



Canadian Labour Congress

Congrès du travail du Canada

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Fall 2016

Mental Health in the Workplace

This introductory survey course will help raise awareness for participants about mental health issues facing workers in today's workplace. Activists will develop a range of strategies to specifically support, accommodate & represent members with mental health challenges at work.

We will look at the myths around mental illness, challenging stigma and what role the union can play in making our workplaces & unions more inclusive of members with psychological disabilities. We will develop action plans to take on systemic factors affecting mental health through advocacy, bargaining & political action.

Course Objectives:

1. Build awareness on basic concepts of mental health & illness
2. Create understanding for why mental health is a key issue for workers & unions
3. Build empathy & understanding for what workers with mental illness face daily
4. Examine roles & responsibilities of the union, member & employer on duty to accommodate
5. Review & create supports & strategies for workers with mental illnesses in the workplace
6. Examine what roles bargaining & political action can play in developing full supports & services for workers with mental illnesses
7. Increase the union's capacity to include, support & advocate for workers with mental illnesses

Audience for this course:

Activists, stewards, committee people, local officers & some staff

Format of this course:

Weeklong

Who should facilitate this course:

Facilitators for this course need to have an open attitude about mental health and mental illness and be willing to examine their own potential biases & life experiences on mental health & mental illness. Facilitators need to be able to reflect on how these biases and life experiences might affect how they would facilitate the course and share these reflections with their co-facilitator and the coordinator of the school.

This course can be delivered by facilitators with strong facilitation skills and who take proper training to learn about mental health issues or have a background in this area already.

Facilitators need to be willing to spend time learning about mental health and mental illness prior to facilitating this course or have experience facilitating material dealing with mental health.

In the short term, until we have a full facilitator training program, it would be strongly recommended that facilitators unfamiliar with mental health content take the Mental Health Commission of Canada's 2 day, Mental Health First Aid course prior to facilitating this course.

Facilitators needs to have chief steward or union rep experience given the duty to accommodate content and other workplace issues in the course.

Facilitators need to be prepared to support a worker-centred, union, systemic and disability analysis of mental health and mental illness.

Facilitators need to be skilled experienced facilitators given some of the sensitive and emotional content covered – must be comfortable facilitating emotional and charged discussions similar to issues like dealing with sexism, racism and harassment in the classroom.

Outline for Mental Health in the Workplace Course

Sunday Evening

1. Brief Introductions & Welcome
2. Life Boats/Buses Icebreaker
3. Mental Health/Mental Illness Poster Exercise
4. Expectations Round
5. Review course outline and expectations
6. Learning contract
7. Video – TVO's Workplace Mental Health

Monday – Day 1 – Morning

8. Workplace/Life/Union Survey
9. Systemic Factors Affecting Mental Health
10. What questions do you have?
(Issues people have faced in the workplace/union?)
11. Mental Health and Mental Illness Continuum
12. Disability Rights & Labour
13. Stigma Self-Reflection
14. Videos – People with mental illness

Monday – Day 1 – Afternoon

15. Statements About Mental Health & Illness
16. Stigma & Discrimination
17. Basic definitions of mental illness & health
 - a. a) Matching game
 - b. b) Class discussion on definitions

Tuesday – Day 2 – Morning

18. Awareness of cross cultural/racial/gender/LGBTQ/young/older/disability worker issues in mental health
19. Sharing our Experiences So Far
20. Getting Help for Members – Assessing approaches

Tuesday – Day 2 – Afternoon

21. Duty to Accommodate - responsibilities of union, worker & employer
22. Dynamics in the workplace
 - Workers' perspective on disclosure
 - Disclosing to employers & co-workers
 - How to approach members
 - Videos
23. Understanding Functional Limitations and Accommodations for Workers with Mental Illness
24. Workplace Scenarios Round 1

Wednesday – Day 3 – Morning

- 25. Workplace Scenarios Round 2

- 27. Assessing Your Contract & Benefits

Wednesday – Day 3 – Afternoon

- 28. Taking Systemic Action – working with HR, HS, & Education Committees
 - a) National Standard for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace
 - b) Mental Injury Toolkit

- 29. Presenting to your executive or local

Thursday – Day 4 – Morning

- 30. Members With Different Needs – First Responders & Front Line Workers

- 31. Members With Different Needs – Family Members

- 32. Members With Different Needs – Domestic Violence

- 33. Expanding Peer Support

- 34. Support for Advocates

Thursday – Day 4 – Afternoon

36. Developing an Action Plan for Bargaining & Political Action

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