

# Workplace abuse is a public health crisis

**Stress is not benign. Chronic workplace bullying—repeated verbal abuse, threats, exclusion, sabotage—has been scientifically linked to measurable, lasting harm in the human body. Workplace abuse is not about hurt feelings. It is about disease, disability, and death.**

## Physiological Consequences of Workplace Bullying

- 1. PTSD and Brain Damage.** Up to 30% of bullied workers show clinical symptoms of PTSD. MRI studies show high brain scars—shrinkage in areas like the hippocampus—identical to trauma seen in combat veterans (American Journal of Public Health, Bessel van der Kolk, MD).
- 2. Cancer, Heart Disease, and Immune Dysfunction.** There's a 1.6x higher risk of heart disease among bullied employees (European Heart Journal, 2018 study of 79,000 adults). Stress-induced inflammation is a known factor in breast and colorectal cancers, autoimmune disorders, and metabolic disease.
- 3. Suicide and Mental Health Collapse.** A large study involving over 98,000 participants found that individuals exposed to workplace bullying had a 65% higher risk of suicidal behavior (including attempts and deaths) compared to those not exposed. Suicide risk escalates dramatically among nurses, first responders, veterans, and public servants in toxic work cultures.

## Societal and Family-Level Impact

- 4. Financial Ruin.** Up to 71% of bullied employees leave or are forced out. Typical financial loss: \$30,000–\$100,000+, excluding lost benefits (WBI 2021 National Survey).
- 5. Marital Breakdown & Intergenerational Harm.** Financial strain from bullying-related job loss is a top cause of divorce. Children of bullied parents show higher rates of depression and school withdrawal (Journal of Family Psychology).

## The Medical and Moral Case for Federal Action

In the 1970s, Congress acted decisively to protect Americans from physical harm at work through OSHA. Today, the same science compels us to address psychological harm—a slow, silent killer that leaves no bruises but shortens lives.

The Workplace Psychological Safety Act establishes a standard to prevent abuse, require investigation, and provide a legal pathway for redress—without relying solely on protected class claims.

## We Urge Your Support

The science is clear. The stakes are high.

[WPSAct.org](https://WPSAct.org)



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