

**Personal Experience of Bullying: Effects on Other People**

Bullying does not just affect the targeted individual. It impacts on many people around them, especially:

- Family
- Friends
- Students (as I was a teacher)
- Treating medical personnel
- The broader society who lose the skills of a hard worker and incur Social Security costs

**The main effects on family and friends are from:**

- Lack of knowledge of what to do as they are not at the workplace and cannot understand what is going on
- Helplessness due to this
- The way the person changes from their true character of being happy and optimistic
- The withdrawal of the person into isolation as the toll mounts
- The inability of the person to have energies available for normal activities
- The grief that this causes to everyone

**The main effects on students in my context (adult migrant) were:**

- Shock at seeing a teacher who they respect and like treated this way as teachers are respected in most other countries; an awareness of problems here
- Loss of their teacher's full attention and energy as this is dissipated on bullying
- A strong, healthy teacher is driven to sickness, with sick leave and replacement staff
- There is tremendous emotional stress on the students
- When I was forced out, I was told a Buddhist monk refugee wrote my name on the whiteboard and, "Our teacher and in our hearts," and collapsed, crying.
- A South American woman told me that she thought only her country of birth did "disappearances" and now she finds Australia does too.
- Students were not told the truth. My father's funeral was the day before I was notified I had lost my job in an apparently fake redundancy. I encountered two different students on separate occasions by accident in the street who both said, in their own words, "So sorry teacher, your father died and now you cannot teach us because you are so upset."
- This added so much pain. I rang the employer and asked what was going on. The HR official admitted students had been misled into believing I left because my father died. She said, "What would you like us to tell them?" I said, "The truth!"

- As I was a popular teacher with the students, I feel the truth was not stated as the students would have been upset and angry. So my deceased father was used as an excuse.
- Across the years, many students commented on the mistreatment and bullying they saw. Some tried to help me by giving me presents to make me feel better. One wrote a letter to the manager in the hope that this would help.
- Many of them saw their teacher ignored by other staff and things like timely room access being blocked by the same staff each week who delayed their class's exit each time, showing disrespect for my class.
- In summary, it was a horrible experience for the migrants as it was the first encounter with an Australian workplace and an Australian educational organisation. It made a contrast to the Government's speeches on Australian values as it modelled the opposite to what the Government was talking about.
- I saw no concern whatsoever for the bullied teacher or the students who were really secondary victims.

### Effects on Colleagues

- Everyone is affected by bullying at work.
- It evokes fear and causes division, distorting normal dynamics into a destructive mode.
- It models the abuse of power and where this is successful, people emulate it.
- The victim comes to be publicly shunned, although many people are privately supportive and outraged.
- Far from justice and support, there is the same mistreatment which has occurred in all crimes of power throughout history: people will go along with the aggressor to appease him/her and to avoid being next.
- At least one teacher resigned in disgust at what happened. That person was relatively new to teaching and left the field, such was the trauma to a bystander.
- Friendships are destroyed by this, causing a social toll in addition to everything else
- One of the greatest needs of a human being is for a sense of belonging and inclusion and these are the two needs that are most violated by bullying, along with the need to be treated with respect and as a human being.
- In all, it is like falling into a parallel universe where all human transactions are radically re-ordered and there is no way back.
- The victim cannot control the bullying so has no way of dealing with this other than reporting it which makes it worse, rising up into an overwhelming attack, and when WorkSafe/Cover mishandles it, the victim is made to appear ridiculous.
- Gossip is overwhelming and adds further destructiveness to the workplace.
- There is no concern for how this rips the victim's life and livelihood to shreds.