

Toxic Workplaces Increase Risk of Depression

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. toxic /'tɒ:k.sɪk/ causing you a lot of harm and unhappiness over a long period of time:
Example: My friend would like to get out of her toxic relationship with her boyfriend.
2. element /'el.ə.mənt/ a part of something:
Example: List the elements that make up a perfect dinner party.
3. bullying /'bʊl.i.ɪŋ/ the behavior of a person who hurts or frightens someone smaller or less powerful, often forcing that person to do something they do not want to do
Example: Bullying is a problem in many schools.
4. autonomy /ɑ:'tɔ:.nə.mi/ the ability to make your own decisions without being controlled by anyone else
Example: The employees are all begging for autonomy.
5. perpetrator /'pɜ:.pə.treɪ.tə/ someone who has committed a crime or a violent or harmful act
Example: The perpetrators of the massacre must be brought to justice as war criminals.



New research has revealed that **toxic** workplaces can be dangerous to mental health. The year-long study is from the University of South Australia. Researchers found that full-time workers who work for companies or organizations that do not prioritize employees' mental health are three times more likely to suffer from depression.

The researchers examined the bad effect of "toxic" environments on health. **Elements** of a toxic workplace included poor management practices, **bullying**, and a failure to consider mental health issues. The researchers indicated that if employees are unhappy at work, mistreated or burnt out, their productivity will suffer and absenteeism will increase.

Lead researcher Dr Amy Zadow said mental health issues created in the workplace can be associated with poor management practices and values. She said: "Evidence shows that companies who fail to reward or acknowledge their employees for hard work, force unreasonable demands upon workers, and do not give them **autonomy** are placing their staff at a much greater risk of depression."

She added: "Bullying in a work unit can not only negatively affect the victim, but also the **perpetrator**....It is not uncommon for everyone in the same unit to experience burnout as a result." Depression affects over 260 million people worldwide and causes many people to take their own lives.

DISCUSSION

1. How can the workplace affect our health?
2. What is your ideal workplace?
3. What responsibility do managers have to create a positive workplace?
4. What can companies do to create a positive workspace?
5. What can workers do about toxic workplaces?
6. What do you know about depression?