target’s personality. Reknes et al. (2016) show that moderate-to-severe bullying has acute health effects regardless of a target’s coping strategy.

B. Harm to institutions: Higher costs and legal risk, lower productivity

Prohibiting workplace bullying protects employees and improves conventional measures of institutional success. In fact, tolerating bullies is basically an own goal. “Bullying destroys teams and causes disenchantment, demoralisation, demotivation, disaffection and alienation. Organisations become dysfunctional and inefficient ...” (The Tim Field Institute, 2017). Careful estimates show that the institutional costs of tolerating bullies far outweigh the benefits. Costs outweigh benefits even when the bully is a superstar (Housman and Minor, 2015).

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.

B.1 Higher health-care costs.

Workplace bullying has severe health consequences for targets and witnesses, as outlined in Section C, 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. Individuals exposed to bullying behavior are significantly more likely than average to become disabled and receive disability benefits (Glambek et al., 2015).

B.2 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.

⁷ By contrast, bullies themselves rarely lose their job (Glambek et al., 2015).

B.3 High turnover, low ability to recruit, damaged reputation.

Roughly one-quarter of targets and one-fifth of witnesses quit (Rayner, 1997, cited in Sutton, 2007). 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 (The Tim Field Institute, 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.

B.4 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. 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, 1996a). 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).⁸ 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 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; see also Peck, 2002).

C. Health 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.

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, Parkinson’s, type-2 diabetes, cancer (Ahola et al., 2012), and Alzheimer’s disease (Gregoire, 2013; this effect is especially strong in women (Slezak (2012))).

Because stress affects mood, targets of bullying will commonly display heightened irritability, frustration, anger and hostility (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994); they will often show decreased interest in their appearance, in punctuality, in their own efficiency or productivity; 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).

⁸ The university shares many similarities with Brandeis and is likely a member of the AAU.

Bullying is also 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 target health. It could be because workplace threats bring intense fear and worry, which trigger a physiological fight-or-flight response.⁹ 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.”¹⁰

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

A lack of institutional support compounds the adverse health consequences of workplace bullying. 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).

D. 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).

⁹ 'Cognitive activation theory of stress,' Ursin and Eriksen (2004).

¹⁰ 'Cognitive theory of trauma,' Janoff-Bulman (1992).

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.

D.1 *The law and the institution*

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).

D.2 *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, 2016d). 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.”

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 B: 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. The two most compelling reasons both stem from the same source: The primary goal of the HR function has been, for decades, to become a “strategic partner” of management (Ulrich, 1997). Research shows that, on average, “employee advocacy” by HR does not promote this goal (Lawler and Morhman, 2003), which is logical: HR will not be invited into the C-Suite if it takes sides against managers, and given the relative frequency of manager-on-subordinate bullying any attempt to address the problem will on occasion shine an unfavorable light on a manager. In addition, executives at most US institutions fear that by acknowledging bullying they create an institutional liability for injuries (Lewis and Rayner, 2003).

Experts highlight additional reasons why HR departments typically side with the bully:

- HR employees may not be uninformed because textbooks, training courses, and existing policies focus on the harassment prohibited by law. 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.
- HR departments are short of 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.

D.3 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. In addition to the concerns just listed, it is safe to say that managers are often the bullies given the prevalence of superior-on-subordinate bullying.

D.4 Colleagues.

Though experts stress the importance of bystander intervention (e.g., Prorath, 2016), co-workers rarely intervene. Many colleagues are simply ignorant (though ignorance is sometimes only possible through the active disregard of the evidence).

Even witnesses rarely speak up, often because they feel trapped and fearful (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996; Matthiesen et al., 2003; AAETS, 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, 2016*b*). 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).

Appendix I: Forms of Workplace Bullying

Source: Worksafe New Zealand (2017)

Personal attacks (direct)

Belittling remarks – undermining integrity – lies being told
– sense of judgement questioned – opinions marginalised

Ignoring – excluding – silent treatment – isolating

Attacking a person’s beliefs, attitude, lifestyle or
appearance – gender references – accusations of being
mentally disturbed

Ridiculing – insulting – teasing – jokes – ‘funny surprises’
– sarcasm

Shouted or yelled at

Threats of violence

Insulting comments about private life

Physical attacks

Public humiliation

Persistent and/or public criticism

Using obscene or offensive language, gestures, material

Ganging up – colleagues/clients encouraged to criticise
you or spy on you – witch hunt – dirty tricks campaign –
singled out

Intimidation – acting in a condescending manner

Intruding on privacy, eg spying, stalking, harassed by calls
when on leave or at weekends

Unwanted sexual approaches, offers, or physical contact

Verbal abuse

Inaccurate accusation

Suggestive glances, gestures, or dirty looks

Tampering with personal effects – theft – destruction of
property

Encouraged to feel guilty

Task-related attacks (indirect)

Reducing opportunities for expression –
interrupting when speaking

Supplying incorrect or unclear information

Withholding or concealing information –
information goes missing – failing to return
calls or pass on messages

Undervaluing contribution – no credit where
it’s due – taking credit for others’ work

Constant criticism of work

Underwork – working below competence –
removing responsibility – demotion

Unreasonable or inappropriate monitoring

Offensive sanctions – e.g., denying leave

Excluding – isolating – ignoring views

Changing goalposts or targets

Not giving enough training or resources

Giving unachievable tasks – impossible
deadlines – unmanageable workloads –
overloading – ‘setting up to fail’

Sabotage

Meaningless tasks – unpleasant jobs –
belittling a person’s ability – undermining

Making hints or threats about job security

No support from manager

Scapegoating

Denial of opportunity

Judging wrongly

Forced or unjustified disciplinary hearings

Lack of role clarity

Not trusting

Appendix II: 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%)

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