

# The Biological Toll of Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying affects 10–30% of the global workforce, acting as a potent neurobiological stressor. Beyond psychological distress, chronic harassment triggers hippocampal atrophy and accelerated cellular aging, reframing office abuse as a critical public health crisis.

## Measurable Hippocampal Atrophy

Chronic stress suppresses neurogenesis, leading to to significant volume loss in the brain's memory center.

| Brain Component | Effect of Chronic Bullying                                  |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hippocampus     | Structural shrinkage and impaired memory consolidation      |
| Amygdala        | Enhanced reactivity and persistent threat perception        |
| Telomeres       | Shortening of chromosomal caps, accelerating cellular decay |

HIPPOCAMPUS

TELOMERES

## Accelerated Cellular Aging

Workplace distress causes premature telomere shortening.

## Elevated Dementia Risk

High midlife job stress is linked to significantly higher rates of late-life Alzheimer's.

## Evidence-Based Organizational Responses

### Implement Primary Prevention

Define specific prohibited behaviors and train leaders to foster psychological safety.



Provide multiple reporting channels and guarantee transparent, prompt investigations into all claims.



### Establish Procedural Justice



### Build Distributed Leadership

Flatten hierarchies and empower employee voices to mitigate the power imbalances enabling abuse.

