



RESEARCH STUDIES

workplacebullying.org

**The WBI Website
2013 Instant Poll - D
The Timing & Results of
Targets Confronting Bullies
At Work**

Gary Namie, PhD - Research Director

Do not cite findings without crediting WBI

© 2013 Workplace Bullying Institute, All rights reserved

THE TIMING & RESULTS OF TARGETS CONFRONTING BULLIES AT WORK

WBI 2013-D Instant Poll

Individuals unfamiliar with details of the workplace bullying phenomenon but who declare themselves workplace experts suggest or insist that workers targeted for bullying directly confront their assailants. In a large-sample 2012 survey [WBI-2012-Strategies Effectiveness], 70% of 1,600 individuals said they attempted to confront their bully. The torment ended in only 3.5% of situations. Confrontation was ineffective.

This 2013 Instant Poll survey investigated whether the timing of a confrontation would affect effectiveness. WBI Instant Polls are online single-question surveys that rely upon self-selected samples of individuals bullied at work (typically 98% of any sample). No demographic data are collected. Our non-scientific Instant Polls accurately depict the perceptions of workers targeted for bullying at work as contrasted with the views of all adult Americans in our scientific national surveys.

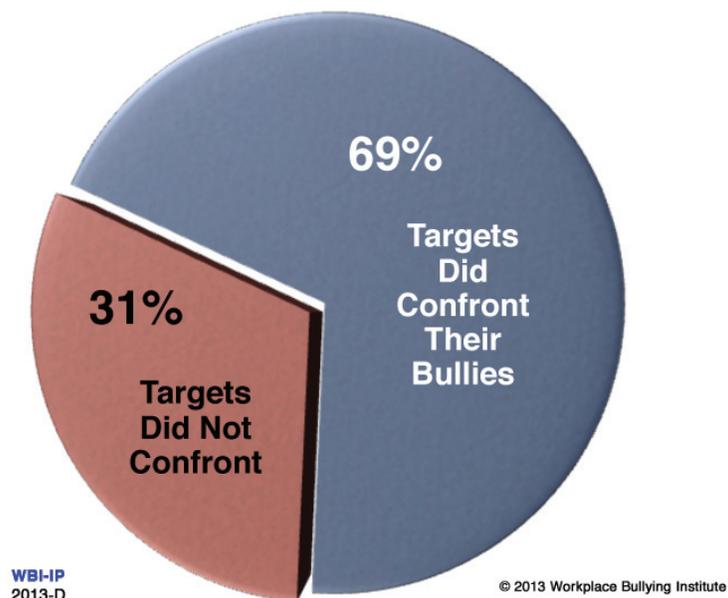
We asked 554 target-respondents to answer the following question.

For bullied targets only. When did you confront your bully, telling her or him that the abusive conduct was unacceptable to you?

Percentages of each response were:

.312 *I never confronted my bully directly*

This meant that 68.8% of respondents (n=381) did confront their bully, matching the percentage of targets who reported confronting their bullies in the 2012 study.



Because respondents could make only one choice, those who chose the responses below represented a sub-sample independent of those who reported that they never confronted. Subsequent percentages were based on the group of 381.

- .021 *Immediately during the first incident and the bullying stopped*
- .228 *Immediately but the bullying worsened*
- .021 *Early in the process within weeks, but not immediately and it stopped the bullying*
- .315 *Early in the process within weeks but it did not stop the bullying*
- .024 *Much later, several months after the bullying started, and it stopped*
- .391 *Several months later but it did not stop the bullying*

TARGETS CONFRONTING BULLIES	IMMEDIATELY	EARLY, WITHIN WEEKS	LATER, MONTHS	TOTALS
STOPPED THE BULLYING	0.021	0.021	0.024	0.066
DID NOT STOP THE BULLYING	0.228	0.315	0.391	0.934
TOTALS	0.249	0.336	0.415	1.000

WBI-IP
2013-D

© 2013 Workplace Bullying Institute

Of those targets who did confront, the majority (42%) waited until several months later. Another 34% confronted within weeks and 25% of targets immediately confronted their bullies. Regardless of the time targets chose to confront, the assertive acts failed to stop the bullying. The overall failure rate was 93%. On those rare occasions when targets were able to stop their bullies, the rate did not exceed 2% despite timing of the confrontation.

Conclusion

The results of this study conformed with the prior larger sample study -- approximately 70% of targets actually do confront their bullies. Most targets procrastinate and wait until months after the onset of bullying. Despite traditional advice telling bullied targets to confront, suggesting that rational abusers will stop when faced with resistance from their targets, the reality is that confrontations by targets do not and cannot stop bullies and the bullying.

Gary Namie, PhD
Research Director

WORKPLACE
BULLYING
INSTITUTE