

Mobbing

Definition, possible consequences & little food for thought

What is considered as Mobbing?

Unfortunately, some people are confronted with mobbing very early in their lives. Most people witness mobbing at school at the latest. This can have a significant impact on the further course of a person's life. What exactly is considered as mobbing, is sometimes defined somewhat differently. However, a very popular explanation of a mobbing situation is the definition formulated by Heinz Leymann. According to this definition, a mobbing situation is one in which personal attacks occur regularly (at least once a week), become worse and worse, and take place over a period of at least 6 months.² However, 6 months is a long time, whereby physical and mental consequences can occur much earlier.

Mobbing consequences in children and teenagers¹

Young victims of bullying often suffer physical injuries as well as social exclusion and, above all, a violation of their self-esteem. As a result, there may be a reduction in social relationships and a deterioration in the school performance and mental health of the affected person. In the worst cases, various mental disorders (e.g., psychosomatic complaints, depressive disorders, social disorders, anxiety disorders) may even develop.

Many people also fail to consider that, in addition to the victims, the perpetrators of mobbing can also suffer lasting damage. Poorer school performance, disturbed social behaviour, pronounced social and societal problems, and other consequences are on the list of possible consequences for mobbing perpetrators.

A cause of mobbing in adulthood can therefore be a consequence of mobbing in childhood or adolescence, both for perpetrators and victims.

Mobbing consequences in adults³

In contrast to school at a young age, the workplace at a later stage of life is an environment where mobbing often occurs. The consequences of mobbing in adulthood can be divided into 3 categories: Individual, organisational, and societal consequences.

Individual consequences: In today's world, most people are aware of the fact that mobbing can worsen their mental state and thus represent a psychological burden. This burden can affect work and performance behaviour in the form of demotivation. Increased mistrust,

[1] Böhmer, M., & Steffgen, G. (Eds.). (2019). *Mobbing an Schulen: Maßnahmen zur Prävention, Intervention und Nachsorge*. Springer-Verlag.

[2] Leymann, H. (1993). *Mobbing: Psychoterror am Arbeitsplatz und wie man sich dagegen wehren kann*. [Mobbing: Terrorization at work – and how to ward it off]. Rowohlt, Reinbek.

[3] Litzcke, S. M., & Schuh, H. (2010). *Stress, Mobbing und Burn-out am Arbeitsplatz*. Springer-Verlag.

nervousness, insecurity, lack of concentration, thought blocks, anxiety and self-doubt are some of the effects indicated. Frequent performance losses can in turn lead to mobbing, creating a vicious circle between mobbing and performance deterioration. Other individual consequences include health problems such as migraine attacks, paralysis, and gastrointestinal, cardiovascular and cancer diseases. **Job loss in the form of voluntary transfer within the organisation, dismissal or redundancy are also common outcomes.** Finally, the victim's leisure time and relationship with the family suffers.

Organisational consequences: As mentioned above, a mobbing situation at work is usually only ended by the person concerned taking action. This is done through dismissal or requested transfer. Furthermore, mobbing also entails economic costs. Thus, for example, costs arise for a company because the work productivity of perpetrators and victims decreases, there is more absenteeism due to illness, the working atmosphere deteriorates, labour law proceedings are called, and information is passed on to a lesser extent. This results in economic costs due to curative treatments, early retirement, permanent unemployment, and rehabilitation cures.

Societal consequences: Mobbing causes a destruction of the functionality of labour relations, resulting in a deterioration of profitability and productivity of a company. Furthermore, the production of companies can decrease and the increasing costs in the health care system make life more difficult for public budgets, among others.

Conclusion

In summary, mobbing can have a negative impact in any area of life. Not only victims and perpetrators have to deal with consequences, but also their families and friends, the institution they work for and finally the society they live in.

Nevertheless, the most suffering and important person in a case of mobbing is still the victim. The lack of a law in many countries (including Luxembourg) makes it a mammoth task to tackle mobbing, specifically mobbing at work. But even without the existence of such documents, action can be taken against this often-destructive phenomenon that occurs on a daily basis. Look at your work environment, do not withdraw if you perceive a mobbing situation, actively help the victims of mobbing to get out of their situation and take action against the perpetrators.

If you were in their situation, you would wish the same, wouldn't you?

Being a victim of mobbing at work and only being able to escape from this role by being transferred or quitting is a **double punishment** that should not exist.

To be a perpetrator, to make other people's lives hell, and to get away without consequences is an **injustice** that should not exist.

Finally, employers who, because of their connections and power, are seemingly untouchable, are not just characters in Hollywood movies, but a **reality**, a **corruption** that takes place in our environment and that should not exist.

- Jos C. Wagner