Connecting Work and Mental Health

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HSIW Conference, Windsor, 2023

And a shameless plug for the new Mental Health Toolkit! ☺

Psychosocial Hazards Increase Stress

Psychosocial hazards are the ways in which work is organised, designed, or managed that causes harm the health of workers.

Work Organisation CAN hurt

Organisational Culture	Psychological & Social Supports	Clear Leadership & Expectations	Civility & Respect	Psychological Demands
Growth & Development	Recognition & Reward	Involvement & Influence	Workload Management	Engagement
	Balance	Psychological Protection	Protection of Physical Safety	

Those are psychosocial factors

Good management of psychosocial factors in work promotes the mental wellbeing of all workers

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

# What does it look like in my workplace?

Controlled

- mastery
- self-confidence
- motivation
- satisfaction or fulfilment
- physical and mental fitness and health.
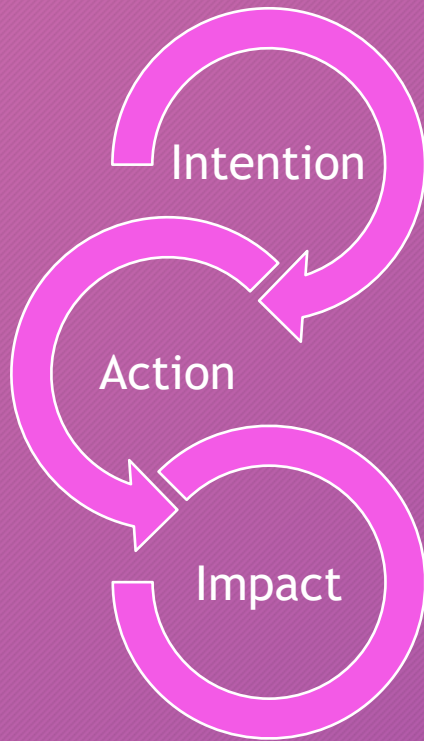
Uncontrolled

- absenteeism
- presenteeism
- higher accident and injury rates
- higher rates of early retirement
- reduced productivity
- reduced engagement

You'll get sick more often

Stress affects your physical health too

Infection

Immune system cells

Uncontrolled & Persistent Stress

Increased leaves
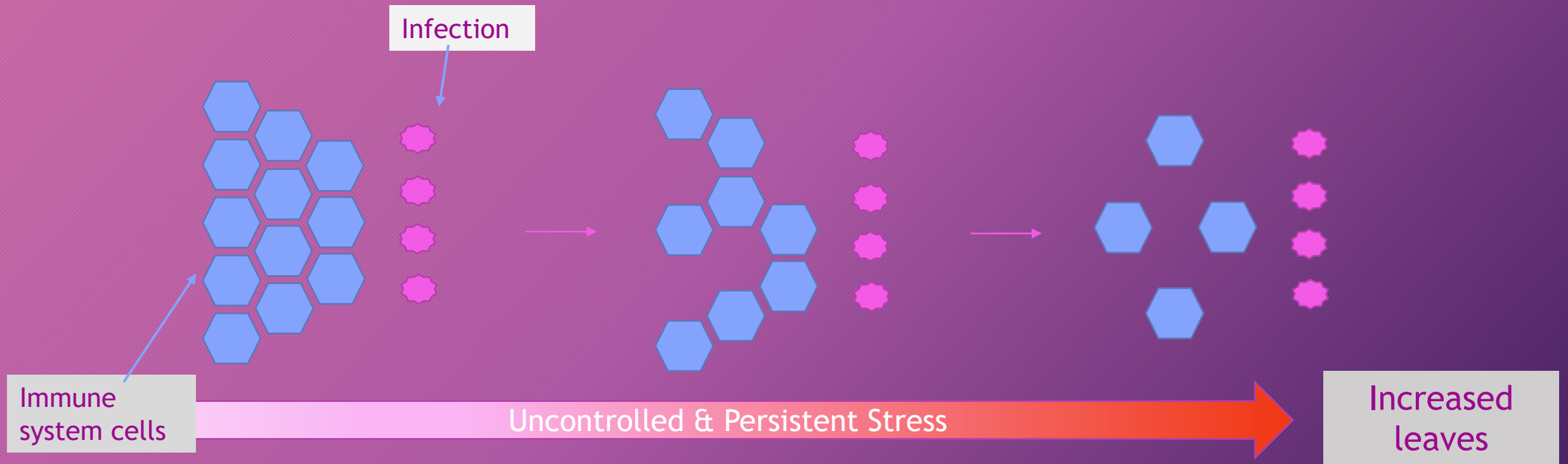
How are harassment and violence connected?

Intention → Action → Impact

- It's the impact that matters
- High stress = behaviours more likely
- Permissive environment makes them worse
- Impacts are often not dealt with at work
- Very little consideration of psychological impact

A Trade Union Perspective on Mental Health

- We believe in social justice – fairness is important

- Trade Union History: A canary in a coal mine
    - Some individuals are more sensitive to something than others (Like allergies)

- Decent working conditions = health and safety

- Solidarity is the foundation of union work

- Occupational health and safety is the reason most people form a union

- There is no artificial line between your head and the rest of your body

TALKING
TO MEMBERS
ABOUT
MENTAL HEALTH

WORK-RELATED
STFESS

Work related psychosocial risks and musculoskeletal disorders: potential risk factors, causation and evaluation methods

Colin Deeney [1], Leonard O'Sullivan
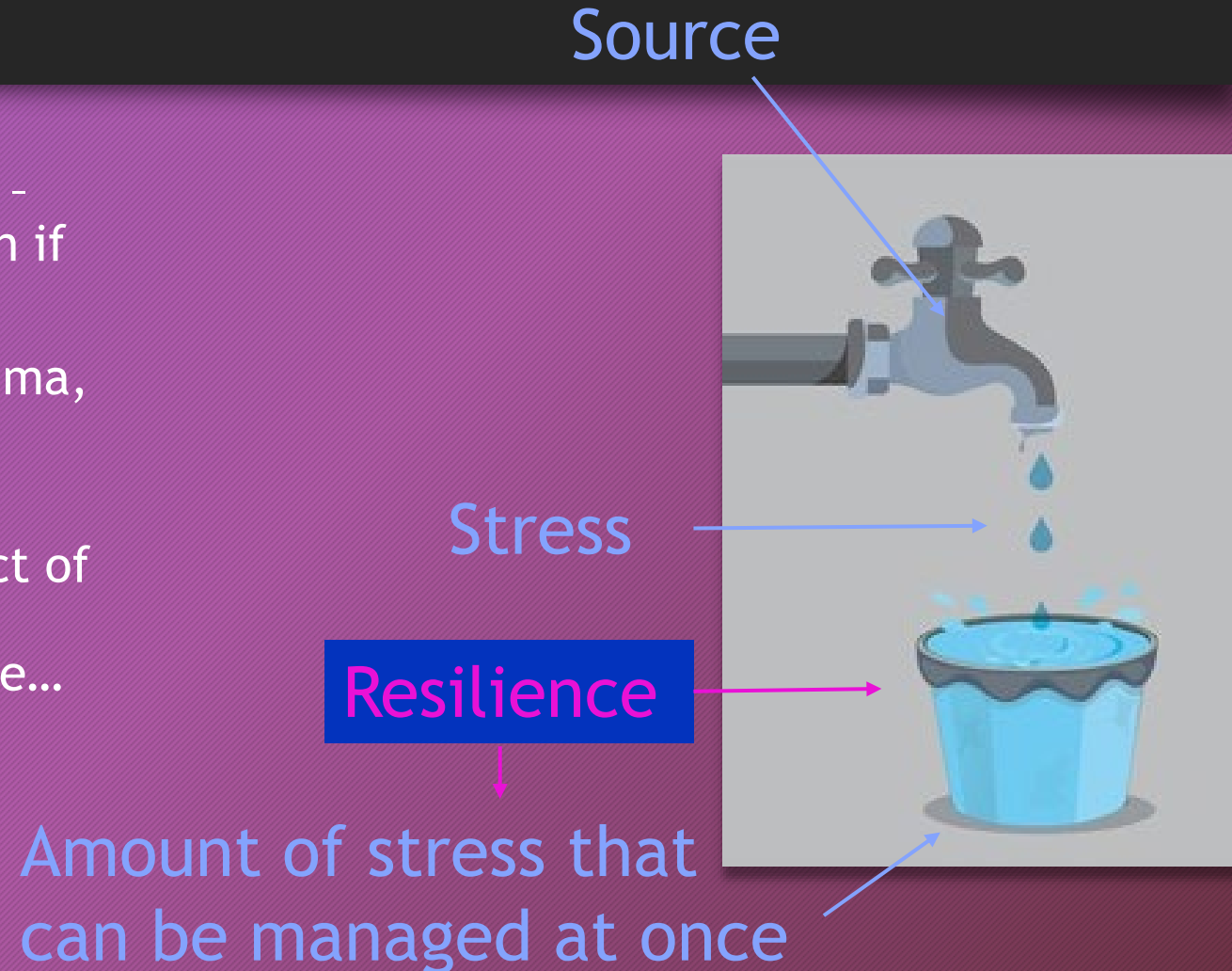
Affiliations + expand

Stress and the Bucket

- Challenges increase stress – your body will feel it, even if you don't react to it

- Bucket Fillers: stress, trauma, symptoms

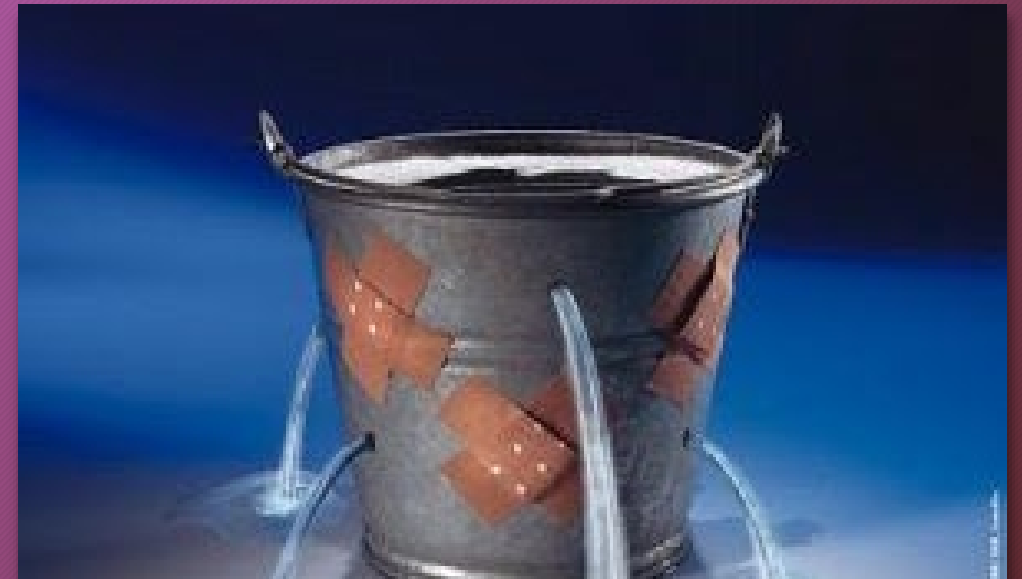- Bucket Tippers: effective strategies to reduce impact of stress – competence, confidence, sleep, exercise…

Source

Stress

Resilience

Amount of stress that can be managed at once

Resilience training can't be the only thing

- You're resilient...until you're not
- Thin Skull Principle
- Focusing on individual resilience = overwhelm
- Path to delay sick leaves, not prevent them
- Emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and depression

Knowledge Transfer helps

https://researchoninvestment.com/resilience-in-the-face-of-change/
https://www.helpingelftraining.com.au/2020/11/13/hows-your-stress-bucket/

RESILIENCE

FLEXIBILITY INTO PLANNING

WITHSTAND SHOCK

ADAPT TO CHANGE

PURSUE YOUR GOAL

ANTICIPATE RISK

PROTECT WEAK SPOTS

CREATING HEALTHIER WORK, NOT TOUGHER WORKERS

HEALTH AND SAFETY FACT SHEET

JUSTICE IN WORK: RESILIENCE AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

A Call to Action

CUPE members have died by suicide, are off on sick leave or are suffering in silence because of work.

Where to start?

- #1 question

- Peer-reviewed

- Validated

- Compares to Canadian workers

- Identifies the psychosocial hazards most affecting *your* workplace

- Diagnoses the work – not the worker

- Provides recommendations for best ROI

- Provides benchmark

https://stressassess.ca/

Solutions are Available

- These are free resources
- CSA: provides technical guidance
  - what should the psychological health and safety management system do?
  - What are essential practices?
  - What psychosocial factors needs to be assessed?
- ILO: what are work practices that promote psychological safety?
- PSHSA psychological health and safety system guidance for public sector workplaces

https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/2704398/
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@safework/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_177108.pdf
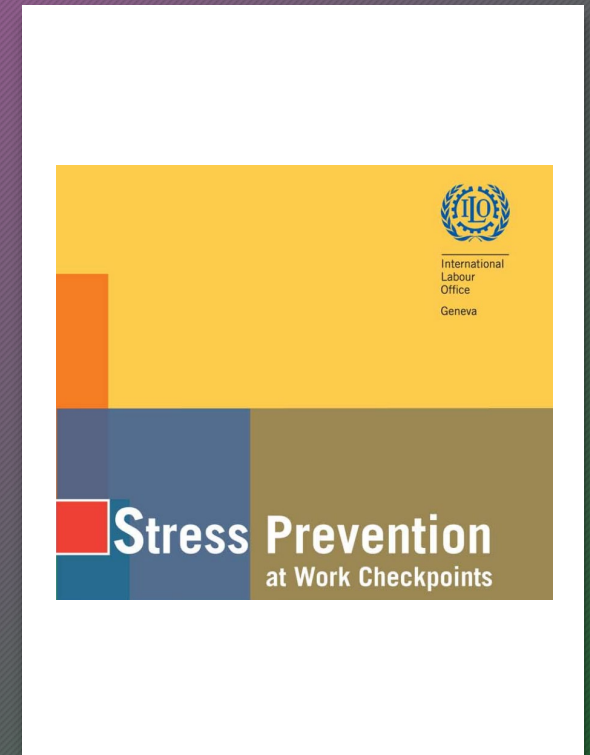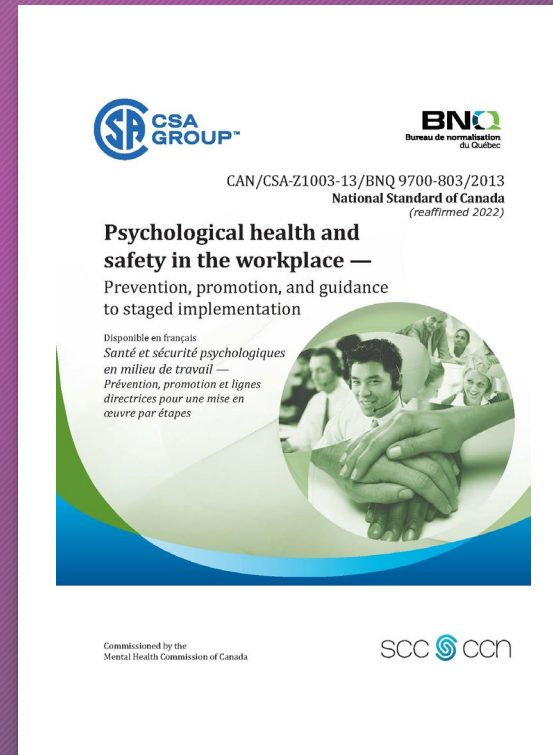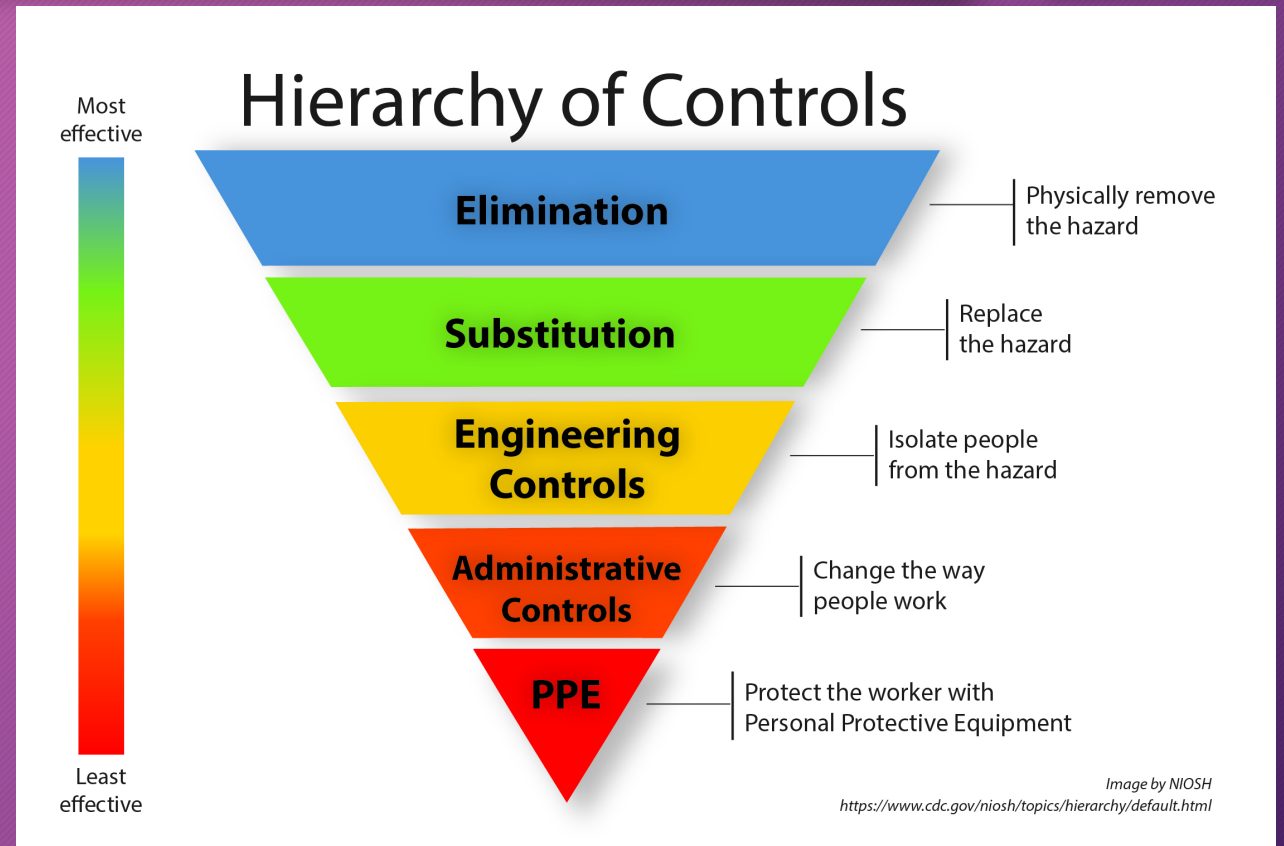
What if the workplace is too small?

Google: ILO + stress + checkpoints

Psychosocial health and safety

- Knowledge Transfer is the most effective JHSC strategy
- Effective when included as part of a greater organisational MH program
  - Peer Support Programs
  - Psychosocial Hazard Prevention Programs
- Different points of action

Most effective

Least effective

Hierarchy of Controls

Elimination — Physically remove the hazard

Substitution — Replace the hazard

Engineering Controls — Isolate people from the hazard

Administrative Controls — Change the way people work

PPE — Protect the worker with Personal Protective Equipment

Image by NIOSH
https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hierarchy/default.html

Psychosocial vs Psychological

Prevention

- Hazards are the employer's responsibility
- Preventing them means more productivity
- Psycho = mind
  social = relationships
- Work organisation is a choice that can be changed

Remediation

- Deals with the impact only
- Highly individual
- Removes the employer's responsibility
- Fails to make the connection to work
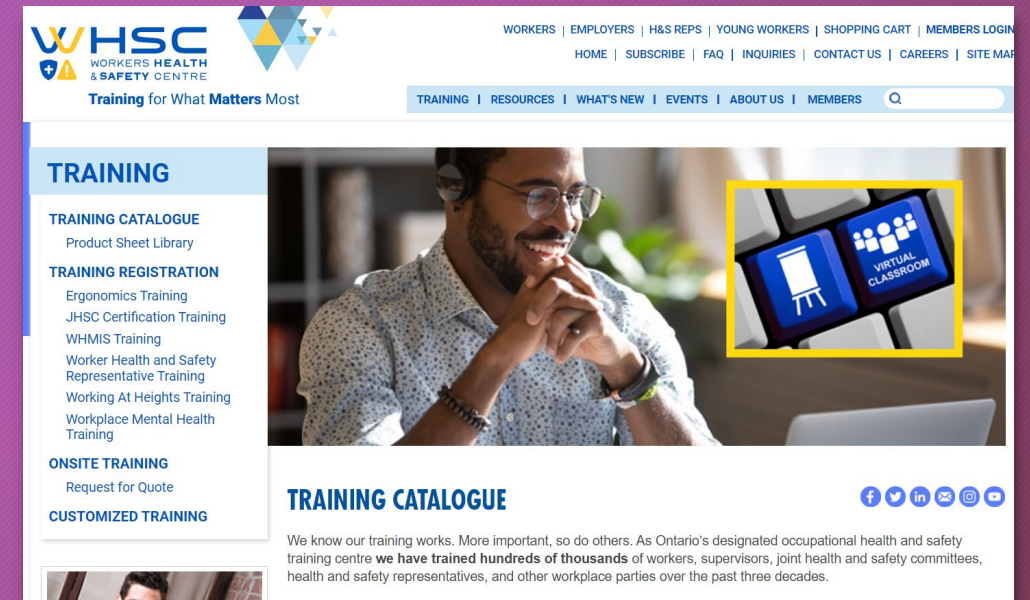- This approach leads productivity issues, increase in leaves and turnover

Local Executives, Leaders and Activists

- Raise the impacts during labour management meetings
- Negotiate appropriate access to psychological health services in your contract
- Negotiate psychologically healthy work language
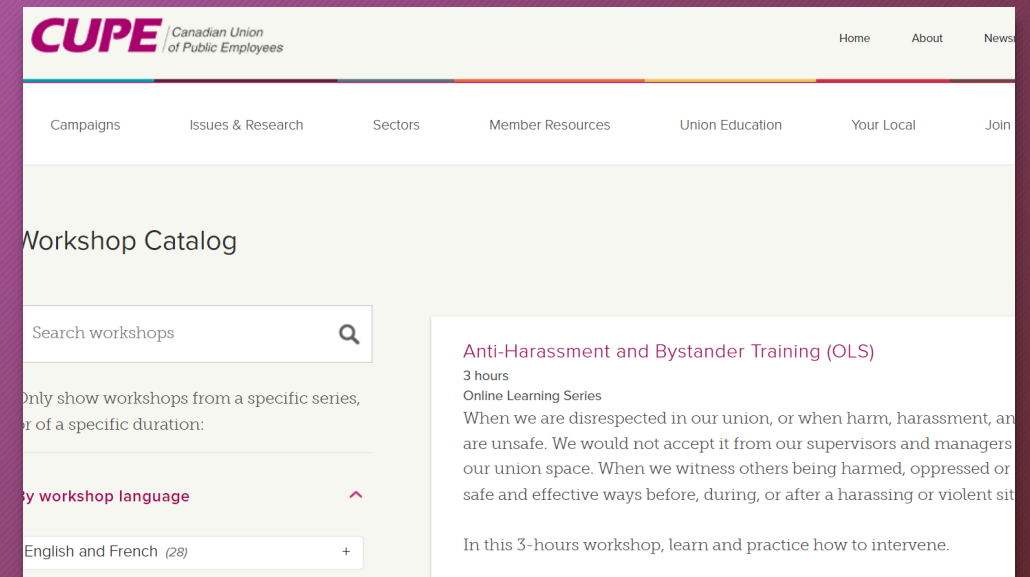- Raise awareness with workplace campaigns

- Because remember:

A knowledgeable member is a powerful member.

Knowledge is Power

- CUPE offers different types of workshops
  - Steward's Learning Series – Understanding Mental Health, Psychologically Safe Workplaces
  - Health and Safety Learning Series – Preventing Mental Injuries at Work
  - Social justice workshops
  - Mental Health First Aid (limited)

- Workers Health and Safety Center

Miigwetch! Merci! Thank you!

Questions and comments welcome