

# Connecting Work and Mental Health

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Health and Safety Forum 2024

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

# Burnout Syndrome

- a chronic response to stress in the workplace defined by physical, mental and emotional state of exhaustion that reduces the sense of personal and professional fulfillment

# Mental Injuries

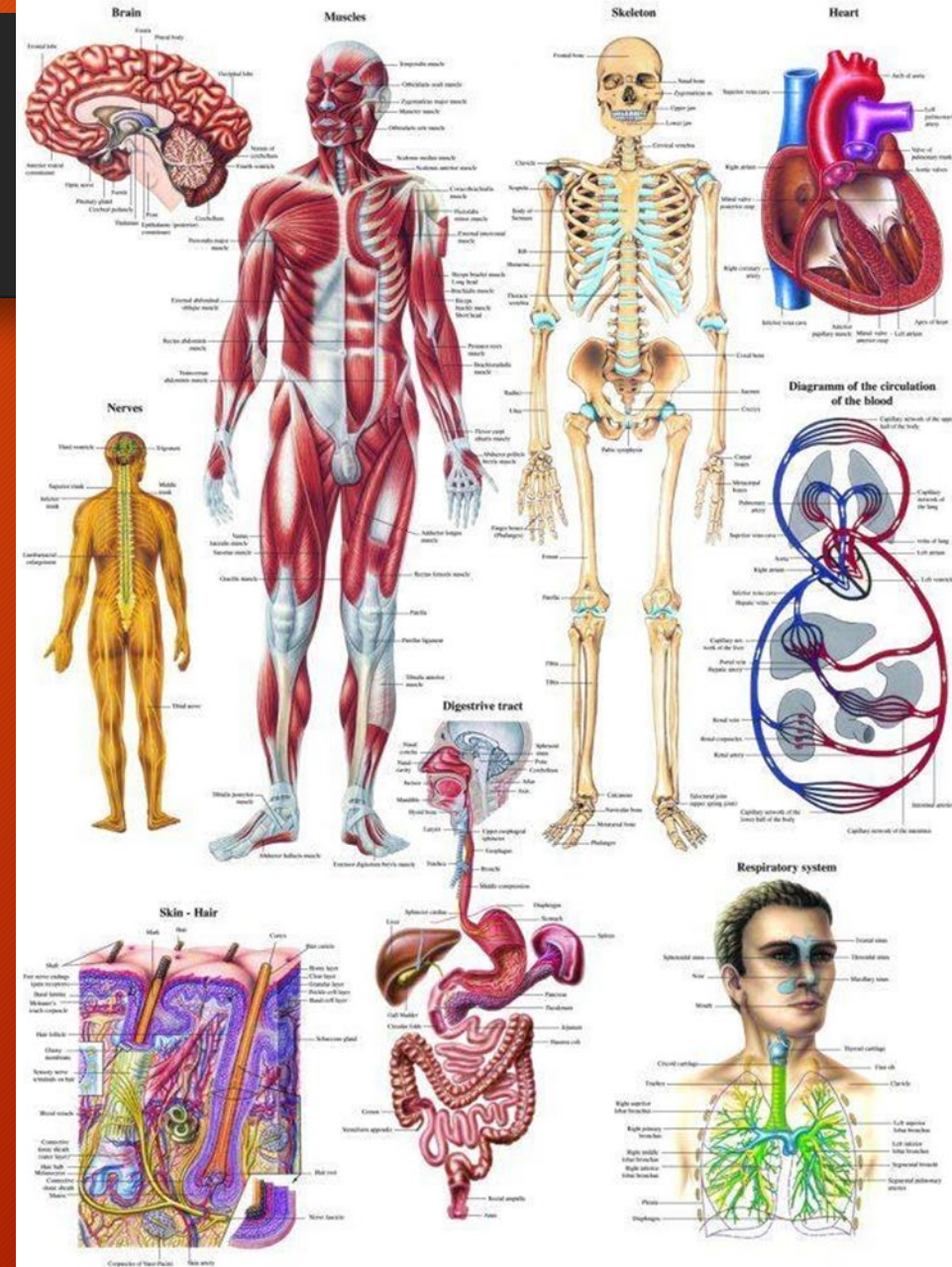


What Body Parts Does Stress Affect?

Stress affects...

Everything

# THE HUMAN BODY

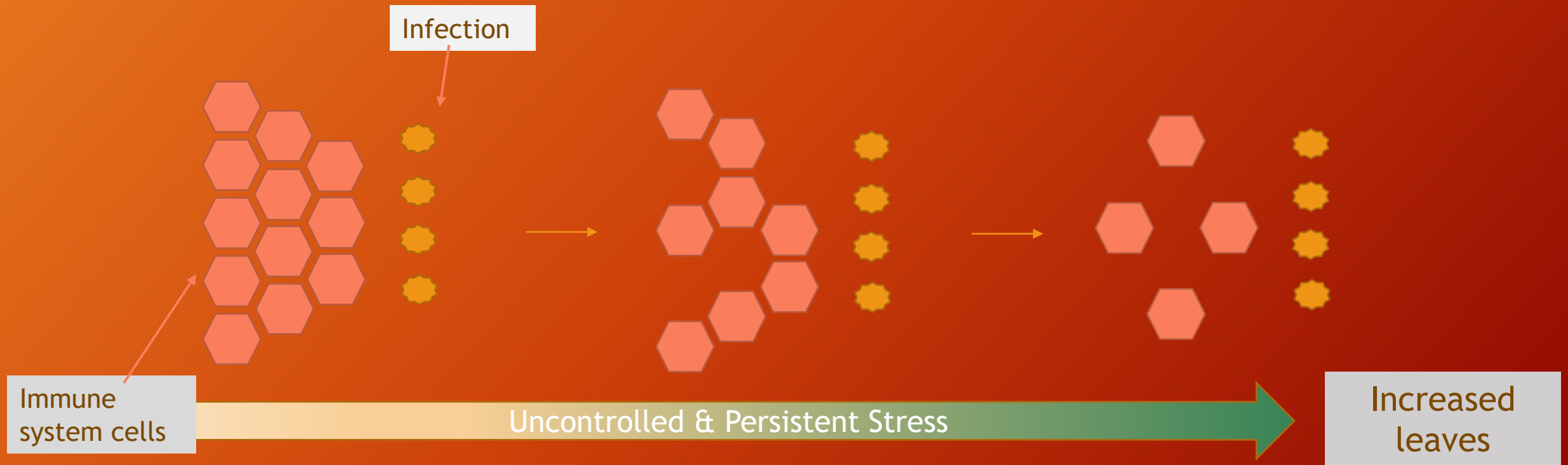


direct evidence is required to prove these hypotheses. In conclusion, chronic psychological stress should be recognised as a risk factor of osteoporosis and stress-coping methods should be incorporated as part of the comprehensive osteoporosis-preventing strategy.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7797546/>

# You'll get sick more often

Stress affects your physical health too



# The Importance of Self-Care

- What is self-care?
- What are boundaries?

**THE OXYGEN MASK PRINCIPLE**

**YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF BEFORE YOU CAN DO ANYTHING FOR ANYONE ELSE.**

# 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

If you don't get it done, you'll be done.

No one talks about how bad it can get.

My coworker keeps bossing me around and my supervisor does nothing.

Everyone is rude, it's very toxic.

It's really hard to see people lonely/hurt/in crisis all the time.

I'm in a dead end job.

I only see my supervisor when I'm in trouble.

Once again, my employer made decisions that don't work.

They just keep piling on work... it's too much.

They don't bother talking to us. There's no team here.

I feel like I'm working all the time.

Nobody cares that we're all stressed out.

I get hit all the time and they keep asking me what I did to cause it.

Those are psychosocial hazards

# 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

Those are  
psychosocial  
factors

Balance

Psychological  
Protection

Protection of  
Physical Safety

## HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

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# PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

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



# What does it look like in my workplace?

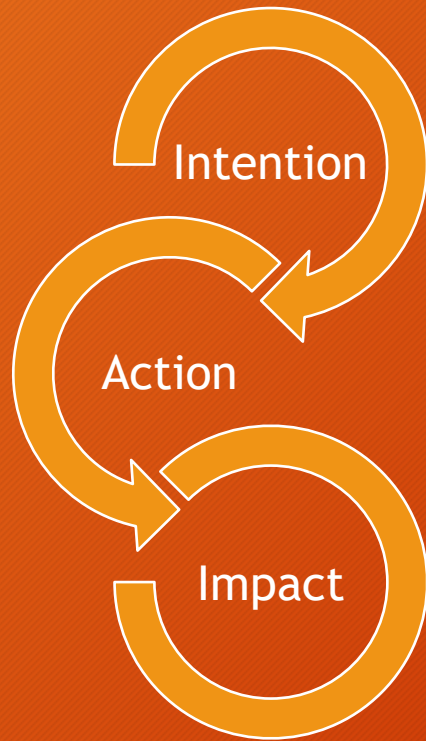
## Controlled

- 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

# How are harassment and violence connected?



- 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**

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## WORK-RELATED STRESS

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> [Work](#). 2009;34(2):239-48. doi: 10.3233/WOR-2009-0921.

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

[Colin Deeney](#) <sup>1</sup>, [Leonard O'Sullivan](#)

[Affiliations](#) + [expand](#)

PMID: 20037236 DOI: [10.3233/WOR-2009-0921](#)

# 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

Knowledge Transfer helps



- 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

<https://researchoninvestment.com/resilience-in-the-face-of-change/>

<https://www.helpingelftraining.com.au/2020/11/13/hows-your-stress-bucket/>



**CREATING  
HEALTHIER  
WORK,  
NOT TOUGHER  
WORKERS**

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**HEALTH AND SAFETY  
FACT SHEET**

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**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/>


Occupational Health Clinics  
for Ontario Workers

Centres de santé des travailleurs  
(ses) de l'Ontario

Home About Contact Us Français

## Welcome to StressAssess

A survey of the psychosocial factors  
in your workplace



This survey is based on the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) and has been adapted to address concerns within the Canadian workplace.

MORE ABOUT

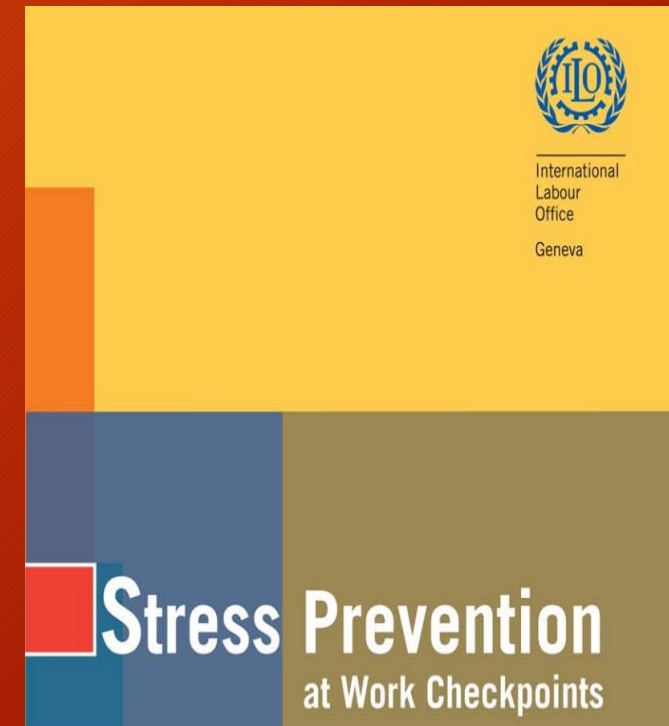
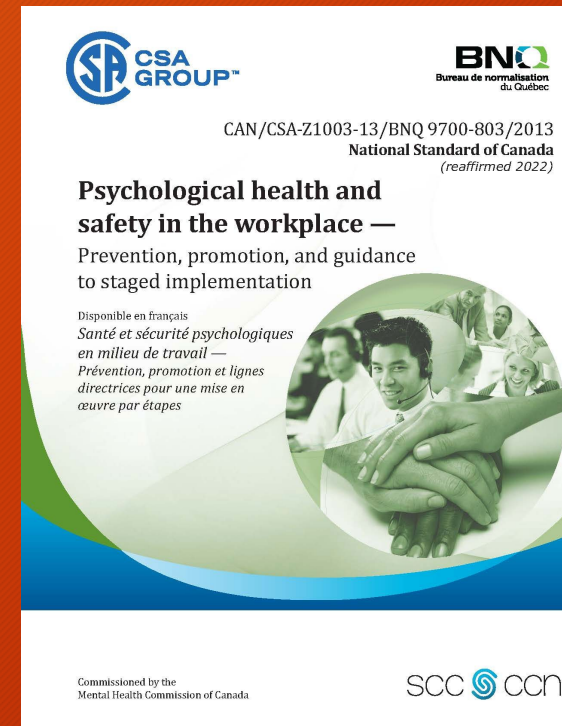
Choose from two versions

Personal Edition

Workplace Edition

# 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/>

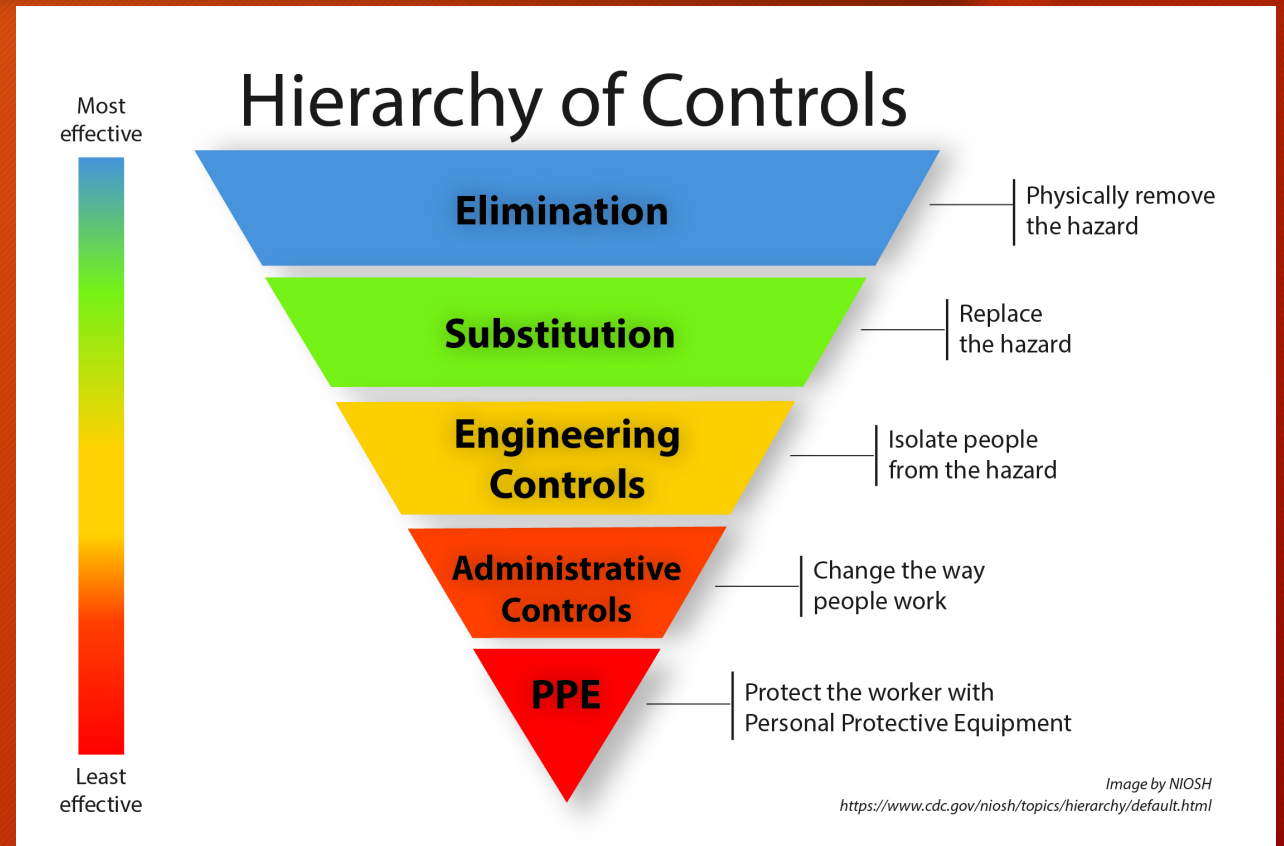
[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_protect/@protrav/@safework/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms\\_177108.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@safework/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_177108.pdf)

# 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



# 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

The screenshot shows the WHSC website's training catalogue. The header includes the WHSC logo and navigation links for Workers, Employers, H&S Reps, Young Workers, Shopping Cart, and Members Login. A search bar is located in the top right. The main content area is titled 'TRAINING' and lists categories: Training Catalogue (Product Sheet Library), Training Registration (Ergonomics, JHSC Certification, WHMIS, Worker Health and Safety, Working At Heights, Workplace Mental Health), Onsite Training (Request for Quote), and Customized Training. A large image of a man in a headset is featured, with a yellow box highlighting a 'VIRTUAL CLASSROOM' icon. Below the image is a 'TRAINING CATALOGUE' section with a paragraph stating: 'We know our training works. More important, so do others. As Ontario's designated occupational health and safety training centre we have trained hundreds of thousands of workers, supervisors, joint health and safety committees, health and safety representatives, and other workplace parties over the past three decades.'

The screenshot shows the CUPE website's workshop catalog. The header features the CUPE logo and navigation links for Home, About, and News. A secondary navigation bar includes Campaigns, Issues & Research, Sectors, Member Resources, Union Education, Your Local, and Join. The main content area is titled 'Workshop Catalog' and includes a search bar for workshops. Below the search bar are filters for 'Only show workshops from a specific series, or of a specific duration:' and 'Filter by workshop language' (English and French (28)). A featured workshop card is visible, titled 'Anti-Harassment and Bystander Training (OLS)', which is a 3-hour Online Learning Series. The card text reads: 'When we are disrespected in our union, or when harm, harassment, and violence are unsafe. We would not accept it from our supervisors and managers in our union space. When we witness others being harmed, oppressed or mistreated, we have a duty to act in safe and effective ways before, during, or after a harassing or violent situation. In this 3-hours workshop, learn and practice how to intervene.'

**Miigwetch! Merci! Thank you!**

Questions and Comments Welcome