

• **St. Vincent College, Latrobe: BA, 1998** •

Duquesne Law: JD, 2006

“To provide a caring peer assistance program to save the lives and restore the health and professional competence of Pennsylvania’s judges and lawyers, members of their families, and law students who may be facing mental health and/or substance use challenges. We carry out this mission through a combination of confidential helpline services, volunteer support and education.”

LCL HELPLINE 1-888-999-1941 24/7 CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT

- Free information and literature
- Free evaluation by a healthcare professional
- Free assistance with interventions
- Peer support
- Lawyer/Judge/Law Student-only support group meetings
- LCL staff support

Our services are **free,**
confidential, non-judgmental
and **non**
obligatory.

Lawyers Concerned for
Lawyers of
Pennsylvania

CONFIDENTIAL Helpline

1-888-999-1941

24 hrs./day, 7 days/week, 365
days/year

www.lclpa.org

- LCL does not report or disclose any identifying information to any Court, Judicial Conduct Board, Disciplinary Board, Board of Law Examiners or any other agency of the Court; nor do we report or disclose any identifying information to State or local Bar Associations or any judicial or law related organization. We do not report any identifying information to anyone without your prior consent.
- You may remain anonymous and still receive our services.



Workplace Bullying: Repeated, unreasonable behavior directed towards
an employee or group of employees that

creates a risk to health and safety.

While the legal profession is inherently adversarial in litigation, this should not extend to internal or inter-professional relationships

The Study:

“Bullying in the Legal Profession: A Study of Illinois Lawyers’ Experiences and Recommendations for Change”

Illinois Supreme Court Study: What did we find out?

1 in 4 lawyers

have experienced workplace bullying during a one-year period.

Bullying in the Legal Profession: A Study of Illinois Lawyers' Experiences and Recommendations for Change

Survey Initiated on September 27, 2023

- 6,010 Illinois lawyers participated in the study, which was conducted for the Commission by The Red Bee Group.
- Bullying was defined as: “Inappropriate behavior intended to intimidate, humiliate, or control the actions of another person. Bullying may take many forms including verbal, nonverbal, or physical acts.”

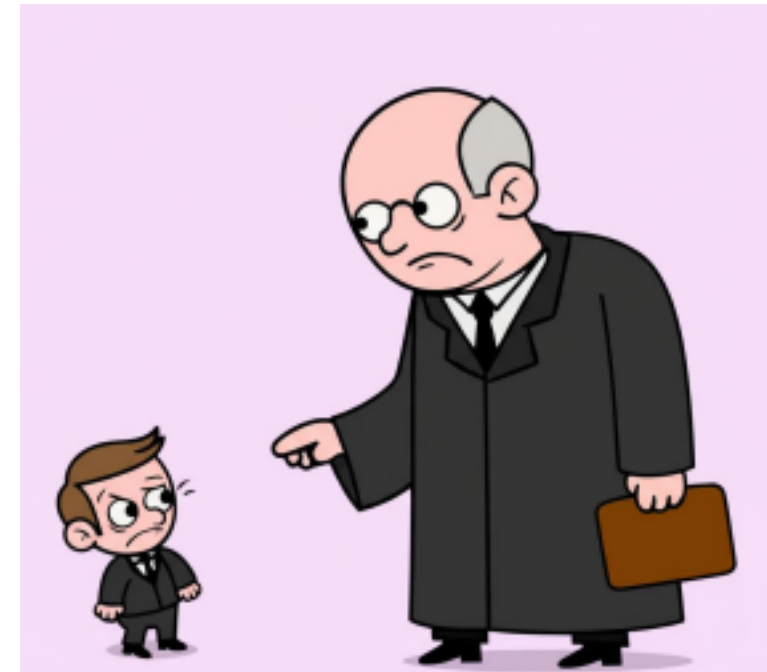
The Behavior:

- The seven most reported types of bullying behavior were: •
 1. Verbal intimidation, such as insults, name-calling, or shouting •
 2. Harsh, belittling, or excessive criticism of work •

3. Demeaning nonverbal behaviors

- 4. Imposing unrealistic work demands
- 5. Behind-the-back malicious rumors
- 6. Improperly taking credit for work
- 7. Not receiving important work information

- HA ZING/STRUGGLES OF BEI NG NEW
I N THE LEG AL PROFESSION



- 39% OF LAWYERS AGED 25 TO 35 WERE BULLIED, COMPARED TO 12% OF LAWYERS AGED 66 TO 75.

The Gender Divide

- **The "Leaky Pipeline":** Despite women entering law school in equal or greater numbers, significant disparities persist in leadership, pay, and retention in the legal profession.

- **Impact on Equity and Talent:** Sexism undermines the careers of talented individuals, limits diversity of thought, and compromises the profession's commitment to fairness.



Defining Sexism in the Workplace

- **Gender Stereotyping:** Attributing certain characteristics, roles, or abilities to individuals based solely on their gender (e.g., women are "emotional," men are "decisive").

- **Gendered Expectations:** Imposing different standards or expectations on individuals based on their gender.
- **Systemic Barriers:** Policies, practices, or cultural norms that disadvantage one gender.



- **Unequal Pay & Compensation:** Persistent gender pay gaps for similar work and experience levels.
- **Limited Advancement Opportunities:** Fewer women in leadership roles (partners, judges, senior counsel), often hitting a "glass ceiling."



Gendered Expectations & Double Standards:

- Women being penalized for assertiveness ("bossy") while men are rewarded ("leader").
- Expectations for women to manage office social events or

emotional labor.

- Implicit bias against mothers or caregivers regarding commitment and ambition.
- Client Bias: Clients sometimes prefer or implicitly trust male lawyers more, impacting opportunities.
- Career Stagnation & Attrition: Women leave the legal profession at higher rates, particularly at senior levels, due to lack of advancement and hostile environments.
- Mental & Emotional Toll: Increased stress, anxiety, imposter syndrome, burnout, and feelings of inadequacy due to constant microaggressions and systemic barriers.
- Financial Disadvantage: Lower lifetime earnings and wealth accumulation due to pay gaps and slower

progression.

The Profound Impact of Sexism

- **Reduced Confidence & Ambition:** Sexist environments can erode self-belief and discourage women from pursuing leadership roles.
- **Work-Life Imbalance:** Women often bear a disproportionate share of domestic and caregiving responsibilities, compounded by inflexible legal work cultures.
- **Underutilization of Talent:** The profession loses out on diverse perspectives and valuable contributions when sexism limits opportunities.
- **Erosion of Trust:** A lack of faith in the firm's commitment to equity and fairness.

Traditional & Patriarchal Structures: The legal profession has historically been male-dominated, leading to entrenched norms and power dynamics.

Unconscious Bias: Implicit biases about gender roles, leadership styles, and competence influence hiring, promotion, and daily interactions.

Lack of Transparency: Opaque processes for compensation, promotions, and work assignments can hide gender disparities.

Likeability Penalty: Women who are assertive or ambitious may be perceived negatively compared to their male counterparts.

compensation practices based on objective metrics.

- Pay Equity & Transparency: Conduct regular pay audits and ensure transparent, equitable

- Comprehensive Bias Training: Provide mandatory, ongoing training on unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, and microaggressions for all employees, especially leadership.

- Parental Leave & Support: Offer generous, gender neutral parental leave policies and support for returning parents.

•

•

•

Cultivating a Truly Gender-Equitable

Legal Workplace

- **Foster a Culture of Inclusion & Respect:** Actively promote an environment where all genders feel valued, heard, and respected.
- **Amplify Women's Voices:** Ensure women's contributions are recognized, their ideas are credited, and they have equal speaking opportunities in meetings and public forums.
- **Challenge Gender Stereotypes:** Actively dismantle traditional gender roles and expectations within the workplace.

Unwelcome Conduct:
Sexual harassment involves
unwelcome sexual
advances, requests for

sexual favors, and other
verbal or physical
harassment of a sexual
nature.



- Offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, or name calling.
- Physical assaults or threats.

- Intimidation, ridicule, or mockery.
- Insults or put-downs.
- Offensive objects or pictures.
- Interference with work performance.

- Hierarchical Structures: Traditional law firm and court structures can foster environments where junior members feel unable to challenge senior figures.
- Long Hours & High Stress: Exhaustion and pressure can lower inhibitions and increase irritability, making individuals



more susceptible to both perpetrating and experiencing misconduct.

- "Old Boys' Club" Culture: Historically, some legal environments have been male-dominated, leading to entrenched attitudes and resistance to change regarding gender equality.

-

-

-



38% OF
LAWYERS WITH A DISABILITY

Illinois Supreme Court Study







- Homophobic Bullying presents specific challenges for LGBTQIA+ legal professionals.
- The "Professional Façade": Homophobic bullying can often be subtle, disguised as "jokes," "banter," or "professional feedback," making it difficult to identify and address.
- Impact on Trust and Safety: It erodes trust, creates an unsafe work environment, and forces individuals to hide their authentic selves.

- Targeted Hostility:
Homophobic

bullying is repeated,
unwelcome

behavior directed at an
individual

because of their actual or
perceived sexual orientation, or
association with LGBTQIA+
individuals.



Forms of Bullying (often subtle in professional settings):

- Verbal: Offensive jokes or slurs about LGBTQIA+ people; demeaning comments about an individual's partner or lifestyle; "outing" someone without their consent; persistent questioning about personal life.
- Exclusion/Isolation: Deliberately excluding LGBTQIA+ individuals from social events, networking opportunities, or professional development based on their sexual orientation.



-
-
-

- Educate Yourself: Understand the nuances of homophobic bullying and its impact.
- Promote Inclusive Language: Encourage the use of inclusive language (e.g., asking for pronouns, avoiding assumptions about partners).
- Be an Active Ally: Speak up against homophobic remarks or actions, even subtle ones. Support your LGBTQIA+ colleagues.
- Our collective responsibility is to ensure the legal profession is a place of justice and respect for *all* its members.



Lawyers of color reported higher instances of bullying (e.g., 36% Middle Eastern/North African, 35% Black/African American, 34% Hispanic).



- A Persistent Reality: Despite advancements, racist bullying remains a significant, often insidious, challenge people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds in the legal profession.
- Beyond Overt Acts: Racism in the workplace is not always overt; it often manifests as subtle biases, microaggressions, and systemic barriers.
- Impact on Equity and Justice: These behaviors undermine individual well-being, hinder career progression, and compromise the legal profession's commitment to justice and equality.



- Verbal Racist Bullying: Racial slurs, derogatory terms,

"jokes" about race/ethnicity, mocking accents, questioning an individual's intelligence or qualifications based on race.

- Exclusion/Isolation: Deliberately excluding individuals because of their race/ethnicity from informal networks, client meetings, social events, or information critical for career advancement.

- Professional Undermining: Assigning less desirable or "diversity" tasks, withholding challenging work, denying mentorship/sponsorship, or giving unfair criticism rooted in racial bias.

- Stereotyping: Making assumptions about an individual's abilities, work ethic, or interests based



on racial stereotypes.

- Systemic Nature: Racist bullying is often reinforced by broader systemic biases and institutional practices within the legal field.

Microaggressions: Everyday, subtle, often unintentional, expressions of prejudice that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to racialized individuals. Examples include: "*Where are you really from?*"

"You're so articulate for someone like you."

Confusing individuals of the same race.

Exoticizing or tokenizing a colleague because of their race/ethnicity.



MICROAGGRESSION



- Psychological Burden: Chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and imposter syndrome from constantly navigating and internalizing racial bias.
- "Double Consciousness": The mental burden of constantly code-switching, monitoring one's behavior, and anticipating racial prejudice.
- Career Stagnation & Exit: Disproportionate rates of racialized professionals leaving the legal field or struggling to advance to senior positions due to systemic barriers and

hostile environments.

- Limited Opportunities: Being overlooked for high-profile cases, leadership roles, or client relationship-building opportunities.
- Emotional Toll: The expectation to educate colleagues on racial issues, often at personal emotional cost.
- Erosion of Trust: A deep sense of distrust in the firm's commitment to equity and in the fairness of internal processes.





- **Implicit Bias & Stereotypes:** Unconscious biases about race influence hiring, promotion, mentorship, and daily interactions.
- **Lack of Diversity in Leadership:** A predominantly non racialized leadership often lacks lived experience or understanding of racialized experiences, hindering effective anti-racism initiatives.
- **"Meritocracy Myth":** The belief that the legal profession is a

and



- Fear of "Calling Out" Racism: Racialized individuals may fear being labeled "too sensitive" or facing retaliation for reporting racist incidents.
- Insufficient Anti-Racism Training: Training often focuses on general diversity rather than specific, actionable strategies for dismantling systemic racism and addressing microaggressions.
- Client Preferences/Bias: Firms may inadvertently (or intentionally) cater to client biases, impacting opportunities for racialized lawyers.

- **Explicit Anti-Racism Policies:** Develop and enforce policies that specifically address and prohibit all forms of racial discrimination and bullying, including microaggressions.
- **Ongoing Anti-Racism Training:** Implement comprehensive training for all levels of staff, focusing on implicit bias, systemic racism, microaggressions, and effective bystander intervention.
- **Diverse & Inclusive Leadership:** Actively recruit, retain, and promote racialized individuals into leadership and decision making roles.





Open Communication and Collaboration

Promote open communication among team members to build trust and encourage effective collaboration within the workplace.

Recognition and Motivation

Regularly recognize and reward achievements to boost morale

and inspire motivation among employees.

Supporting Work-Life Balance

Encourage flexible schedules and wellness initiatives so employees feel valued in both personal and professional lives.



Emotional Consequences

Bullying frequently results in anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, seriously impacting victims' emotional well-being.



Feelings of Isolation

Victims of bullying often experience intense isolation and helplessness, which can persist long after the bullying ends.



Risk of Self-Harm

Continued bullying increases the risk for self-harm and suicidal thoughts, underscoring the need for intervention and support.



High Prevalence of Issues

Legal professionals experience elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse compared to other fields.

Workplace Stress Factors

Long hours, high job stress, and intense client demands are major contributors to mental health challenges in law.

Improving Mental Well-being

Reducing stigma and adopting well-being initiatives are essential for better mental health outcomes in law.

- Free information and literature
- Free evaluation by a healthcare professional
- Free assistance with interventions
- Peer support
- Lawyer/Judge/Law Student-only support group meetings
- LCL staff support
- **FULLY OPERATIONAL** during COVID

Our services are **free, confidential, non-judgmental**

and **non obligatory.**

**Lawyers Concerned for
Lawyers of
Pennsylvania, PA**

CONFIDENTIAL Helpline

1-888-999-1941

**24 hrs./day, 7 days/week, 365
days/year**

www.lclpa.org

You Are Not Alone!!!

- Support is available for everyone facing challenges.
- Many legal professionals share similar experiences.
- Confidential help exists to guide and assist you. •

Seeking help shows strength and courage.

