

Who gets Bullied at Work?

The role of Emotion Stability, Psychological Flexibility, and Coping in Workplace Bullying.

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Bullying costs individuals and their workplace a great deal. Considerable research has been conducted to explore the incidence and prevalence of bullying in the workplace and the negative consequences to individuals and organizations (Rammsayer, Stahl, & Schmiga, 2006). Few studies, however, have considered the individual characteristics of adults who are bullied in the workplace (Sansone & Sansone, 2015; Calvete, Orue, & Gamez-Guadix, 2016). The current study investigated personality traits, psychological flexibility, and coping styles which might contribute to victimization and workplace bullying including higher education. Of 419 participants recruited, 299 answered yes to being bullied as a child or in the workplace - 46% reported being bullied as a child and 71.6 % reported being bullied at work. The remaining 120 participants dropped out without answering, 186 participants who had experienced bullying proceeded to complete the entire study. The final distribution consisted of 75% females and 19% males between the ages of 18-65 with 70% reporting tertiary education level (i.e., over 16 years of education). Neuroticism, which is a personality trait characteristically defined by proneness to negative mood states: anxiety, angry hostility, self-consciousness, and difficulty contending with stress, was a significant predictor of maladaptive coping, psychological inflexibility in the workplace and bullying. Experiencing bullying as a child and neuroticism were significant predictors of bullying in the workplace. The higher incidence of neuroticism amongst participants who have experienced bullying in the workplace might offer a cautious explanation for the dropout rates in the current study. Future directions for effective workplace programs in higher education and research are also considered.

Keywords: Bullying, Personality Traits, Coping, Psychological Flexibility