



Pink Shirt Day: practice kindness, zero tolerance for bullying and harassment

Headlines have been dominated by the rise in cyberbullying, where culprits hide behind the safety and anonymity of computer screens and cell phones. But workplace bullying and harassment are not new, and health care workers experience it at an alarming rate.

For years, on-the-job injuries, including violence-related incidents, have been widely documented. But it's only been more recently that the devastating impacts of workplace bullying and harassment have been addressed.

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

In the 2019-2022 facilities contract, 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, Stand Up for OH&S, Workload, and Mental Health First Aid – 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 26, 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.

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