



Pink Shirt Day: speaking out against workplace bullying and harassment

Gossiping. Name-calling. Yelling. Belittling. Isolating. These are all forms of workplace bullying. And no work site is immune to it.

In health care – whether it's between supervisors and employees, patients/residents and workers, or even between peers – bullying and harassment create toxicity in already stressful workplaces.

It's widely documented that health care workers experience high rates of on-the-job injuries, including violence-related incidents, but it's equally important to recognize the growing problem of harassment and bullying and the devastating effect it has on those involved.

That's why HEU members made it a priority to address the issue at the 2019 bargaining table.

In the tentative 2019-2022 facilities contract, new language has been added to *Article 37 – Occupational Health and Safety*, which includes identifying bullying and harassment behaviours (Article 37.09 Bullying & Harassment), and introduces safeguards to tackle how unsafe work impacts mental health (Article 37.14 Psychological Health & Safety).

By law, all Canadian employees have the right to a respectful workplace – one that's free of harassment, bullying and violence. Although it's the employer's legal responsibility to establish and enforce a safe work environment, all members of the team participate in creating that workplace atmosphere.

Whether a recipient or perpetrator, bullying and harassment lead to poisonous work environments that can damage a worker's physical and psychological health, and cause fractured teams and departments.

The union offers workshops – including Intro to OH&S, Workload, and Workplace Mental Health – which address issues of bullying and harassment in the context of the employer's responsibility to ensure there's workplace policy, procedures, training, reporting and investigations that set out the roles of workers, supervisors and managers.

HEU members should contact their servicing representative if they experience workplace bullying and harassment.

On February 27, HEU is urging members to stand up against all forms of harassment and bullying by participating in Pink Shirt Day. Show your support by wearing a pink item of clothing, and talk to each other about this growing problem in Canadian workplaces.

February 25, 2019