



# 2021 WBI U.S. WORKPLACE BULLYING SURVEY

The Fifth National Scientific WBI Study  
Zogby Analytics, Pollster

6.

## RANK OF PERPETRATORS

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## 6. RANK OF PERPETRATORS

Question: What was rank of the principal perpetrator(s)?

Table 13

	Proportion	Percentage
Single individual, higher rank than target, a boss	.4680	47%
Single individual, same rank, a coworker	.1598	16%
Single individual, lower rank, a subordinate	.0936	9%
More than one, higher rank, bosses	.1392	14%
More than one peer, coworkers	.0411	4%
Multiple subordinates	.0365	4%
A combination of bosses & peers	.0365	4%
A combination of bosses, peers & subordinates	.0228	2%
Higher rank than target (no combinations)	.6472	65%
Coworkers/peers	.2141	21%
Lower rank than target	.1386	14%
Lone perpetrator	.7231	72%
Multiple perpetrators	.2768	28%

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Unshaded rows in Table 11 are the response choices seen by survey respondents. The first three shaded rows are the values used in Figure 8. Bosses remain the most frequent perpetrators across all WBI national surveys begun in 2007. There is truth to the alliteration -- Bully Bosses. Bullying originates with peers in about 1 in 5 cases. Subordinates, lower in rank but not in self-perceived power, bully “up the ladder” in 14% of cases.

We also asked respondents if the principal perpetrator worked alone or as part of a group. Many readers will recognize this as a way to distinguish Mobbing (with its requisite multiple perpetrators) from Bullying (by a single instigator). In fact, every lone instigator soon acquires support from others, either explicitly through commands or requests or implicitly as coworkers align with the aggressor. Workplace bullying is rarely a solo act. Respondents said they saw a lone person (72%). But they did not see the others.

Figure 8

