

DRAKE AUSTRALIA PTY LTD  
**BULLYING RESEARCH REPORT**

# ABOUT DRAKE INTERNATIONAL

One of the largest privately owned global HR & recruitment services organisations in the world, Drake is a leader in sustainable HR practice and talent management.

For over 58 years, Drake's business philosophy has stayed true – 'organisations achieve the highest level of performance when they are staffed with the right people, working with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours,

## **Drake Workwise**

Drake WorkWise is a leading national provider of quality, cost effective psychological, organisational consultancy and OH&S services, to over 230,000 staff throughout Australia.

Working with a clientele of some of Australia's largest organisations, as well as smaller businesses across the broad spectrum of the Australian workplace, Drake WorkWise builds customised, creative and impactful partnerships.

Drake WorkWise, combined with Drake International, forms one of Australia's largest, most reputable and longest running Human Solutions companies.

## **Contact Information**

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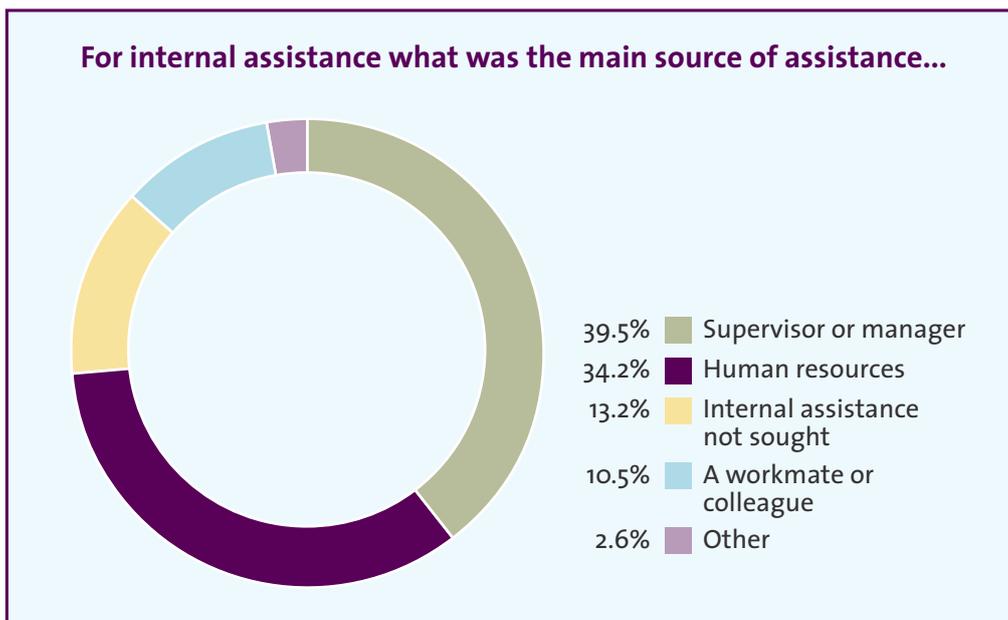
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# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- More than 50% of respondents had witnessed bullying and over 25% had been a target of bullying themselves.
- More than 50% reported the bullying behaviour had been going on for over 6 months.
- Sideways bullying from workmates or colleagues was reported in over 25% of cases; however supervisors and managers were identified as the main culprits (around 50%)
- Gender appears to be no barrier as the survey reported both male and female targets and bullies in similar numbers
- Of those bullying cases witnessed; nearly 50% had one bully with more than one target.
- Whilst the more obvious bullying behaviour evident in the past like physical intimidation has not disappeared completely, the survey revealed this has been replaced by the more subtle, but no less damaging, insults, sarcasm, humiliation, criticism and isolation.

## Organisational Overview

- Appropriate organisational management of the situation was identified as lacking with only 30% of bullying targets, and less than 50% of witnesses, being satisfied with their organisations' handling of the situation.
- The survey revealed that management often did not 'walk the talk' and model appropriate behaviour.
- It is concerning that less than 50% of bullying witnesses or targets sought help for their situation. The main reason for not seeking assistance was the belief that either nothing would be done, or it would make it worse.
- On a more positive note, for those who did seek assistance, a popular source of help was managers/supervisors.
- Only 50% of the sample reported receiving any bullying awareness or prevention training.



# BACKGROUND

Drake International conducted a national survey of employees of Australian workplaces requesting information about their experiences of workplace bullying.

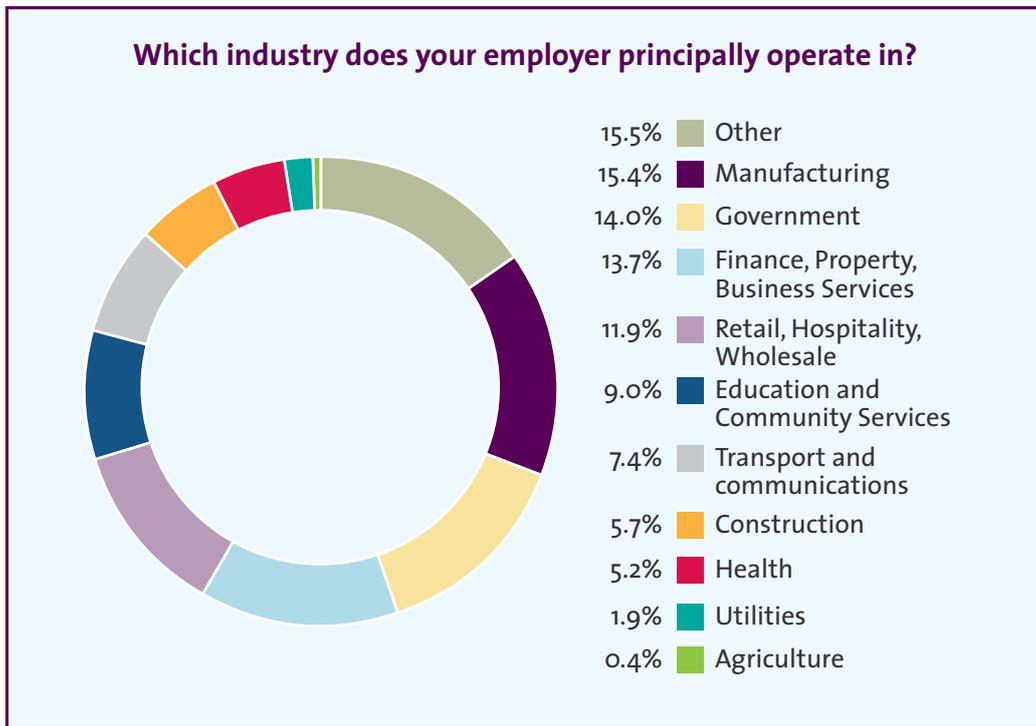
The survey questioned people's experiences of bullying behaviour as a witness, a target, or being accused of such behaviour, as well as seeking feedback on some aspects of their organisations management of bullying.

## Demographics

850 respondents completed the survey. Respondent demographics include:

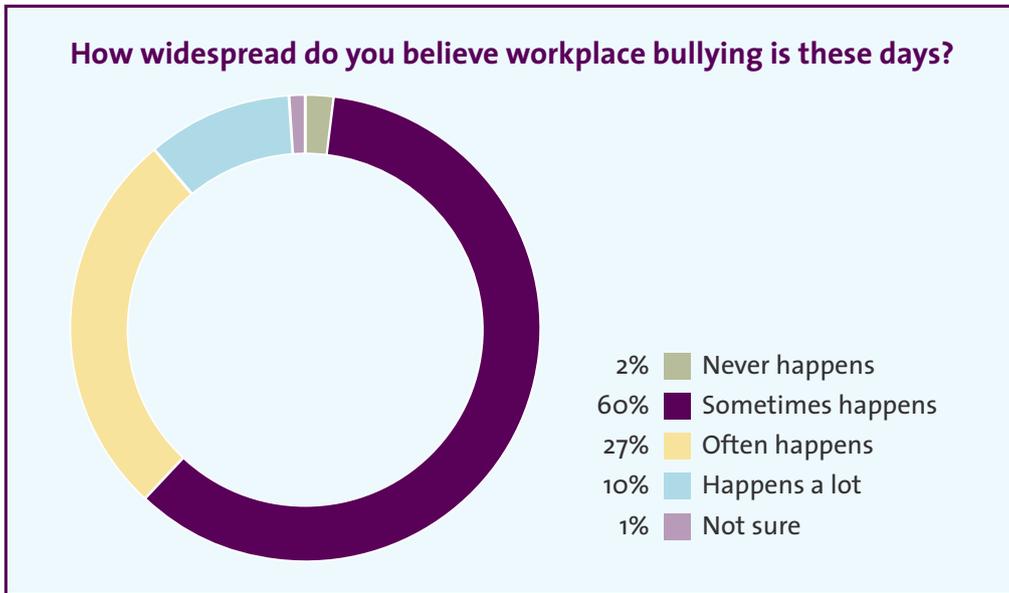
- slightly more females (55%)
- over three quarters (77%) were aged 30-50 years of age
- most (84%) had been with their organisation for more than 2 years
- around three quarters of respondents (74%) were in a supervisory role.

A range of eleven industries were represented, with Manufacturing, Government and Business Services the most common. Over half (59%) of the companies respondents worked for had 200 or more employees

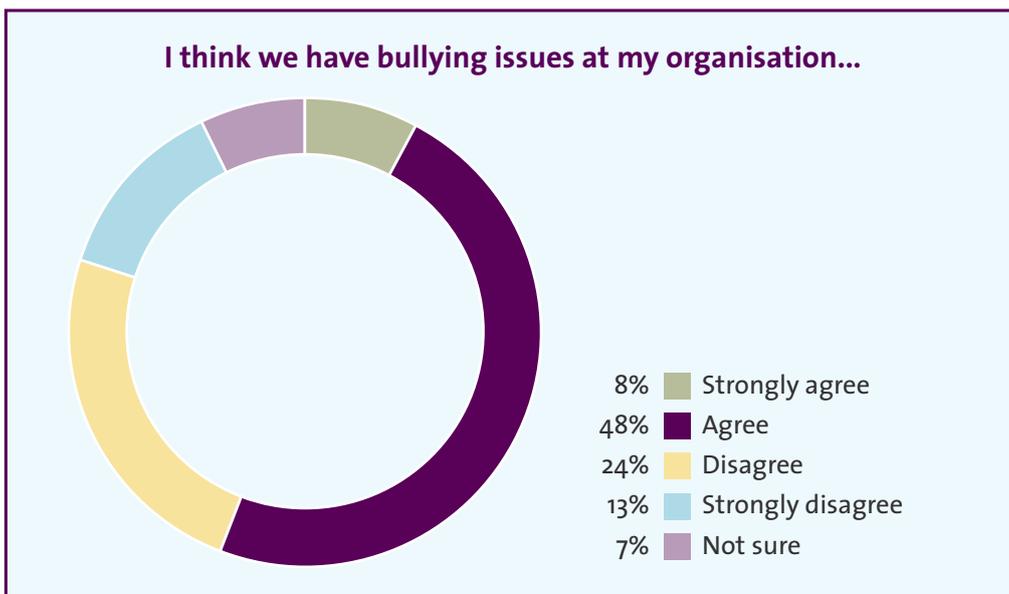


# PREVALENCE OF BULLYING

Most respondents believed bullying was widespread with over a third (37%) believing it happens often or a lot.



More than half (56%) believed that there were bullying issues at their organisation and over a quarter (29%) within their actual department.



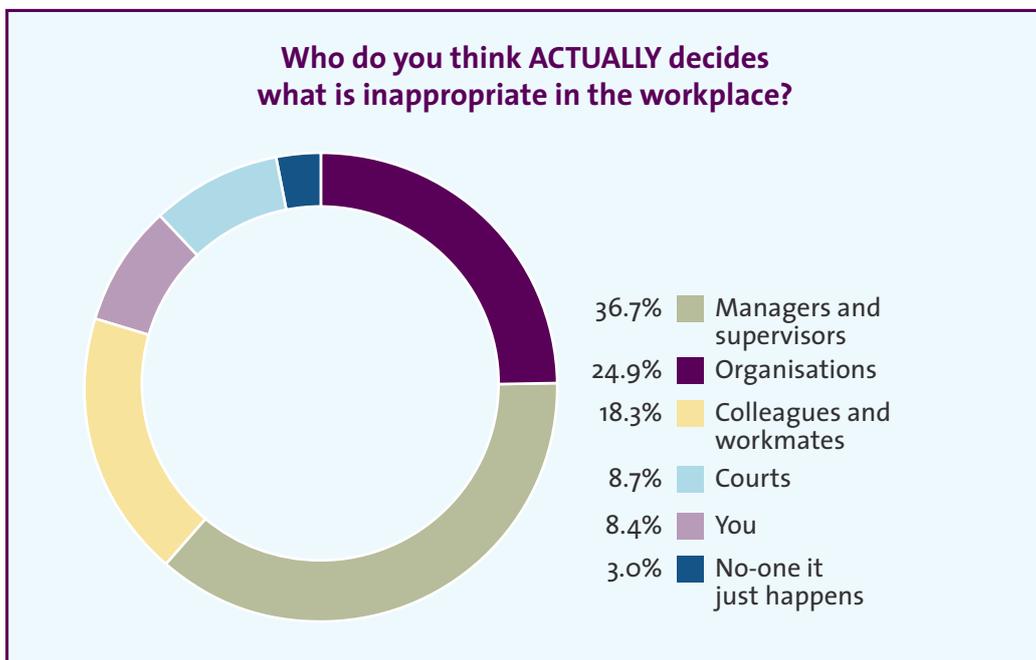
Respondents believed the Construction industry had the most bullying issues, followed by hospitality, and retail & wholesale.

# PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF BULLYING

Most people (66%) thought the primary responsibility for preventing and managing bullying behaviour should be with managers and supervisors in an organisation. However, the organisations' role was also acknowledged with nearly a quarter (24%) believing the organisation itself was primarily responsible.

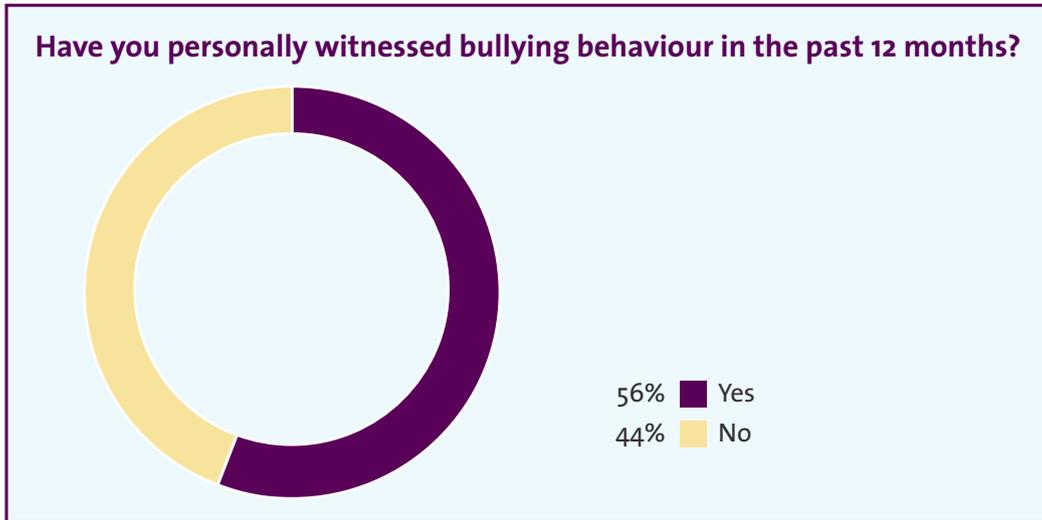


51% of respondents thought the organisation should determine what inappropriate behaviour is (followed by managers and supervisors 21%), but in reality respondents recognised that who actually determines the definition of inappropriate behaviour was more evenly split between managers & supervisors (37%), organisations (25%) and colleagues/workmates (18%).

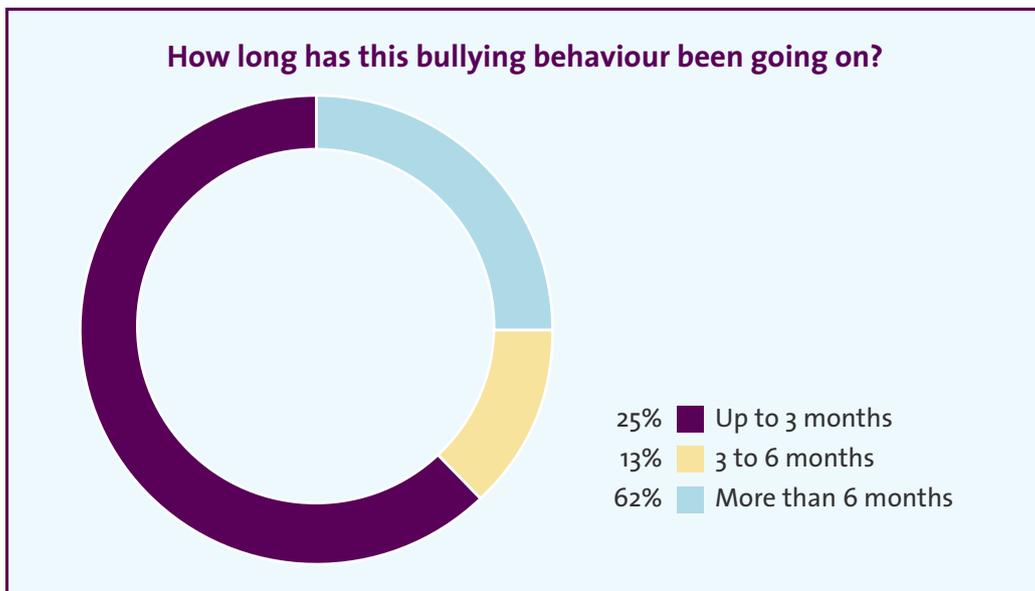


# WITNESSES TO BULLYING

Alarmingly, given the range and size of industries in the sample, 56% of respondents had personally witnessed bullying behaviour in the last 12 months.

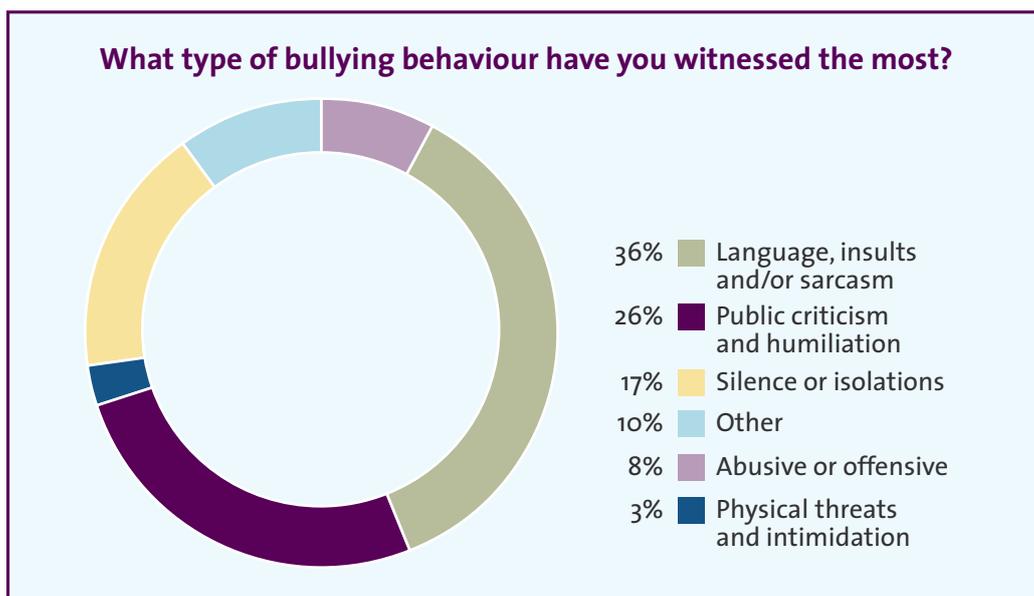


Respondents' estimates of the duration of the bullying behaviour they had witnessed varied, but over half (62%) estimating more than 6 months.

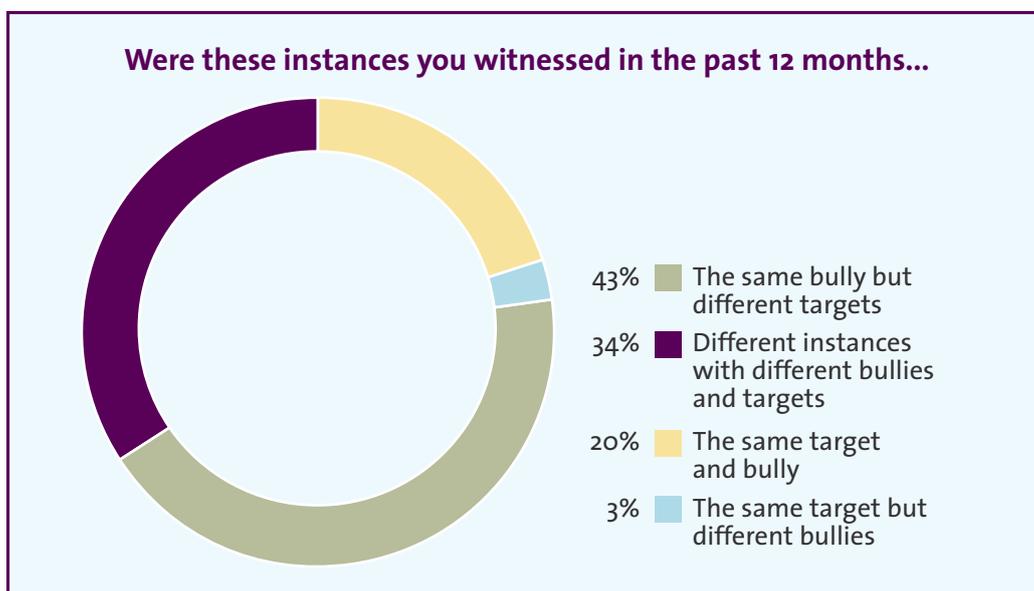


## TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR WITNESSED

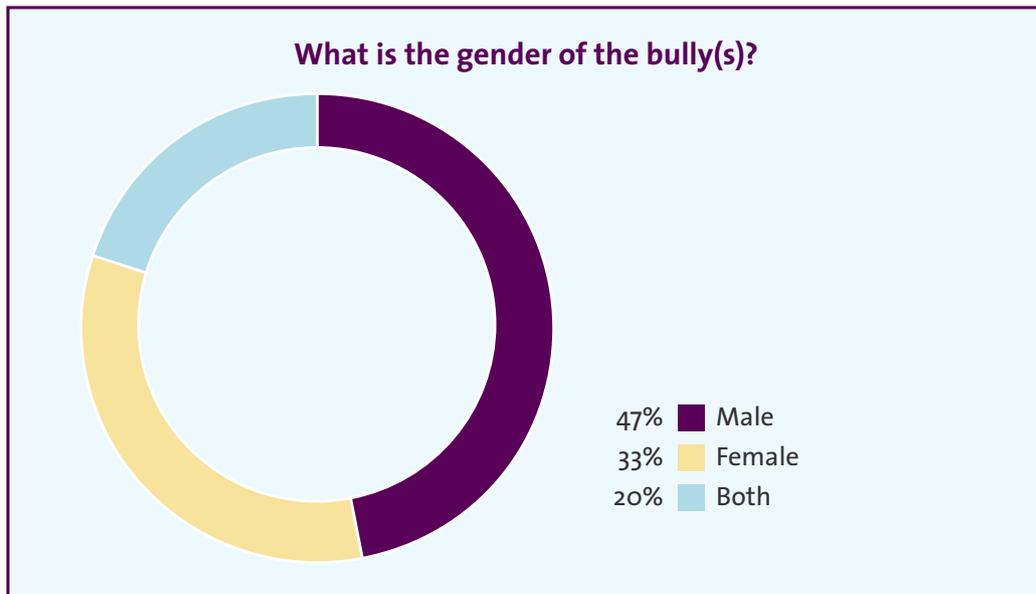
Not surprisingly the more obvious physical bullying was not reported as common, though this has not been eliminated completely, as 3% still reported this behaviour. More subtlety with the type of behaviour exhibited was evident, with insults and sarcasm being the most common type of bullying behaviour witnessed in the last 12 months (36%), followed by public criticism and humiliation (26%). It is interesting to note that one of the more difficult forms of bullying to detect – silence and isolation, was reported by 17% of respondents. This type of behaviour was also reported in respondents personal experiences of bullying noted below.



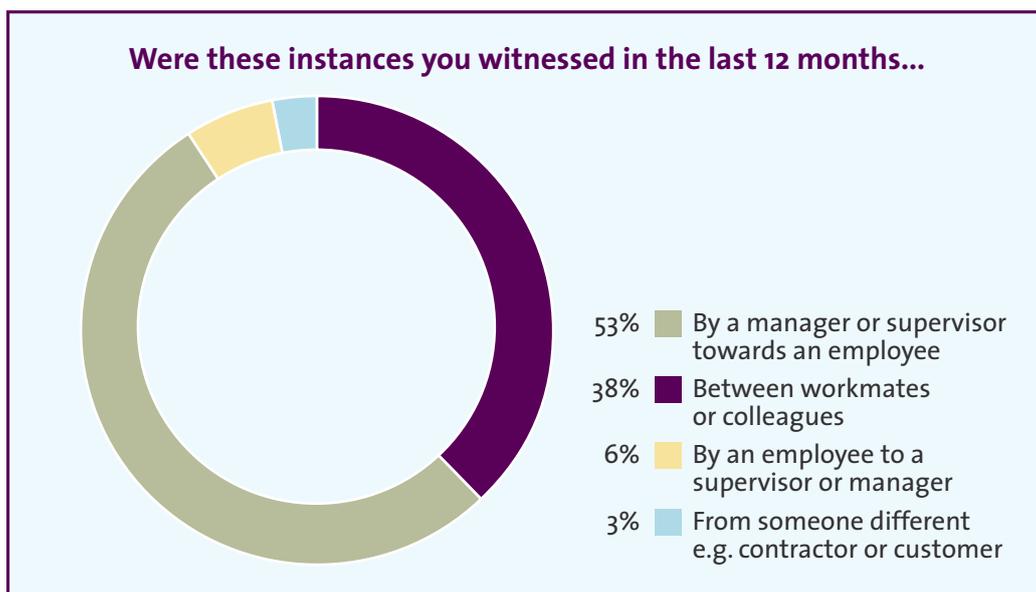
Although 20% of respondents reported witnessing behaviour between one target and bully, most experiences were more widespread. It appears in nearly half the cases (43%) that the bully had different targets or that the behaviour was perhaps part of the general culture with different targets and bullies (34%).



This aligns with the reporting of the gender of the bully and target, as 20 % of respondents reported both male and female bullies and that bullies targeted only men in 19% of instances, only women in 33% of instances, and both men and women in 47% of instances.



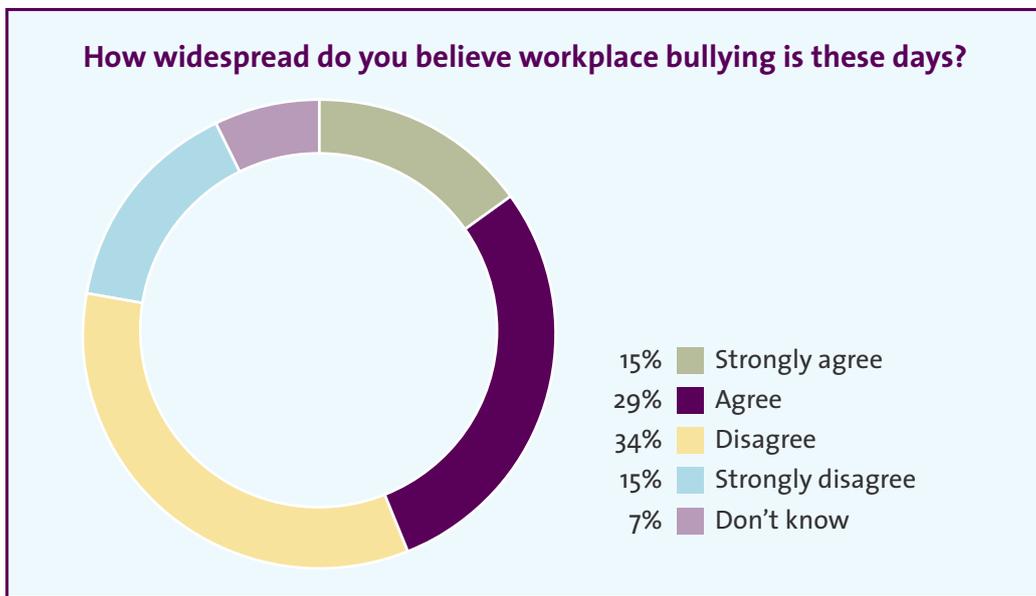
The power differential that often exists between target and bully, was reinforced through the results as the most common behavioural direction witnessed was downwards by a manager/supervisor towards an employee (53%). However this is not always the case as the differential can be informal or covert - sideways bullying between workmates/colleagues was witnessed in a third of cases.



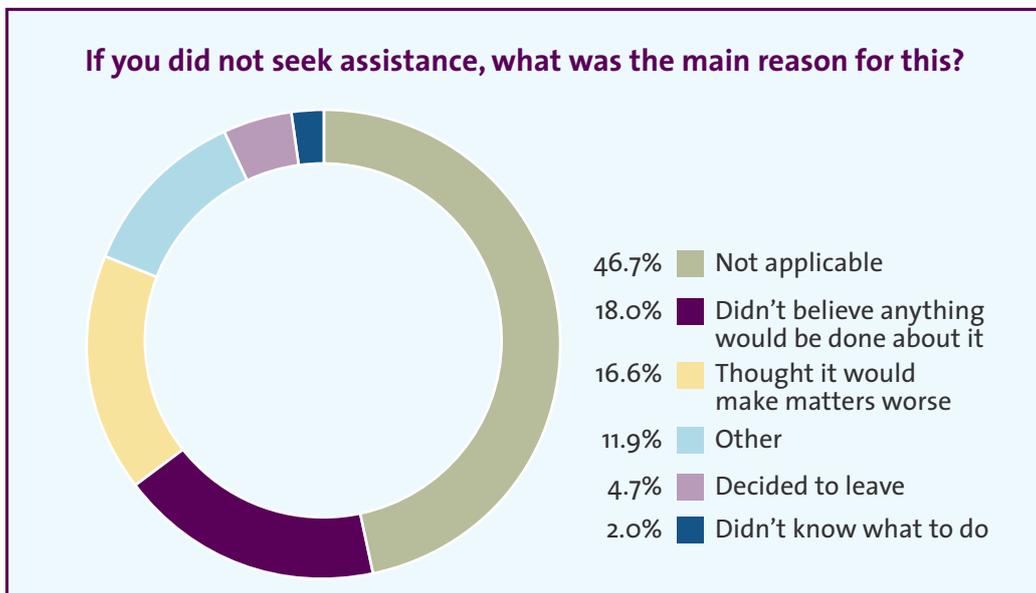
# REPORTING AND SUPPORT FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

In terms of seeking help or reporting bullying behaviour, only half reported that they sought help (57%) mostly from within the persons own organisation (75%). Internally this assistance was most often sought from HR (46%), closely followed by a supervisor/manager (39%). This is interesting feedback in light of the responses given that supervisor/manager roles were most frequently witnessed as the bully.

The Employee Assistance Program was the most common external source of assistance. In terms of organisational response, in around half the incidents witnessed a formal complaint was made, but it was reported that only 75% of these complaints were investigated. This may partly explain why less than half (43%) agreed that respondents organisation dealt with the situation satisfactorily.

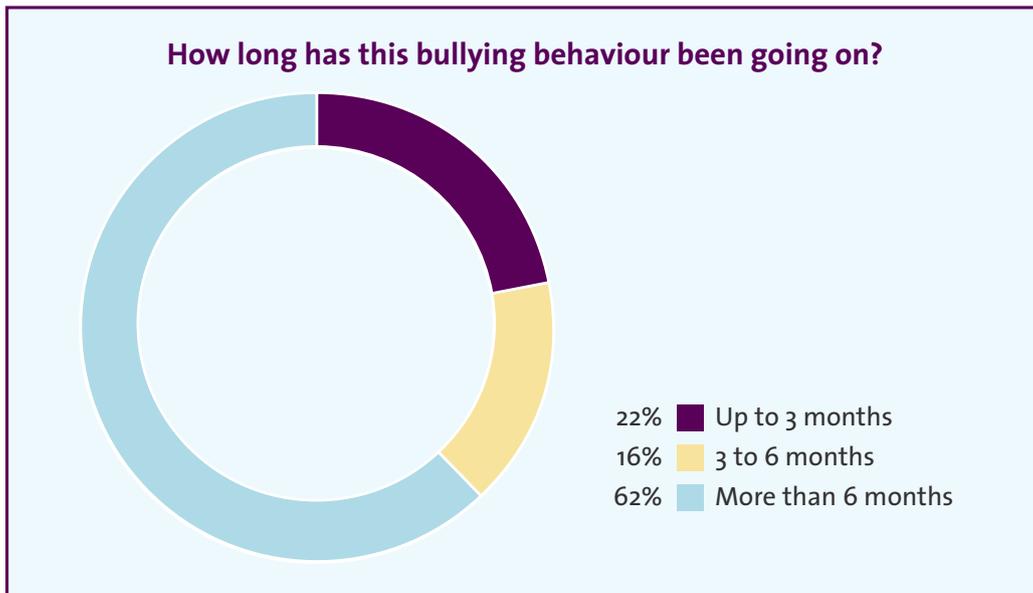


Not knowing what to do was not a common reason for respondents not seeking help. However, thinking it would make matters worse or not believing anything would be done did account for 34% of reasons given. This may also have affected the number of cases which did not result in a formal complaint as noted above.

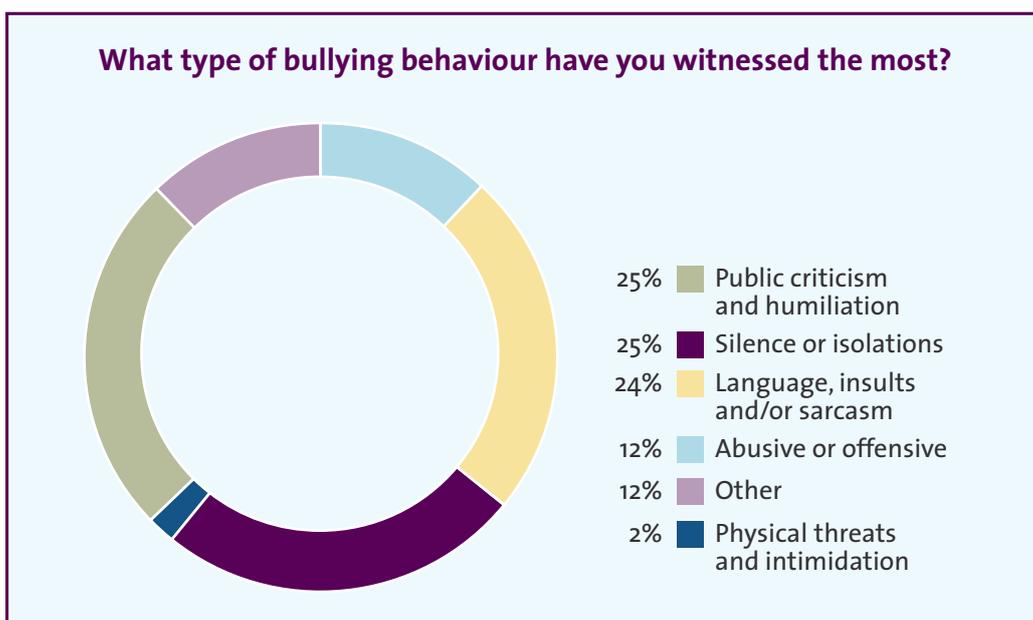


## PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING

28% of the survey respondents had personally experienced bullying behaviour in the last 12 months with 29% having experienced bullying often, or very often. Consistent with the feedback from those who witnessed bullying, over half (62%) experienced bullying behaviour for more than 6 months.



Again, consistent with respondents who witnessed bullying behaviour, verbal bullying was experienced the most - evenly split between public criticism and humiliation, insults and/or sarcasm and also silence and isolation (26%) which was experienced more often than witnessed.



## PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING

Not surprisingly, it appears that perhaps respondents being bullied are less likely to notice if bullying is happening elsewhere as 71% reported being bullied by the same person, although 21% did report being bullied by more than one person.

Consistent with witnessed behaviour, an overt power differential was evident in the results as the most common bullying direction was downward with managers making up 45% of the bullies with 27% being a workmate or colleague. 8% also reported being bullied by a group of individuals sometimes referred to as 'mobbing'.



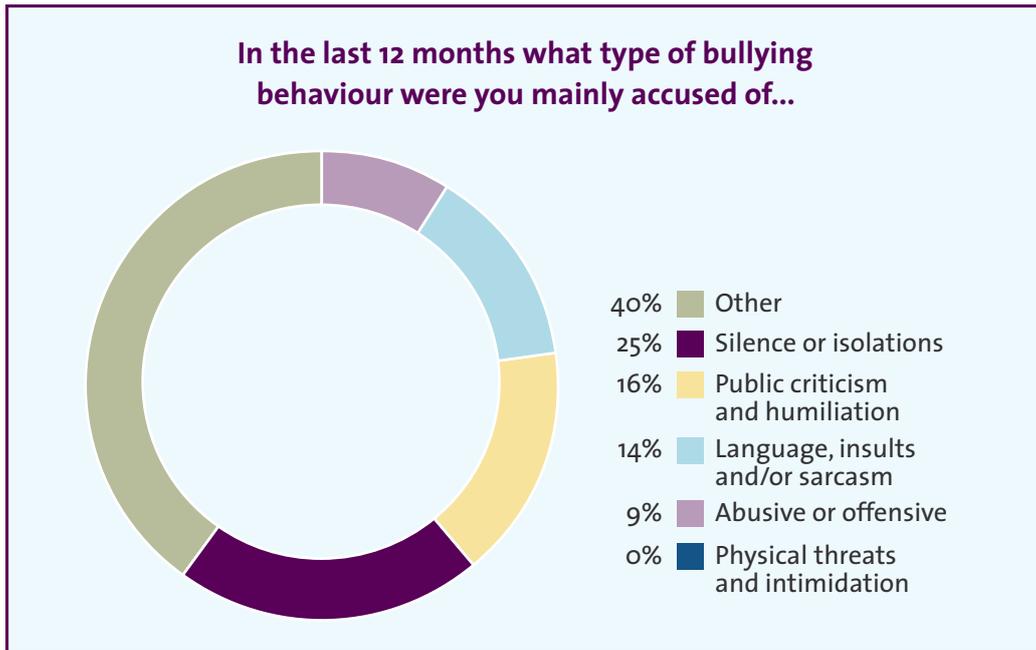
Only 46% of the targets sought help for the situation, and of these 62% sourced help internally from their organisation or combined with an external source (29%). The main source of internal assistance was again a supervisor or manager (51%), even though, as with witnessed behaviour, this role was the most common bully. 29% sought help mainly from HR.

Of those who sought external assistance, a friend or family member was reported as most popular. In only 50% of cases did the bullying behaviour experienced result in a formal complaint. However it appears that nearly all of these cases (90%) reported that their organisation investigated the complaint. Unfortunately, only 36% reported that their organisation dealt with the situation satisfactorily. If you take this result into account with a similar percentage for respondents who witnessed bullying behaviour (43%), it is not a good reflection of the processes or capabilities within organisations to effectively manage bullying behaviour when it is reported.

Similar to the witnessed behaviour, of the 54% who did not seek assistance, 50% thought it would make matters worse or didn't believe anything would be done.

# BEING ON THE OTHER SIDE – ACCUSED OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

5% of respondents had been accused of bullying behaviour. Consistent with the results noted from the witness and target, 44% of the accused were subject to a formal complaint which was investigated. In more than 50% of the cases, respondents reported that the complaint was not upheld. The time frame reported for the alleged behaviour was shorter, with 35% greater than 6 months.



In contrast to the previous results, 'Other' behaviour was the most common (40%) followed by silence or isolation (21%). Bullying downwards was again the most common behavioural direction (50%) with sideways accounting for a third of cases.

The targets were slightly more likely to be only female (50%) and just the one individual (65%).

62% of those accused of bullying sought assistance, and mostly from just within their organisation (67%). A supervisor or manager was the most common source of support (40%) or human resources (34%), with the Employee Assistance or friend or family member being the most popular external source. Of those who did not seek assistance, 23% reported that they didn't need it.

Those respondents accused of bullying were similarly unhappy about how the organisation dealt with the issue (50%).

# ORGANISATIONAL FEEDBACK

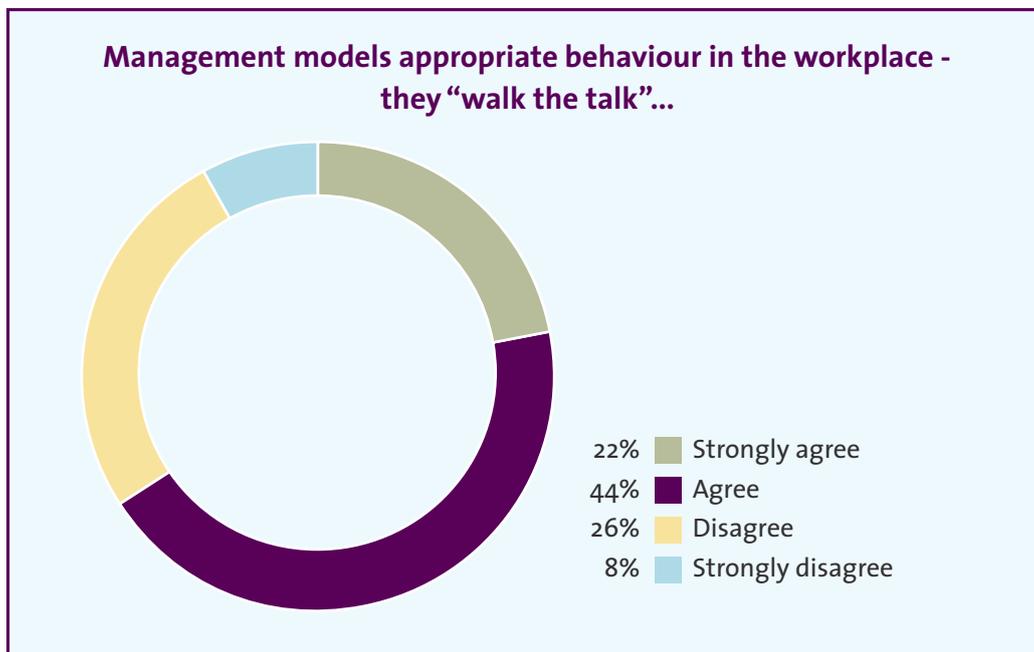
Generally respondents thought they understood the definition of bullying behaviour. They also reported:

- their organisation had appropriate policies and procedures in place (82%)
- their organisation had a complaints procedure (75%)
- were aware of their expectations with regard to appropriate behaviour (95%)
- knew what to do if they witness or are a target of bullying (89%).

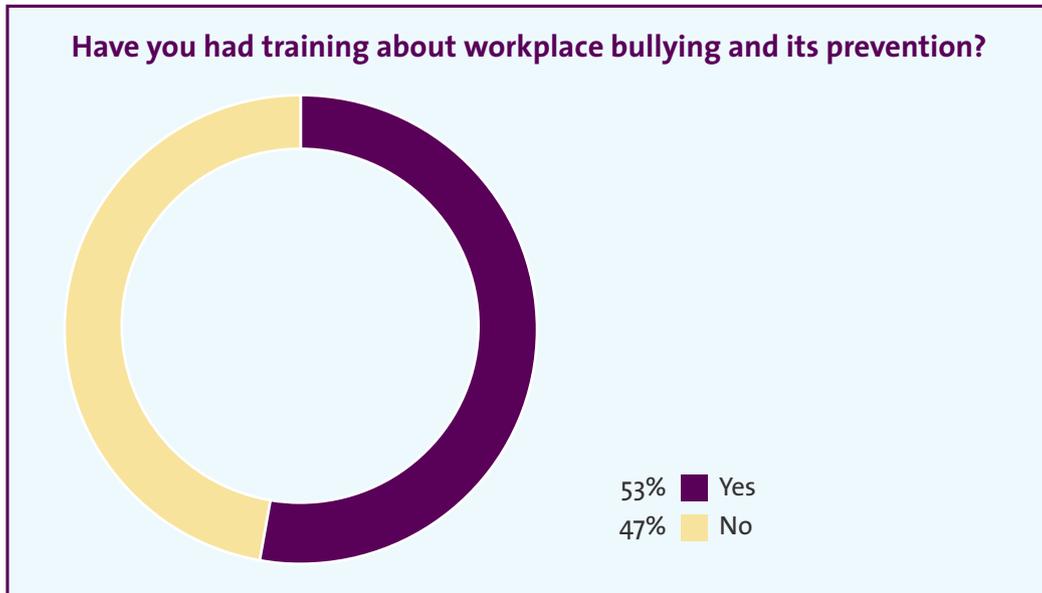
This is contrary to the information reported by respondents who witnessed or were targets of bullying behaviour, where less than half sought assistance, and nearly two thirds were dissatisfied with how their organisation dealt with the situation. A similar proportion also reported that this behaviour went on for more than 6 months.

There is a generally a favourable perception from most respondents who have not had direct experience of a bullying issue, but this changes when they come into direct contact with policy and procedures as applied to their experience as either a witness or target.

80% did feel comfortable with going to their line manager with any concerns. This is consistent with respondent's direct experience where a manager/supervisor was a popular choice for those respondents who actually sought assistance. Less favourable was respondents perception of management modelling where a third (34%) thought management did not 'walk the walk' and model appropriate behaviour.



Only half (53%) had undertaken bullying prevention training.



Of those who had participated in training, for 75% it was over 6 months ago, 44% more than 12 months ago. 90% of people thought the training was useful, but 39% didn't think the training changed anyone's behaviour. 37% of respondents indicated that they would like training on bullying prevention.

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