

Workplace Bullying

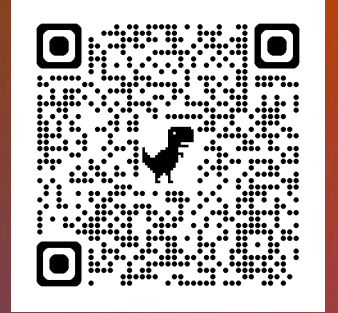
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The U.S. Surgeon General's
Framework for



Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

2022



Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

Centered on the worker voice and equity, these five Essentials support workplaces as engines of well-being. Each Essential is grounded in two human needs, shared across industries and roles.



Components

Creating a plan with all workers to enact these components can help reimagine workplaces as engines of well-being.

Protection from Harm

- Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety
- Enable adequate rest
- Normalize and support mental health
- Operationalize DEIA* norms, policies, and programs

Connection & Community

- Create cultures of inclusion and belonging
- Cultivate trusted relationships
- Foster collaboration and teamwork

Work-Life Harmony

- Provide more autonomy over how work is done
- Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible
- Increase access to paid leave
- Respect boundaries between work and non-work time

Mattering at Work

- Provide a living wage
- Engage workers in workplace decisions
- Build a culture of gratitude and recognition
- Connect individual work with organizational mission

Opportunity for Growth

- Offer quality training, education, and mentoring
- Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement
- Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback

*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility



Office of the
U.S. Surgeon General

**What is
“workplace bullying?”**

Work Ability and Risk of Turnover for Bystanders to Workplace Bullying

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We investigated two possible outcomes for bystanders to workplace bullying: sickness absence and turnover. Specifically, we examined the direct risks for three categories of witnesses: currently bullied witnesses, previously bullied witnesses, and pure witnesses without any personal experience of bullying. We also explored mechanisms that may explain these outcomes. Sleep problems and sickness presenteeism were analyzed as mediators of sickness absence, while job satisfaction and turnover intent were examined as mediators of turnover. The study was based on a prospective probability sample of the Swedish workforce. The results showed that witnessing bullying affects subsequent sickness absence and turnover across all three categories of witnesses. Turnover was preceded by reduced job satisfaction, followed by an intention to quit, while sickness absence was preceded by sleep problems and presenteeism. These findings may be explained by the cognitive activation theory of stress, which suggests that witnessing bullying can increase cognitive activation, potentially leading to health-related problems if prolonged. Additionally, reduced job satisfaction and intention to quit may stem from the hostile work environments often associated with bullying. These results highlight the importance of implementing preventive measures to reduce the risk of bullying, not only for the targets but also for the organization as a whole.

Keywords: bystanders, workplace bullying, turnover, sick leave, presenteeism


Workplace bullying is a severe social stressor (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005) and is defined as a systematic mistreatment of an employee by one or more colleagues at the workplace, where the targeted individual has difficulties in ending or warding off the mistreatment (Einarsen et al., 2020). While it is well established that exposure to workplace bullying has significant detrimental consequences for those directly targeted (Boudrias et al., 2021; Leach et al., 2017; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Nielsen et al., 2016; Verkuil et al., 2015), less is known about how bullying affects individuals who only witness the mistreatment of colleagues (for notable exceptions, see Ng et al., 2020, 2022; Nielsen, Rosander, et al., 2021; Paull et al., 2020; Rosander & Nielsen, 2023b; Salin & Notelaers, 2020; Sprigg et al., 2019). Understanding the impact of bullying on bystanders is important as it contributes to a fuller understanding of the problem and provides essential knowledge for managing bullying and designing measures to reduce its occurrence. However, many areas within this subfield of workplace bullying research remain underexplored and hampered by methodological shortcomings.

For instance, while findings from a recent systematic review and meta-analysis of the research literature on bystanders to bullying

do indicate that witnesses are also likely to be affected when a colleague is exposed to bullying (Nielsen et al., 2024), the review also highlighted that most existing studies have been limited to immediate outcomes, such as job-related attitudes and psychological distress, while there is a lack of research on more distal and long-term outcomes related to work ability, such as sickness absence and turnover. Another limitation is that most research on bystanders has not considered how the bystanders' own exposure to bullying could influence their perceptions and reports of witnessed bullying (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2013). Finally, there is a notable shortage of studies investigating mechanisms that can explain the outcomes following witnessed bullying.

To address some of these knowledge gaps, we will investigate distal, long-term outcomes by using proximal attitudinal and psychological outcomes as mediators for bystanders to bullying, taking both current and previous experiences of bullying into account. Specifically, the aims of this prospective study are to examine the subsequent risks of sickness absence and actual turnover for bystanders to bullying and to identify mechanisms that can explain how witnessing bullying impacts sickness absence and turnover.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Michael Rosander, upon reasonable request. Results from the study were presented at the 14th International Association of Workplace Bullying and Harassment Conference, held from 25 to 28 June 2024 in Huddersfield, United Kingdom. The authors presented the mediation models but did not provide a detailed account of all results.

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose. The project was

approved by the Regional Ethical Review Board at Linköping University (protocol number: 2017/336-32). This research was funded in whole, or in part, by the FORTE (Sweden; Grants 2019-01232 and 2023-00262). For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright license to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

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Workplace bullying is a

- severe social stressor
- defined as systematic mistreatment of an employee
- by one or more colleagues at the workplace
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A Weekly Diary Within-Individual Investigation of the Relationship Between Exposure to Bullying Behavior, Workplace Phobia, and Posttraumatic Stress Symptomatology

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Most studies on workplace bullying have adopted a between-person approach, neglecting the potential within-individual fluctuations in the experience of bullying behaviors. However, investigating such fluctuations may prove useful for uncovering processes and mechanisms associated with bullying and its antecedents and consequences as they unfold over time. In the present study, based on recent discoveries on traumatic experiences and posttraumatic stress (PTS), we hypothesized that even short-term exposure to bullying behaviors—such as the exposure that characterizes an individual when the *time window* considered is a working week—may already have a substantial psychological impact at the within-individual level, as indicated by the experience of PTS symptoms. Additionally, we hypothesized that the development of workplace phobia may act as a mechanism linking the exposure to bullying behaviors during the week and the reported PTS symptomatology, and that person-level vulnerability factors to PTS (e.g., a recent trauma and female gender) accentuate the within-individual relationships. We tested the proposed hypotheses on a sample of 158 workers that were followed for 6 consecutive working weeks for a total of 860 observations. In line with other recent within-individual investigations, we found that exposure to bullying behaviors shows substantial week-level fluctuations. We also found overall support for the hypotheses, including evidence of a within-level lagged impact of bullying behaviors on workplace phobia, suggesting that even nonpersistent exposure to such behaviors is related to potentially nonignorable psychological suffering and PTS symptoms.

Keywords: workplace bullying, workplace phobia, posttraumatic stress, weekly diary study

Supplemental material: <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp000371.supp>

Workplace bullying is a distinct form of workplace aggression that, according to a common definition, refers to persistent exposure to repetitive negative social behavior at work, which comprises harassment, ostracism, exclusion, or actions that negatively affect the target's work, such as withholding of information that impairs performance and being given unmanageable workload (S. V. Einarsen et al., 2020). The phenomenon has been initially described by Leymann (1990) in a series of clinically oriented investigations in which he documented the psychologically aversive effects of bullying, including its traumatic consequences (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996). Later studies confirmed that being exposed to workplace bullying has detrimental effects on the victims and their

organizations, including anxiety, depression, long-term sickness absence, intention to leave, and early retirement from work (see Boudrias et al., 2021; Burr et al., 2022; Mikkelsen et al., 2020; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). A recent study showed that self-labeling as a victim of bullying was significantly related to subsequent suicide attempt and death by suicide as assessed by registered-based data (Conway et al., 2022).

From the available evidence, it is clear that workplace bullying is an extreme work-related social stressor, leading to consequences that are frequently more severe than those ensuing from more common psychosocial risk factors, such as high workload, role conflict, and role ambiguity (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). Additionally,

and editing and an equal role in investigation and project administration. Paul M. Conway played a supporting role in writing—original draft and writing—review and editing and an equal role in conceptualization. Michela Vignoli played a lead role in project administration, a supporting role in conceptualization, investigation, and writing—review and editing, and an equal role in methodology.

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A preliminary version of this study has been presented by Cristian Balducci at the “Bergen International Symposium on Workplace Bullying 2022,” Bergen (Norway), June 2–3, 2022, and at the 21st Congress of the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, Katowice (Poland), May 24–27, 2023. The data and the syntax of the main analyses have been made available as Supplemental Material.

Cristian Balducci played a lead role in conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, methodology, writing—original draft, and writing—review

Workplace bullying is the

- systematic
- prolonged
- negative treatment
- of an employee
- by co-workers or a supervisor
- where the target can't ward off or defend against the treatment



Is there a blast radius of workplace bullying? Ripple effects on witnesses and non-witnesses

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Abstract

Substantial evidence points to detrimental effects of workplace bullying on the health, well-being and job attitudes among those exposed. What is less known is how bullying affects their non-exposed colleagues. In this study, we introduce the concept “blast radius of bullying” and use social information processing theory to investigate how bullying impacts targets, witnesses, and non-witnesses. We suggest three mechanisms to understand the impact bullying may have on non-targets: the working environment mechanism, secondary victimization, and emotional contagion. We hypothesized that non-exposed colleagues in groups where bullying exists would feel some impact of bullying, but that it would be smaller for those further away from the point of impact. We also investigated the association between the severity of mistreatment and outcomes for the above-mentioned categories. We used data ($n=2215$) from 195 work groups. The results provided evidence for a blast radius of bullying, however, not as far-reaching as hypothesized as only direct observation of mistreatment was associated with negative outcomes. The severity of mistreatment was not associated with the outcomes, whereas the frequency of observation had some impact for witnesses. The study showed that also witnesses may be regarded as “co-victims”.

Keywords Workplace aggression · Bystanders · Health and well-being

Workplace bullying is highly detrimental for those exposed. As shown in numerous primary studies and meta-analyses, targets of bullying suffer grave consequences, including high levels of mental distress, somatic complaints, and suicidal ideation, as well as lower well-being and work ability (Leach et al., 2017; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Nielsen et al., 2016; Verkuil et al., 2015). However, an important unresolved issue within research on workplace bullying is how its occurrence influences those not directly exposed at the workplace. The few studies that exist have mainly been limited to examining colleagues that have witnessed bullying of others directly (e.g., Nielsen et al., 2021; Sprigg et

al., 2019; Vartia, 2001), without considering the potential ripple effects on those not knowing that bullying occurs at their workplace or merely have heard rumours about it. Consequently, we do not know whether the occurrence bullying has an impact on the workplace as a whole, or if the consequences are limited to those directly involved as targets, perpetrators, or witnesses. The main objective of the present study is to fill this knowledge gap. We introduce the concept “blast radius of bullying” and based on social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) we suggest three mechanisms of how this blast radius may be understood. Using group level data, we investigate how the occurrence of bullying in a work group impacts targets, witnesses, and non-witnesses and compare it with employees in work groups free from bullying. Specifically, we determine how the presence of bullying affects creativity, concentration, mental health, sickness absence and sickness presenteeism among targets, witnesses, and non-witnesses.

Workplace bullying has in many cases been treated as a dysfunctional interpersonal process (Fevre et al., 2012; Zapf & Gross, 2001), and to this date, most interventions directed toward bullying has focused on the targets. If bullying also

- Workplace bullying is
- a distinct form of workplace aggression that involves
- persistent and repetitive exposure
- to negative social behavior at work
- which comprises harassment, ostracism, exclusion, or actions that negatively affect the target's work

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**Is workplace bullying
different than any other
workplace mistreatment?**

A Weekly Diary Within-Individual Investigation of the Relationship Between Exposure to Bullying Behavior, Workplace Phobia, and Posttraumatic Stress Symptomatology

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From the available evidence, it is clear that workplace bullying is an extreme work-related social stressor, leading to consequences that are frequently more severe than those ensuing from more common psychosocial risk factors, such as high workload, role conflict, and role ambiguity (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). Additionally,

Workplace bullying is different in severity:

“[I]t is clear that workplace bullying is an extreme work-related social stressor, leading to consequences that are frequently more severe than those ensuing from more common psychosocial risk factors, such as high workload, role conflict, and role ambiguity.”

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Exploring the Coping Strategies of Bullying Targets in Organisations Through Abductive Reasoning: An Agent-Based Simulation Approach

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Abstract

Over recent decades, workplace bullying and other forms of ‘negative acts’ have become a phenomenon of global interest. Extant scholarship has recognized the negative effects, which escalating acts of verbal and physical aggression can have on individuals and the wider, ethical infrastructure of organisations. While previous studies have explored the antecedents of such negative acts and proposed various intervention and prevention strategies, there remains a critical need to examine the coping strategies employed by those targeted by bullying, particularly in instances where silence is the chosen response. In this pioneering study, we use primary data from two UK National Health Service trusts and agent-based social simulation, to determine whether it is possible to influence the coping strategies of bullying targets. Our findings suggest that perceived organisational support has a strong effect on changing bullying coping strategies, away from external (solicitors, Court of Law) and towards internal channels (colleagues, managers, etc.). We also find that TU membership can moderately influence a change in bullying coping strategies from doing nothing to taking actions. The article makes a conceptual contribution to the literature on coping strategies as a result of (un)ethical behaviour in organisations, offers methodological innovation and makes recommendations to organisational policymakers.

Keywords Ethical infrastructure · Bullying · Negative acts · Organisational support · Agent-based social simulation

Marco Campenni and Constantine Manolchev have equally contributed to this work.

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, workplace bullying has become a phenomenon of global interest and researchers have highlighted the continued prevalence of workplace aggression, such as bullying, harassment, incivility and other negative behaviours (Cao et al., 2023; Ghumman et al., 2024; Harvey et al., 2009; Hershcovis, 2011; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). This continued interest is unsurprising, when considering the sheer range of overlapping concepts covered by the umbrella concept of “negative acts” (El Ghaziri et al., 2019; Hoprekstad et al., 2023; Perinelli et al., 2023). For instance, the study of various types of workplace hostility emerged in the 1990s with pioneering work from Fitzgerald (1993), and ongoing research into counterproductive and aggressive behaviours has since produced a rich body of literature (Mackey et al., 2018; Pan & Lin, 2018; Richard et al., 2020). In the UK, organisational scholarship tends to focus on bullying as a particularly toxic “negative act”, recognised as having adverse physical, psychological and emotional impacts on its targets, which can culminate in

Workplace bullying is different in legal status:

“Unlike harassment, which the UK’s Equality Act (2010) defines as discriminatory behaviours based on protected demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender), bullying does not have a legal definition, which makes identifying its incidence in organisations particularly difficult.”

**How prevalent is
workplace bullying?**



2024 WBI
U.S. WORKPLACE BULLYING SURVEY

The Sixth National Scientific WBI Study
Zogby Analytics, Pollster

THE
COMPLETE
REPORT

Gary Namie, PhD
Director & Survey Author

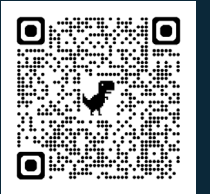
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THANKS TO THE 2024 SURVEY
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ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM GENEROUS GoFundMe CONTRIBUTORS

US national sample of 1,024
adults; data collected in
September 2024



- I am experiencing it now or have experienced it in the last year – **14%**
- I have experienced it before in my work life, but not in the last year – **18%**

Is 14% a small number?

Is 14% a small number?

Type of Experience	Proportion	Number
I am experiencing it now or have experienced it in the last year.	.137	22.2 million US workers
I have experienced it before in my work life, but not in the last year.	.186	29.9 million US workers

**52.1 million
US workers**



The making and breaking of workplace bullying perpetration: A systematic review on the antecedents, moderators, mediators, outcomes of perpetration and suggestions for organizations

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ABSTRACT

Research examining workplace bullying (WB) perpetration from the perspective of perpetrators has remained limited compared to the literature on targets and victims. Until now, no systematic review of the studies from the perpetrators' viewpoints has been published. The present review aimed to synthesize the empirical studies that examine antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of WB perpetration. It also analyzed the practical suggestions given to curb perpetration and the research methods used. A literature search in Scopus, ProQuest, Science Direct, PubMed, and Web of Science databases for empirical studies published between 2003 and 2023 in peer-reviewed journals in English resulted in 50 full-text articles. Antecedent-perpetration relationships were primarily examined based on social and aggression theories. These relationships were analyzed in the silos of work environment or individual factors without diverse moderators and mediators. Research on WB perpetrators largely lacked causality analysis. Perpetration was associated with task-focused, conflict-prone, poorly organized, and stressful work environments. WB perpetrators had undesirable personality characteristics, and they were also being bullied. The outcomes of their behavior were rarely studied. The suggestions the researchers gave to curb WB perpetration seemed unlikely to be implemented by the same management team that created the toxic environment in the first place. Research on WB perpetrators, which is still in its infancy stage, lacks variety in terms of topics studied, the combination of work environment and individual factors, causality analysis and evidence-based interventions.

1. Introduction

Innumerable constructs explain the negative workplace behaviors that harm employees and organizations. These interpersonal mistreatments, physical and psychological, range from simple incivility to all-out physical violence. Negative acts that comprise workplace aggression include sexual harassment, counterproductive work behavior, abusive supervision, bullying, deviance, lateral violence (Magnavita et al., 2020) and violence (Manier et al., 2017; Prisseumuth et al., 2017). Bullying is a common workplace phenomenon, defined as a severe and damaging interpersonal behavior (Alkankaha et al., 2021), occurring regularly and repeatedly over a period of time, with the interaction of personal and work-related factors (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). The phenomenon results in adverse outcomes for all parties involved.

For targets and victims, adverse outcomes may be negative well-being (Zapf et al., 2020), sleep problems (Magnavita et al., 2019; Nielsen et al., 2020), mental disturbances (Verkuil et al., 2015), frequent job changes, or unemployment (Einarsen et al., 2020), and/or suicidal thoughts (Gunn & Goldstein, 2020). For spouses, adverse outcomes may be partner social undermining and conflicts (Rodríguez-Muñoz et al., 2020). For witnesses, possible negative consequences may be increases in turnover intentions and reductions in organizational commitment (Galín & Notelaers, 2018). For departments or work units, higher employee burnout (Escartín, Dollard, et al., 2021) and finally, for organizations and society, funds wasted (Cullinan et al., 2020; Kline & Lewis, 2019) may be possible adverse outcomes of workplace bullying (WB).

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Globally, the estimated prevalence is approximately 15%

- Different methods, definitions, and locations result in a range of figures

**Is workplace bullying the
same as a “toxic” work
environment?**

INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Toxic Work Climates: An Integrative Review and Development of a
New Construct and Theoretical FrameworkManuela Priesemuth¹ and Marshall Schminke²¹Department of Management and Operations, Villanova School of Business, Villanova University²Department of Management, University of Central Florida

Research and the media demonstrate the profound impact hostile work environments have on organizations and their members. Often, the term “toxic work climate” is used to describe patterns of aggressive behaviors that harm individuals and manifest in the broader workplace. However, despite these common references, scholars still know relatively little about what a toxic work climate actually entails, the processes by which they emerge, and their influence on organizational outcomes. The research domain is complex. Within the organizational literature alone, toxic work climates have been described as those that harbor abusive bosses, aggressive employees, and those that show signs of bullying or incivility. Our aim in this integrative conceptual review is to add precision and focus to this multidisciplinary and fragmented literature. Grounding our efforts in multilevel theories, we first introduce an overarching definition of the toxic work climate construct and review research on existing hostile climate types that can appropriately be consolidated under this new heading. We then develop a new theoretical model that outlines the dominant causes and mechanisms by which toxic work climates form, and the main pathways by which they influence employees, teams, and organizations. Finally, we provide a unified path forward for advancing theory, research, and practice, including advice on how toxic climates might be combated in years to come.

Keywords: toxic work climates, toxic work environments, toxic culture, hostile climates, work climates

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In recent years, the term “toxic work climate” has been prominent in scholarly articles across a variety of research domains including management, psychology, sociology, sports, health care, military, hospitality, and education (e.g., Fine et al., 2016; Härtel, 2008; Holloway & Kusy, 2011; Matos et al., 2018; van Rooij & Fine, 2018). Likewise, the popular press has taken to task well-known firms like Miramax, Fox News, Cable News Network, Amazon, Google, Meta, and Uber for fostering toxic work climates in their daily practices and procedures. In this way, both research and “real world” accounts have highlighted the destructive nature of toxic workplaces, depicting the devastation for employees, work teams, and organizations alike. Indeed, toxic workplaces have been shown to prompt conflict, lost productivity, increased turnover, and in some cases, even posttraumatic stress disorder (Nielsen et al., 2015).


The ubiquitous nature of toxic workplaces points to the importance of better comprehending this type of work environment. However, a full understanding of toxic climates is still elusive. For instance, although the term “toxic work climate” (and related terms such as toxic cultures or toxic environments) appears regularly in the literature and popular media, we know relatively little about the construct itself and its role in shaping organizational outcomes. Moreover, toxic work climates have been described in varying forms including work environments that exhibit signs of abuse, bullying, mistreatment, or incivility (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Paulin & Griffin, 2016), without a proper definition and integration of these climate constructs. Additionally, scholars often explore these issues in silos, researching only a single toxic work behavior (e.g., abusive supervision) at a time, while neglecting the vast literature of other related constructs (e.g., bullying; Herscovis, 2011). As a result, both scholarship and practice face significant challenges caused by examining the idiosyncratic dynamics of only one specific toxic concept rather than identifying general patterns across the larger research domain.

An additional challenge in understanding toxic work climates is the multifaceted nature of its underlying theoretical approaches. Some early work proposed that toxic climates (like other work climates) might emerge through traditional attraction–selection–attrition (ASA) processes (Schneider, 1987) in which employees are drawn to, join, and remain in companies that share values similar to their own (Fulmer & Ostroff, 2016). However, although exceptions may exist (e.g., Matos et al., 2018; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998), it is hard to imagine large numbers of employees being drawn to, willfully

Workplace bullying is different than a toxic work climate:

- A work climate can be “toxic” even without bullying
- Bullying can occur in a work climate that may not be “toxic” for more than the bullying target
- Sometimes, they go hand-in-hand

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Manuela Priesemuth played a lead role in conceptualization, writing–original draft, and writing–review and editing. Marshall Schminke played a supporting role in conceptualization, writing–original draft, and writing–review and editing.

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**Is the focus on the target
or the perpetrator?**

The role of leadership practices in the relationship between role stressors and exposure to bullying behaviours – a longitudinal moderated mediation design

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ABSTRACT

Role conflicts and role ambiguity have been identified as important risk factors for exposure to workplace bullying, particularly when combined with inadequate leadership practices. Even though role ambiguity theoretically can be considered a causal precursor to role conflicts, previous research has mainly examined these role stressors as concurrent predictors of workplace bullying. The present study provides a more nuanced analysis by investigating role conflicts as a mediator in the relationship between role ambiguity and exposure to bullying behaviours. Adding to the understanding of the bullying process we also considered the possible moderating roles of laissez-faire and transformational leadership in the role stressor–bullying relationship. Employing a national probability sample of 1,164 Norwegian workers, with three measurements across a 12-month period, the results showed an indirect effect of employees' role ambiguity on subsequent exposure to bullying behaviours through employees' experience of role conflicts. Moreover, laissez-faire leadership exacerbated, while transformational leadership attenuated, the indirect relationship between role ambiguity and exposure to bullying behaviours through role conflicts. In summary, the present data shows that when the management of organisations neglects its inherent responsibility to adequately address employees' experiences of role ambiguity and role conflicts, the risk of exposure to workplace bullying is likely to increase.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Role ambiguity; role conflict; transformational leadership; laissez-faire leadership; workplace bullying; negative acts

Workplace bullying has shown to be a detrimental psychosocial stressor with a wide range of negative consequences for those exposed and for the social environment where it takes place (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). It is therefore essential to identify those factors that provide a fertile ground for bullying to develop

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“[T]he concept of workplace bullying has a target perspective, where it is the total toll of the exposure – potentially from many sources – that is at the heart of the matter, more so than focusing on isolated perpetrators and their individual acts of incivility and aggression.”

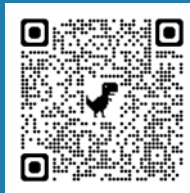
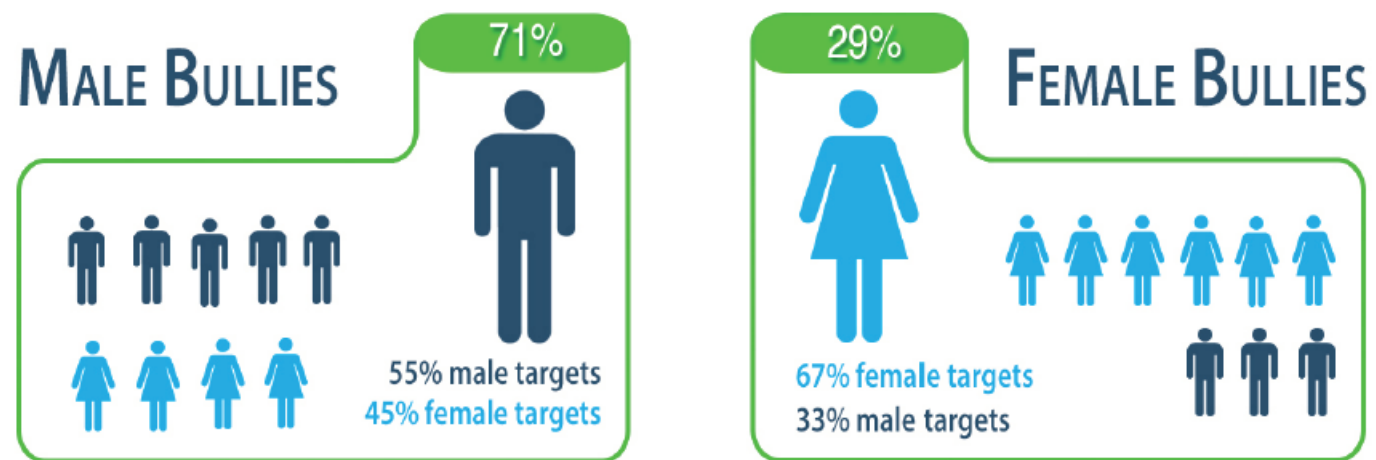


Figure 4. Bullying of Women & Men by Men & Women



**How is workplace
bullying measured?**

Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R)

<p>These statements describe your interactions with your coworkers. For each statement, please rate the frequency with which you experience the following interactions by CIRCling the appropriate number.</p>		Daily 5				
		Weekly 4				
		Monthly 3				
		Occasionally 2				
		Never 1				
		CIRCLE ONE				
1.	Someone withholding information which affects your performance	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Spreading of gossip and rumors about you	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Being ignored or excluded	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, your attitudes, or your private life	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Intimidating behaviors such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Having your opinions ignored	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Having allegations made against you	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Excessive monitoring of your work	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday)	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Being exposed to an unmanageable workload	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse	1	2	3	4	5

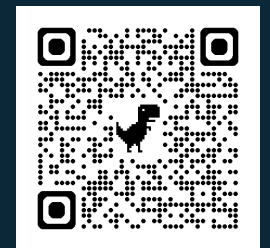
- Short-Negative Acts Questionnaire (S-NAQ)

- Examples

- Being ignored or excluded
- Spreading of gossip and rumors about you
- Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work
- Being the subject of excessive teasing or sarcasm

**Do the targets of
workplace bullying
disproportionately
belong to certain
groups?**

- 37% of LGBTQ employees reported experiencing at least one form of harassment at work due to their sexual orientation or gender identity at some point in their lives



In the Room, but no Seat at the Table: Mixed Methods Analysis of HBCU Women Faculty and Workplace Bullying

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S Sage

Leah P. Hollis¹

Abstract

With gendered organization theory and $n = 201$ Historically Black Colleges and Universities women faculty, the following is addressed: **RQ1** Which Historically Black Colleges and University women faculty, those at schools with or without an anti-bullying policy, are more likely to report workplace bullying? **RQ2** What is the relationship between workplace bullying intensity and time spent strategizing against bullying, health problems, and organizational distrust for Historically Black Colleges and University women faculty? **RQ3** How does workplace bullying affect the experiences of Historically Black Colleges and University women faculty? The mixed methods findings confirm the need for preventative structural changes policies to empower women.

Keywords

historically Black colleges and universities, women faculty, gendered organizations, mixed methods

Overview of Workplace Bullying

“My university encourages bullying from the top down, especially against female employees. They also are punitive if anyone tries to speak out against bullying.”

Respondent #150. March, 2020

Since the mid-1990s, researchers have studied the organizational and leadership factors that enable workplace bullying (Bassman, 1992; Einarsen et al., 1994; Rayner, 1997; Yamada, 1999). Workplace bullying occurs when someone with more organizational, expert, or reverent power abuses that power to consistently relegate the target to an inferior position (Zabrodzka et al., 2016). The target of such abuse often is given last-minute tasks, maliciously insulted in open meetings, or embarrassed via group emails (Namic & Namic, 2009). In higher education, workplace bullying includes threatening professional status or denying vital resources the target needs for career advancement (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Twale, 2017). Many targets reported being subjected to cursing, yelling, hostility, and other rude communication problems (Hollis, 2015; Johnson & Indvik, 2001). In higher education, bullies also engage in passive-aggressive behaviors such as denying travel funds, the silent treatment, moving lab equipment, assigning overloaded classes, and assigning unfavorable class time (Heffernan & Bosetti, 2021; Twale, 2017). These behaviors are not an

exhaustive list; nonetheless, workplace bullies can destroy one’s health.

Workplace bullying also precipitates higher turnover rates. In their study of 373 employees, Coetzee and van Dyk (2018) found a strong association between workplace bullying and faculty departing the university. Salin and Notelaers (2017) studied 1148 employees who considered workplace bullying as a psychological and humanitarian contract violation. Though the targets’ organizational positions were not related to turnover, kind-hearted employees with a cordial and gracious persona were more traumatized by aggressive behavior. They reacted with their plans to leave the organization (Salin & Notelaers, 2017). Their departure only entrenched aberrant employees who fortified workplace toxicity.

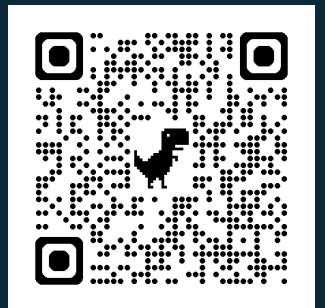
Additionally, research confirms that workplace bullying leads to health-harming problems. Those affected by workplace bullying and the resulting toxic work environment have reported insomnia, depression, anxiety, stress, self-medicating behaviors, post-traumatic stress, and suicidal ideation (Hollis, 2021; Leach et al., 2017; Islamoska et al., 2018; Rodriguez-Munoz et al., 2011; White, 2004). The

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- Overlap with discrimination
- Sometimes context specific
- Influence of EDI policies



**Does workplace bullying
happen in remote work?**

The Effect of Cyberbullying on Stress and Productivity of Remote Employees During COVID-19

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Ethics Approval: This research was deemed exempt by the IRB of Auburn University.

Data Availability: The data is available upon request from the first author.

- Cyberbullying refers to “a situation where over time, an individual is repeatedly subjected to perceived negative acts conducted through technology (e.g., phone, email, websites and social media) which are related to their work context”

The Effect of Cyberbullying on Stress and Productivity of Remote Employees During COVID-19

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- [M]easurement of cyberbullying includes behaviors that are unique to the cyber environment, such as:

“Received aggressively worded messages (e.g., using all capital letters, bold font or multiple exclamation marks).”

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- Factors leading to the thriving of online workplace bullying:
 - Accessibility
 - Anonymity
 - Ambiguity
 - Delayed consequences

**What is the impact of
workplace bullying on
individuals?**

What influences the relationship between workplace bullying and employee well-being? A systematic review of moderators

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^aSheffield University Management School, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK; ^bCentre for Research in Psychology & Human Well-being, The National University of Malaysia, Ampang, Malaysia; ^cAlliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

ABSTRACT

Researchers have consistently shown the detrimental effects that workplace bullying has on employee well-being. While there have been many studies examining moderating factors that worsen or mitigate bullying's effects, the field lacks a common theoretical framework to integrate and explain these diverse moderators. The aim of this systematic review is to identify, categorise, and evaluate variables that have been tested as moderators of the relationship between workplace bullying and well-being using the job demands/resources model. Searches of the literature were carried out in the PsycINFO, Web of Science and Scopus databases. Sixty-eight studies met the inclusion criteria, which reported on 209 tests of moderation. Using an established taxonomy, the moderators were categorised into home demands/resources ($n = 2$), personal demands/resources ($n = 136$), job demands/resources ($n = 4$), social demands/resources ($n = 24$), and organisational demands/resources ($n = 43$). Analysis revealed that social resources, such as co-worker support, and organisational resources such as supportive organisational climates, consistently buffered the harmful effects of bullying. In contrast, personal resources had little influence as moderators. Further cross-cultural and longitudinal research is needed to understand whether the influence of these moderators extends across time and different cultural contexts.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Workplace bullying;
moderators; well-being;
systematic review

Workplace bullying can have devastating consequences for workers' well-being. Over the past ten years, meta-analyses have emerged, which lay bare the impact that bullying can have on those targeted (Nielsen et al., 2020a; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Verkuil et al., 2015). This body of evidence, covering both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, shows that exposure to workplace bullying is associated with poorer well-being, with effect sizes in the medium to strong range (e.g. .3 to .7; Mikkelsen et al., 2020). These findings also appear consistent across different occupational contexts (Hogh et al., 2021).

To better understand the nature of the relationship between workplace bullying and employee well-being, researchers have turned to moderation studies, which examine variables that affect the strength of a relationship between predictor and outcome

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- Anxiety
- Depression
- Post-traumatic stress
- Emotional exhaustion
- Spill-over to outside relationships
- Sleep disruption
- Physical tension & pain

Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

Centered on the worker voice and equity, these five Essentials support workplaces as engines of well-being. Each Essential is grounded in two human needs, shared across industries and roles.



Components

Creating a plan with all workers to enact these components can help reimagine workplaces as engines of well-being.

Protection from Harm

- Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety
- Enable adequate rest
- Normalize and support mental health
- Operationalize DEIA* norms, policies, and programs

Connection & Community

- Create cultures of inclusion and belonging
- Cultivate trusted relationships
- Foster collaboration and teamwork

Work-Life Harmony

- Provide more autonomy over how work is done
- Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible
- Increase access to paid leave
- Respect boundaries between work and non-work time

Mattering at Work

- Provide a living wage
- Engage workers in workplace decisions
- Build a culture of gratitude and recognition
- Connect individual work with organizational mission

Opportunity for Growth

- Offer quality training, education, and mentoring
- Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement
- Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback

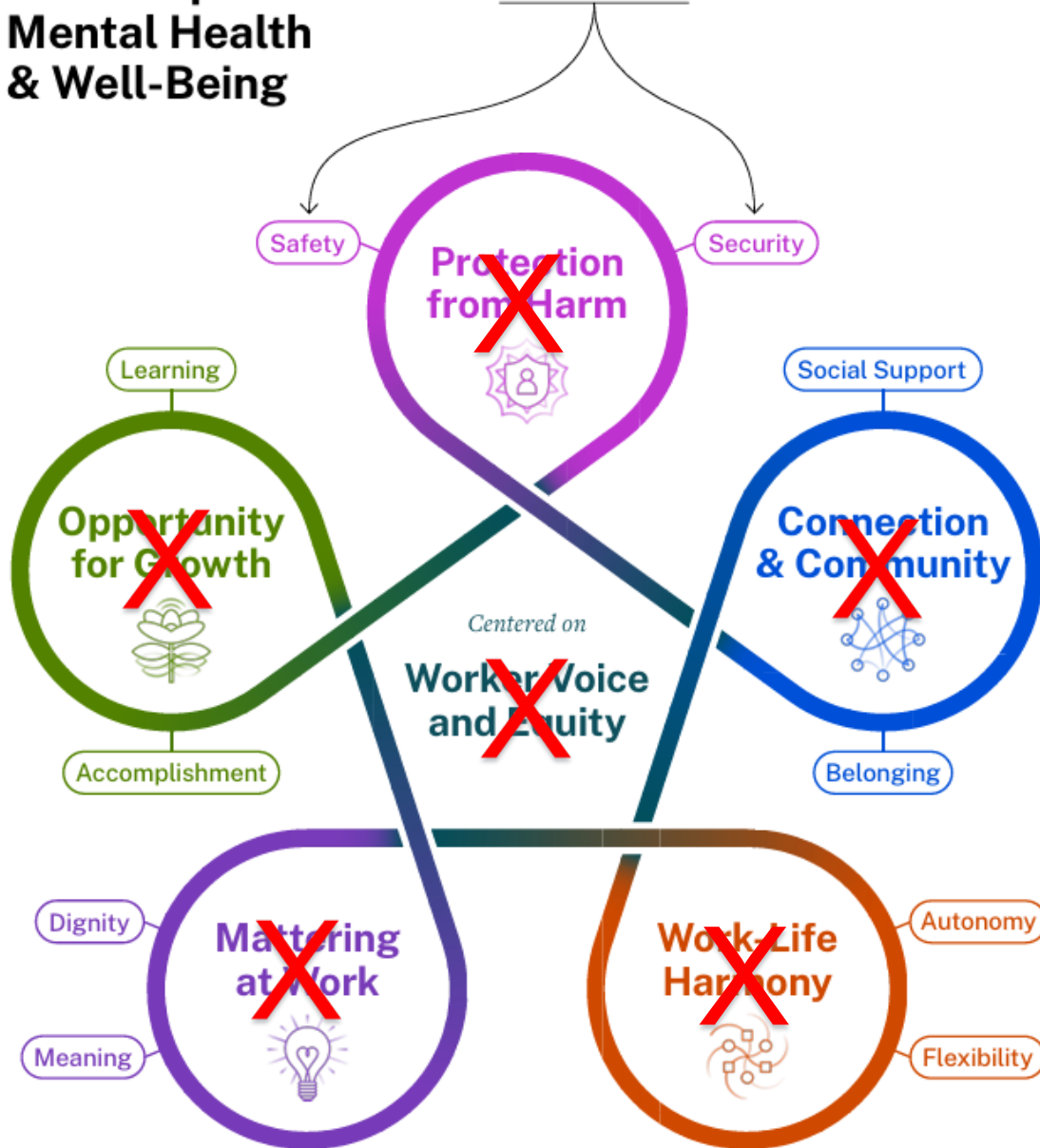
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Inclusion & Accessibility



Office of the
U.S. Surgeon General

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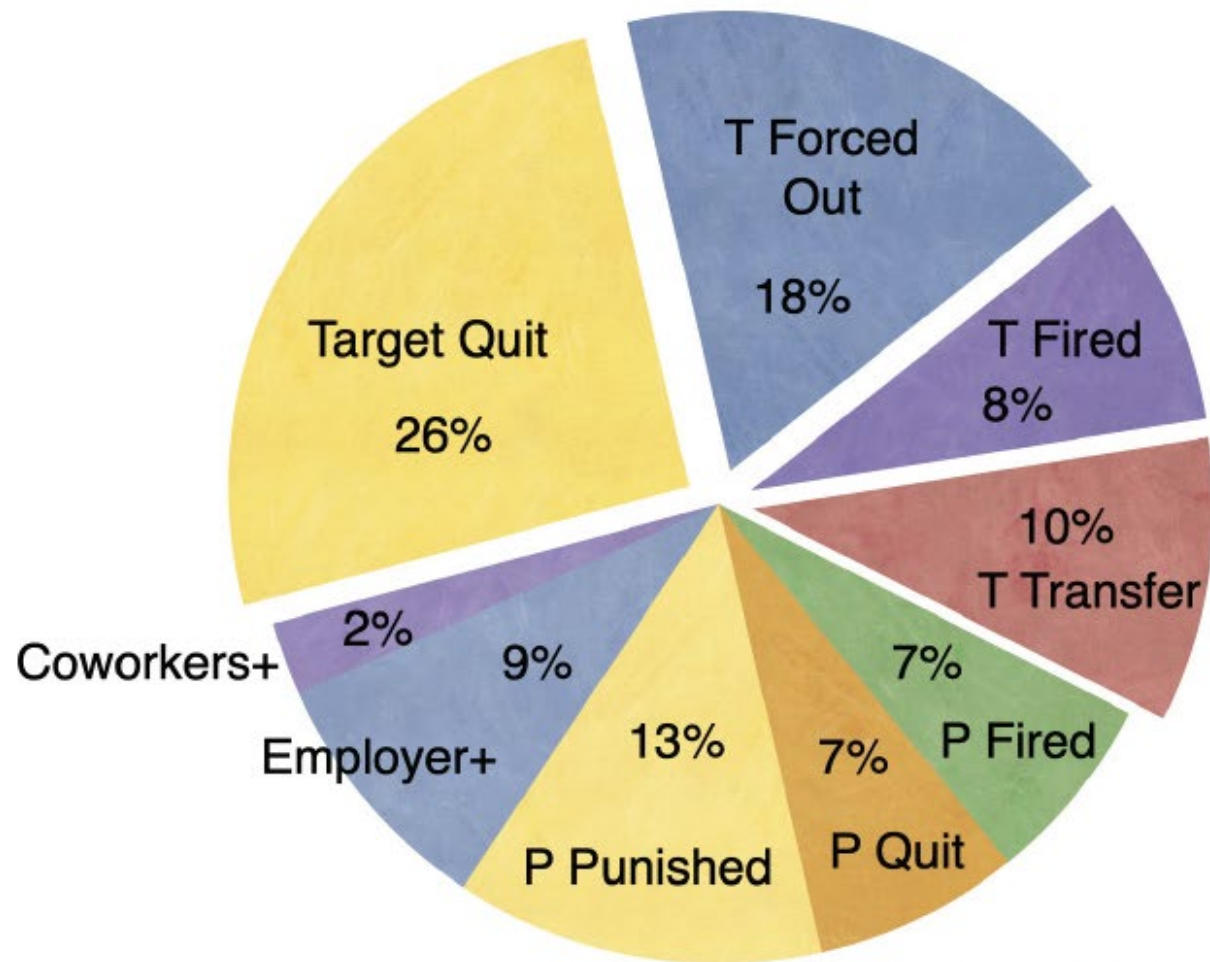
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TARGETED EMPLOYEES
HAVE A 62% CHANCE
OF LOSING THE JOBS
THEY LOVED FOR
NO LEGITIMATE
REASON

Figure 11. What Stopped the Bullying in Worst Case Situations - Graph

**What is the impact of
workplace bullying on
organizations?**



Is there a blast radius of workplace bullying? Ripple effects on witnesses and non-witnesses

Michael Rosander¹ · Morten Birkeland Nielsen^{2,3}

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Abstract

Substantial evidence points to detrimental effects of workplace bullying on the health, well-being and job attitudes among those exposed. What is less known is how bullying affects their non-exposed colleagues. In this study, we introduce the concept “blast radius of bullying” and use social information processing theory to investigate how bullying impacts targets, witnesses, and non-witnesses. We suggest three mechanisms to understand the impact bullying may have on non-targets: the working environment mechanism, secondary victimization, and emotional contagion. We hypothesized that non-exposed colleagues in groups where bullying exists would feel some impact of bullying, but that it would be smaller for those further away from the point of impact. We also investigated the association between the severity of mistreatment and outcomes for the above-mentioned categories. We used data ($n=2215$) from 195 work groups. The results provided evidence for a blast radius of bullying, however, not as far-reaching as hypothesized as only direct observation of mistreatment was associated with negative outcomes. The severity of mistreatment was not associated with the outcomes, whereas the frequency of observation had some impact for witnesses. The study showed that also witnesses may be regarded as “co-victims”.

Keywords Workplace aggression · Bystanders · Health and well-being

Workplace bullying is highly detrimental for those exposed. As shown in numerous primary studies and meta-analyses, targets of bullying suffer grave consequences, including high levels of mental distress, somatic complaints, and suicidal ideation, as well as lower well-being and work ability (Leach et al., 2017; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Nielsen et al., 2016; Verkuil et al., 2015). However, an important unresolved issue within research on workplace bullying is how its occurrence influences those not directly exposed at the workplace. The few studies that exist have mainly been limited to examining colleagues that have witnessed bullying of others directly (e.g., Nielsen et al., 2021; Sprigg et

al., 2019; Vartia, 2001), without considering the potential ripple effects on those not knowing that bullying occurs at their workplace or merely have heard rumours about it. Consequently, we do not know whether the occurrence bullying has an impact on the workplace as a whole, or if the consequences are limited to those directly involved as targets, perpetrators, or witnesses. The main objective of the present study is to fill this knowledge gap. We introduce the concept “blast radius of bullying” and based on social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) we suggest three mechanisms of how this blast radius may be understood. Using group level data, we investigate how the occurrence of bullying in a work group impacts targets, witnesses, and non-witnesses and compare it with employees in work groups free from bullying. Specifically, we determine how the presence of bullying affects creativity, concentration, mental health, sickness absence and sickness presenteeism among targets, witnesses, and non-witnesses.

Workplace bullying has in many cases been treated as a dysfunctional interpersonal process (Fevre et al., 2012; Zapf & Gross, 2001), and to this date, most interventions directed toward bullying has focused on the targets. If bullying also

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- “Blast radius”
 - Emotional contagion
 - Job dissatisfaction
 - Productivity losses
 - Performance losses
 - Impaired innovation
 - Absenteeism
 - Presenteeism
 - Increased claims
 - Lack of engagement
 - Talent retention
 - Talent attraction

**How can the problem be
fixed?**

The role of leadership practices in the relationship between role stressors and exposure to bullying behaviours – a longitudinal moderated mediation design

Kari Wik Ågotnes ^{a,*}, Morten Birkeland Nielsen ^{a,b}, Anders Skogstad^a, Johannes Gjerstad ^{b,c} and Ståle Valvatne Einarsen ^a

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Prevention

- Workplace climate
- Workplace culture
- Leadership styles
- Workplace policies/procedures
- Legislation

Perceived Organizational Support

Table 4 Measures of perceived organisational support

1. In my workplace senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees' psychological health
 2. Senior management acts decisively when a concern of an employees' psychological status is raised
 3. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment
 4. Psychological well-being of staff is a priority for this organisation
 5. Senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance
 6. Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity
 7. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect employees
 8. Information about workplace psychological well-being is always brought to our attention by our line manager/supervisor
 9. Employee contributions to resolving occupational health and safety concerns in the organisation are listened to
 10. Participation and consultation in psychological health and safety occurs with employees', unions and health and safety representatives in my workplace
 11. Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological safety and health matters
- In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation
-

Psychological Safety

Amy Edmonson's: Psychological Safety Scale

1. If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you. (R)
2. Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
3. People on this team sometimes reject others for being different. (R)
4. It is safe to take a risk on this team.
5. It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help. (R)
6. No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
7. Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

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Kurt Lewin Leadership Styles

AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

The leader makes all the decisions. Increases productivity short-term, but is detrimental to long term engagement, motivation and creativity

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

The leader involves the entire team in decision-making. Leads to strong engagement, creativity and sustainable productivity even in the absence of the leader. Can be time-consuming



LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP

Hands-off leadership where the team members make all the decisions. Also known as "zero leadership". This can work well in highly skilled and self-motivated teams but is most often detrimental for productivity.



Invisible, Unmanageable, and Inevitable: Online Abuse as Inequality in the Academic Workplace

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Online abuse is a growing problem in higher education. For postsecondary institutions, the increasing prevalence with which faculty members are targeted with online abuse raises important questions about what it means to provide a safe and equitable work environment that promotes equality for diverse workers in the digital age. This article draws from a series of 10 interviews with academic administrators to assess the capacity of higher education institutions to address online abuse of faculty. Findings show that, while administrators recognize how online abuse reproduces inequality in the academic workplace, various procedural norms keep this problem at a distance, invisible to management, and beyond the scope of institutional responsibility. Following Jones and Pringle (2015), we argue that this procedural distancing relegates online abuse to the terrain of the *unmanageable*, which, in effect, helps to render inequality inevitable for the most marginalized faculty members. Finally, and to counteract the presumed unmanageability of online abuse, we identify several alternative interventions that might be used to address online abuse and help to mitigate the inequality it produces in academia and beyond.

Keywords: online abuse, inequality, diversity, workplace harassment, faculty

In December 2017, Dr. Laurie Rubel published a research article about race and mathematics education, highlighting the systemic barriers marginalized students face and the implicit biases of so-called meritocratic education systems. After publication, her work was singled out and criticized in the right-wing student news publication *Campus Reform*, a moment which would later be identified as the flash point for a right-wing media firestorm with Dr. Rubel at its center. The story was picked up by major publications around the world and eventually became the subject of a Fox News segment (Math Ed Collective, 2018). The publicity resulted in a wave of racist and misogynistic online abuse from strangers, who targeted Dr. Rubel, her research, and the institution where she works. The barrage was multidirectional. Perpetrators found and harassed Dr. Rubel on social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit. They flooded her email, repeatedly called her cell phone, and sent her posted hate mail (Kamenetz, 2018).

Dr. Rubel's experience is not unique. She joins a growing list of workers in academia (Veletsianos et al., 2018), journalism (Simões et al., 2021), and politics (Zharavskaya et al., 2020) who have been targeted with online harassment and abuse while acting in their professional roles (Arora et al., 2021; Frangou, 2019; Pidd, 2022). In this article, we define online abuse as a technologically

mediated form of violence where communication technology is used to intentionally cause harm to a targeted individual or group (Jane, 2014). This has become a prevalent problem for academics for whom social media, online learning platforms, and other network communication technologies have become important tools they use to teach, connect, and collaborate with colleagues; participate in discussions relevant to one's field; and share research with a broad audience (Johnson & Veletsianos, 2021). These changing professional and technological norms have obligated faculty to become visible, connected, and accessible in ways that make them vulnerable to abusive and harassing behaviors online, such as *doxing*, as in when someone's personal information is published online without their consent, or threats of physical violence.

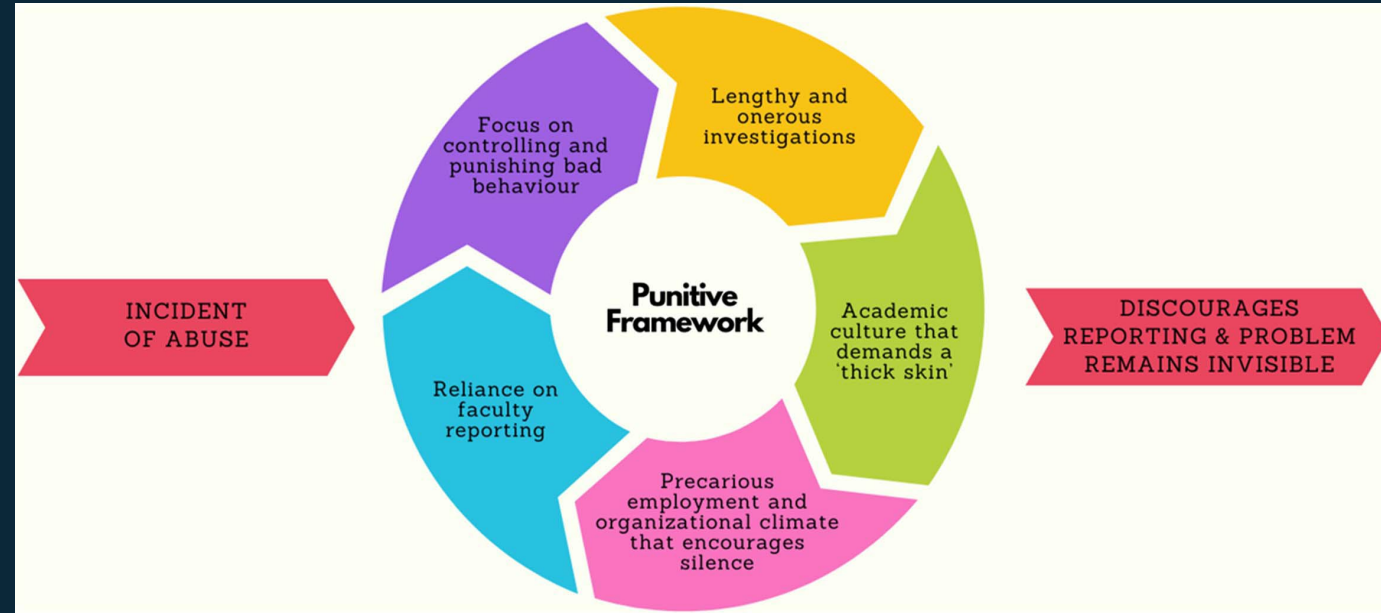
Research shows that experiences of online abuse can have a devastating impact on mental health and well-being (Chadha et al., 2020). Targets frequently respond by censoring themselves, withdrawing from certain communities, avoiding certain job tasks, and minimizing their public visibility overall (Gosse, Veletsianos, et al., 2021). In higher education, this diminished participation can have negative consequences for the professional development and career trajectory of the faculty member. If faculty are hesitant to pursue certain research topics, speak publicly as an expert in their field, or share the results of their work beyond a small specialist audience, they may miss out on opportunities to build their reputation and to collaborate with others on new research projects. At the same time, the public loses out on the insights of their work, as well as the contributions they could make to their respective research and teaching communities.

Unfortunately, the risks and associated burdens of online abuse are not evenly distributed across identity groups. Women, racialized people, members of the two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, others community (hereinafter 2SLGBTQIA+), and other marginalized identity groups are

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Legislation


14. SUPPORT FOR A NEW LAW

Question: Do you support or oppose enactment of a new law (in addition to existing nondiscrimination & harassment laws) that would require employers to protect their workers from repeated, harmful, abusive mistreatment and give abused workers a right to sue for failing to do so?

Table 20. Support for a New Law

	Proportion	Percentage	Proportion	Percentage
Not needed. Existing laws are adequate	.0826	8%		
			Ignoring	not needed
Strongly support	.6349	64%	.6921	69%
Somewhat support	.2333	23%	.2543	25%
<i>Support</i>	.8682	87%	.9464	95%
Somewhat oppose	.0324	3%	.0353	3%
Strongly oppose	.0167	1%	.0182	2%
<i>Oppose</i>	.0492	5%	.0536	5%

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New Statute: Anti-bullying Policy Creates Immunity for Workplace Emotional Distress Claims

Posted by: Edward Phillips & Brandon Morrow on May 22, 2019

Journal Issue Date: Jun 2019

Journal Name: Vol 55 No 6

Over the last several years, the topic of “bullying” has become more prevalent and warranted increased attention in the workplace. “Bullying” — or mental anguish by the courts — has thus been a recent topic of discussion for employment law practitioners. What steps can employers take to minimize this behavior in the workplace? Are there any legal consequences for the behavior of its employees?

In 2014, the General Assembly passed the Healthy Workplace Act, which provided public employers immunity for workplace bullying claims if they adopted a model policy.¹ Recently, though, the General Assembly amended the Healthy Workplace Act (on a unanimous vote, no less) to extend its immunity to private employers. It was signed by Gov. Lee on April 23, 2019, and took effect immediately.

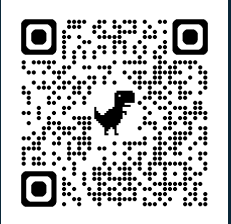
Currently, a Tennessee employer may be subject to claims for “infliction of mental anguish based on its employees’ abusive conduct” if a worker believes they have been the victim of bullying. We have seen intentional and negligent infliction of emotional distress claims in the employment context paired with hostile work environment claims under the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) or Title VII.² However, under the new law, an employer can obtain legal immunity if it adopts the model policy created by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR)³ or adopts a similar policy that satisfies the same goals set forth in the new statute.

Bullying, Mental Anguish and Emotional Distress

The term “bullying” is the more common usage of the legal terms “mental anguish” and “emotional distress.”⁴ The Tennessee Supreme Court has construed “mental anguish” to be synonymous with “emotional distress.” The court has also held that “emotional distress” claims require a showing of “serious or severe mental injury.”⁵ These claims do not include “every minor disturbance to a person’s mental tranquility” but only “serious or severe emotions.”

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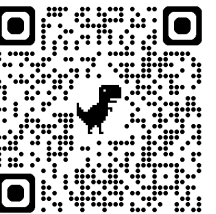


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Workplace Bullying Accountability Act

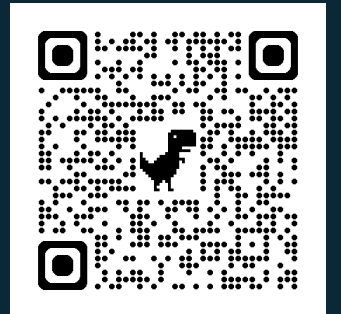
The WBI Anti-Bullying Legislative Campaign, 2025–26



**Who are some experts on
workplace bullying?**

- David Yamada

- Professor of Law and Director of the New Workplace Institute
- Suffolk University Law School





- Dr. Gary Namie

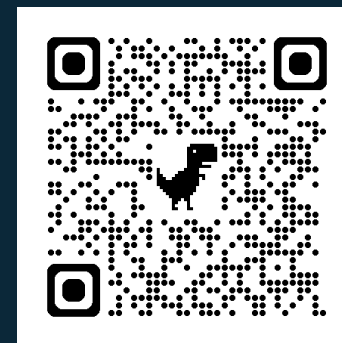
- Social psychologist
- Director, Workplace Bullying Institute





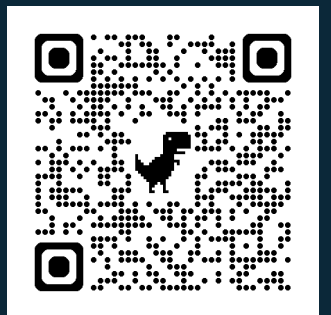
- Dr. Leah Hollis

- Associate Dean for Access, Equity and Inclusion; Professor of Education
- Penn State College of Education



- Dr. Michael Rosander

- Social psychologist
- Professor, Linköping University





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