

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2106/210627-toxic-workplaces.html>

New research has revealed that toxic workplaces can be hazardous to mental health. The year-long study is from the University of South Australia. Researchers found that full-time workers who work for companies or organizations that do not prioritise employees' mental health are three times more likely to suffer from depression. The researchers examined the adverse effect of "toxic" environments on health. Elements of a toxic workplace included poor management practices, bullying, and a failure to consider mental health issues. The researchers indicated that if employees are unhappy at work, mistreated or burnt out, their productivity will suffer and absenteeism will increase.

Lead researcher Dr Amy Zadow said mental health issues created in the workplace can be attributed to poor management practices and values. She said: "Evidence shows that companies who fail to reward or acknowledge their employees for hard work, impose unreasonable demands on workers, and do not give them autonomy are placing their staff at a much greater risk of depression." She added: "Bullying in a work unit can not only negatively affect the victim, but also the perpetrator....It is not uncommon for everyone in the same unit to experience burnout as a result." Depression affects over 260 million people worldwide and causes many people to take their own lives.

Sources: <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/6/e044133>
<https://metro.co.uk/2021/06/24/toxic-work-culture-makes-you-three-times-more-likely-to-be-depressed-14820538/>
<https://www.iflscience.com/health-and-medicine/your-risk-of-depression-increases-by-300-percent-in-a-toxic-work-environment/>

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. revealed | a. Decide that or treat something as more important than other things. |
| 2. hazardous | b. Pointed out; showed. |
| 3. prioritise | c. Made previously unknown or secret information known to others. |
| 4. adverse | d. Risky; dangerous. |
| 5. consider | e. Preventing success or development; harmful; unfavorable. |
| 6. indicated | f. Think carefully about something, typically before making a decision. |
| 7. absenteeism | g. The practice of regularly staying away from work or school without good reason. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8. attributed | h. Freedom from external control or influence; independence. |
| 9. value | i. Regarded something as being caused by someone or something. |
| 10. evidence | j. Accept or admit the existence or truth of. |
| 11. acknowledge | k. A person who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act. |
| 12. autonomy | l. A principle or standard of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life. |
| 13. perpetrator | m. Physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress. |
| 14. burnout | n. The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2106/210627-toxic-workplaces.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

1. The research is from the University of North Australia. **T / F**
2. Researchers said one in three companies do not prioritise mental health. **T / F**
3. Researchers said bullying is an aspect of a toxic workplace. **T / F**
4. Researchers said absenteeism will suffer and productivity will increase. **T / F**
5. A researcher said management practices are poor in all companies. **T / F**
6. Workers without autonomy are at greater risk of depression. **T / F**
7. The researcher says bullying also adversely affects the bully. **T / F**
8. Over 260 million people around the world are affected by depression. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH: (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. revealed | a. think about |
| 2. hazardous | b. principles |
| 3. adverse | c. efficiency |
| 4. consider | d. impacts |
| 5. productivity | e. perilous |
| 6. attributed to | f. appreciate |
| 7. values | g. showed |
| 8. acknowledge | h. freedom |
| 9. autonomy | i. unfavourable |
| 10. affects | j. put down to |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. toxic workplaces can be hazardous | a. also the perpetrator |
| 2. three times more likely to | b. people worldwide |
| 3. poor management | c. absenteeism will increase |
| 4. mistreated or | d. as a result |
| 5. productivity will suffer and | e. practices |
| 6. impose unreasonable demands | f. to mental health |
| 7. staff at a much greater | g. on workers |
| 8. not only negatively affect the victim, but | h. burnt out |
| 9. experience burnout | i. risk of depression |
| 10. Depression affects over 260 million | j. suffer from depression |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2106/210627-toxic-workplaces.html>

1. How long was the research in this article?
2. What university carried out the research?
3. What might workers be three times more likely to suffer from?
4. What do researchers say some companies fail to consider?
5. What will increase if workers are mistreated or burnt out?
6. Who is Amy Zadow?
7. What did a researcher suggest some companies impose on workers?
8. Who can be negatively affected by bullying besides the victim?
9. What can bullying lead to in a work unit?
10. How many people worldwide are affected by depression?

TOXIC WORKPLACES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'toxic'?
3. How can the workplace affect our health?
4. What is your ideal workplace?
5. What do you think of the places you have worked at?
6. What responsibility do managers have to create a positive workplace?
7. What can companies do to create a positive workspace?
8. How do bad workplaces affect people?
9. What companies are great places to work for?
10. What can lead to burnout?

Toxic workplaces increase depression risk by 300% – 27th June, 2021
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TOXIC WORKPLACES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'workplace'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. Why are there poor management practices?
15. How can companies stamp out bullying at work?
16. Have you ever had a bad boss?
17. What can workers do about toxic workplaces?
18. What one thing creates a great workplace?
19. What do you know about depression?
20. What questions would you like to ask the researchers?