

A Scoping Review of Bullying and Harassment in Voluntary Organisations

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Aims and Objectives: While studies on workplace bullying have been conducted across many occupational sectors, the voluntary sector has not received systematic attention. Therefore, a scoping review was undertaken on adult-to-adult bullying in voluntary organisations to address this deficit in the academic literature. We followed the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework to conduct a scoping review in order to:

1. Examine the extent of and nature of workplace bullying and harassment in voluntary organisations.
2. Synthesise findings to explore the organisational, structural and contextual factors that are relevant to an understanding of bullying and harassment in voluntary organisations.
3. Outline key research directions for workplace bullying and harassment in voluntary organisations.

Design and Methods: Search terms were identified from the literature and run on abstract/title and abstract, as appropriate for four databases. Limiters for language (English only) and publication dates (2000-2022) were applied. Records were imported to COVidence software and de-duplicated. In this way, 636 records were screened on title and abstract, and 44 articles were assessed for eligibility, resulting in 16 articles for full-text review. Characteristics of the articles were extracted and charted, and a synthesis of the articles was undertaken. The articles were both empirical and conceptual.

Results: All studies were published between 2000 and 2022. Five studies were undertaken in the US, four in the UK, 3 across International NGOs, one in Australia and one in Pakistan. Less than half (6) of the papers mentioned a theoretical stance. There were eight peer-reviewed papers, four reports, three dissertations and one book chapter. The sampling was predominantly staff in voluntary organisations including fundraisers. A range of methods were employed; documentary analysis (2), interviews (7), focus groups (1), surveys (7) and case studies (1). Contrary to expectation, prevalence estimates for bullying were broadly similar to those for organisations generally, however, sexual harassment appears to be a particularly serious problem, especially regarding fundraisers who 'span' the space between voluntary organisations and philanthropic donors. The synthesis identified key organisational, structural and cultural factors which were presented as three inter-related themes. We concluded the context of being 'voluntary' renders bullying and harassment particularly complex, in respect of both manifestation of bullying or harassment and the response to it within the organisation, driving a self-perpetuating process involving dissonance and denial with potentially potent effects on those who experience or witness it.

Dissemination: Preliminary results were presented at the International Workplace Bullying and Harassment Conference in San Diego, September 2022. A publication was submitted in 2023 and is currently under review with *Nonprofit Management and Leadership Journal*.