

ZENA NEWS

Lead the Change You Want to See

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Workplace Bullying Continues to Rise



Zena Consulting
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Tolerating cowards at work results in undisputed direct and indirect costs that can be hard to reverse: from absenteeism, turnover, and burnout to lower productivity and job satisfaction. Author Ray Williams, who's been tracking statistics on the topic for 10+ years, claims bullying is now a threat to democracy. (Read his LinkedIn article [here](#).)

His research confirms that the top targets are the same: women (especially young), younger workers, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ employees, people with disabilities, and immigrants/refugees.



Internet Anarchy is Driving the Trend

What's changed is the growth of and access to new online worlds. Williams calls social media "a training ground for bullying" because:

1. the internet offers unlimited ways to harass others 24/7
2. remote work creates a void of social cues and direct personal contact that emboldens some bullies

Stopping Bullies Starts at the Top

Whether on a playground or in at the office, most of us have experienced or witnessed bullying. And, while we tend to focus on the individual, getting rid of the perpetrator might not solve the problem. Yes, they're revealing a personal flaw but also a systems weak point (communication, legal, HR). Relying on hope, policies, or others is a missed opportunity to create a healthier organization.

Choose a Democratic Leadership Style

Treating people with fairness and respect is simple but not easy. Think power with, not power over. It requires strategy, skill-building, and courage.

We help leaders reduce conflict through better communication. If you're ready to build teams where everyone can thrive, let's connect.

Culture Shapes Behavior

Many factors bigger than individual personalities can influence bullying behavior

Leadership Signals

"Culture is defined by what leaders reward and tolerate. Ignoring subtle harm teaches employees what is acceptable."

Dr. Rob Cross
Leadership Intelligence Expert

Digital Communication Norms

"Remote work lacks social cues. Small conflicts or exclusions can escalate because people misread tone or intent."

Dr. Daniel Goleman,
Emotional Intelligence Expert

Media Narratives

"When popular culture glorifies aggressive or intimidating behavior, employees internalize that bullying is a path to success."

Dr. Jean Twenge, Psychologist

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