



Building for Change Building Local Groups The Power of Bringing Workers Together

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Goals for this session

- ▶ 1. To hear about the value of building local groups.
- ▶ 2. To get some ideas of how to build local groups.
- ▶ 3. To explore issues and ideas for improving the system.
- ▶ 4. To have fun.

Agenda

- ▶ Sharing our Experience
 - Local Injured Worker Groups
 - Research Action Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury (RAACWI)
 - Who Killed Sir William?
 - Celebrating our Successes
- ▶ Engaging together
- ▶ Wrapping Up

Some groups we have worked with

- ▶ Union of Injured Workers
- ▶ Bright Lights
- ▶ Women of Inspiration
- ▶ Toronto Injured Workers Advocates Group (TIWAG)
- ▶ Thunder Bay and District Injured Workers Support Group
- ▶ Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG)

Why have an injured workers group?

- ▶ An injured workers group can become a place of personal transformation and of collective action.
- ▶ The group can help the union rep. by helping educate individual members about the WSIB system and providing emotional support.

Why have an injured workers group?

- ▶ The group can help the union itself better understand the problems faced confronting the workers compensation system and the Return To Work process and it can build local support for the union's efforts in building campaigns to address the problems. For example—the broadening of the presumptive clause for PTSD

What happens when an injured worker joins an injured worker group?

- ▶ They enter a place where they come with an individual problem and discover that it shared by others.
- ▶ They enter a place where they are believed and supported.
- ▶ They enter a place where they can learn.
- ▶ They enter a place where their story can become part of the bigger story.

- ▶ They enter a place where they can discuss ideas and action to address the difficulties.
- ▶ In the words of the “injured Worker Speaker School” conducted in various places in Ontario, they will go from “venting to convincing.” That transformation makes it possible to effectively participate in change.

So, you have just started a little group. Now what?

- ▶ What we have found is the best place to start is to get to know each other.
- ▶ Take time. Listen well.
- ▶ Through that process, support begins, connections and understandings begin to emerge, a good foundation is being laid.

So, you have just started a little group. Now what?

- ▶ Have regular meetings. Whether two people or twelve or twenty turn up, keep on meeting.
- ▶ Begin to make a plan – do it together.

Focus on Process

- ▶ Create an atmosphere in which we listen and give space to learn from each other.
- ▶ Ensure that plans are made, monitored, adjusted and evaluated.
- ▶ Ensure that the injured worker's presence, voice, and participation is upfront.
- ▶ Ensure that learning and participation is happening for all in different ways.
- ▶ Ensure that research is understood and put to use.

Ingredients of good agendas

- ▶ Have an agenda & goal/s. Put them up on the wall on a flipchart or individual paper.
- ▶ Time to check in with everyone and hear from new members.
- ▶ Perhaps a presentation from a CUPE rep on an aspect of the workers compensation system.

Perhaps some history?

Who has heard of Sir
William Meredith?

And his principles?

Who has heard of the
Union of Injured
Workers?

Or the Ontario Network
of Injured Workers
Groups?



Ingredients of good agendas

- ▶ Time to discuss action. What are we especially concerned about in this local group? What can we do? Now – or build to.
- ▶ Collective letter to the Minister of Labour.
- ▶ Join a CUPE campaign.
- ▶ Meet with WSIB officials

Ingredients of good agendas

- ▶ Wrapping up – did we achieve our goals on the agenda?
- ▶ Reminders of upcoming events and the next meeting.

Taking Action

- ▶ We have found that taking action is most effective combining individual experience with research findings.
- ▶ Maybe you could use some research. Research always needs a question. To further your action area – what do you need to know? How would you formulate that in a question?

RAACWI

- ▶ Research Action Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury - 2004 - 2012
- ▶ Funded under the Community - University Research Alliance - a SSHRC Program (no longer in place)
- ▶ Six Ontario universities, Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG), Community Legal Clinics
- ▶ Twenty-six research studies.
- ▶ Training for the community.

RAACWI Achievements

- ▶ A sustained relationship of mutual respect between the community and the academy.
- ▶ Increased academic interest.
- ▶ Academic appreciation of the significance of community knowledge.
- ▶ A strengthening of the community.
- ▶ Provided scientific evidence to a community that could use it in the quest for social justice.
- ▶ Dozens of Knowledge Mobilisation Initiatives.

Who Killed

Sir A Community-University
Research Alliance Seeks
Justice for Injured Workers

William?

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Injured Workers' Speakers School

- ▶ Combining public speaking skills with knowledge of compensation
- ▶ Building solidarity and awareness “we are not alone”
- ▶ Sharing the “discovery” compensation was created to help, not hinder

Injured Workers' Speakers School

- ▶ Understanding Meredith principles
- ▶ Appreciating the historical contribution of injured workers and workers for change
- ▶ Moving from venting to convincing and the special graduation ceremony
- ▶ Using popular education methods







New Directions Speakers School Graduates at City Hall in Thunder Bay

Some Accomplishments

- ▶ Independent Appeal Tribunal
- ▶ “Older worker” supplement
- ▶ Young Worker Health & Safety in High Schools
- ▶ Chronic pain is a real disability - The Supreme Court of Canada
- ▶ Research Action Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury (RAACWI)
- ▶ 7.5% increase over two years for injured workers on long term benefits (\$750,000,000)
- ▶ Beginning January 1, 2018, injured workers and their survivors win full Consumer Price Index adjustments annually
- ▶ 2021 – 2024 - 12% increase in CPI (\$1,200,000,000)

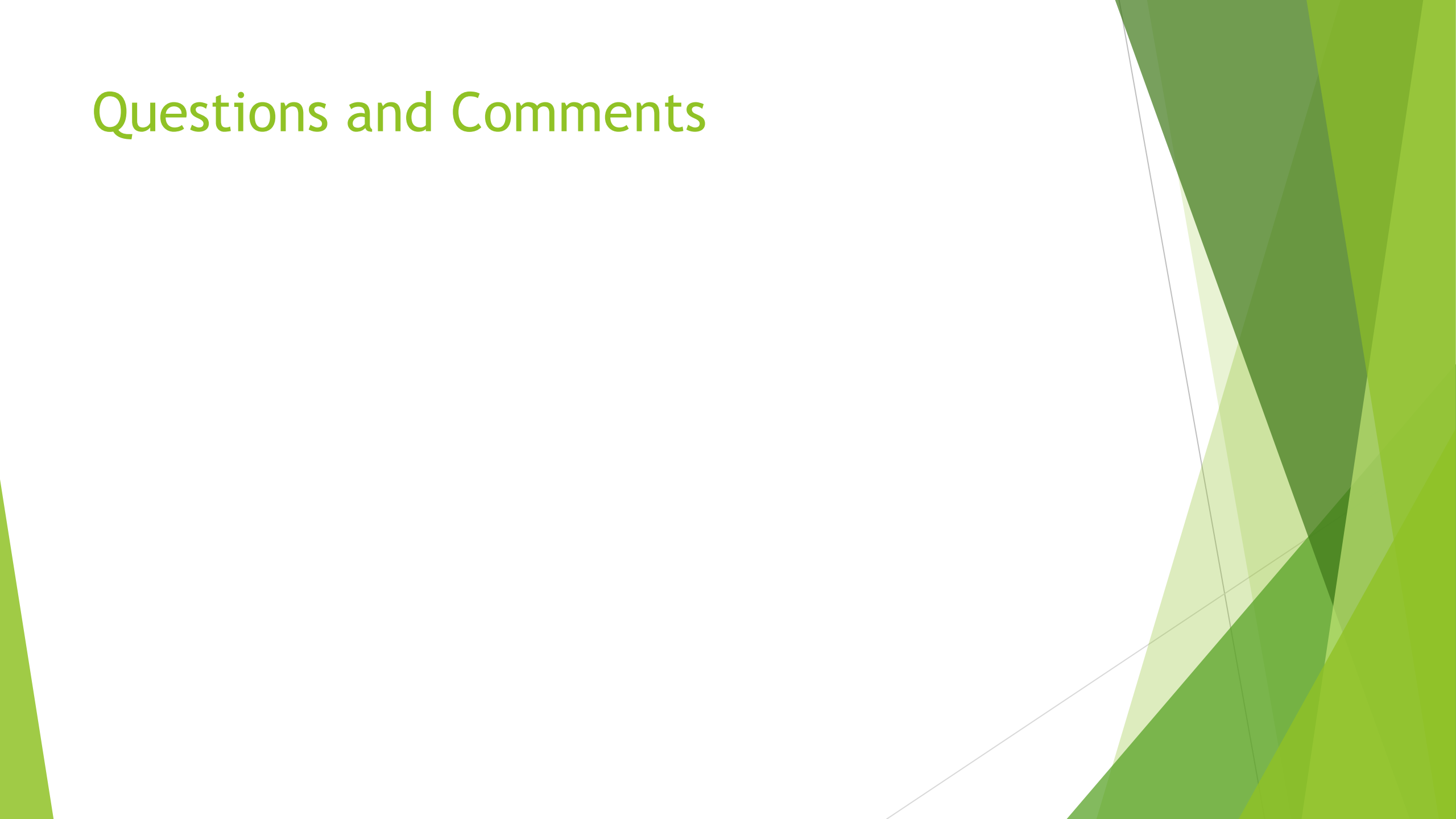
Ongoing Community Work



Engaging Together

- ▶ Name & Local?
- ▶ Type of Work You Do?
- ▶ Injured at Work?
- ▶ Main Problem with Workers Comp in my experience.
- ▶ One thing that would improve the system.

Questions and Comments



Wrapping Up

- ▶ What we heard.
- ▶ How did we do?

- ▶ Come by our table to connect
- ▶ No need to buy the book

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Thank You

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