



HEU marks Pink Shirt Day to raise awareness about bullying and harassment – February 22

HEU members have participated in Pink Shirt Day, since its inception a decade ago, by wearing items of pink clothing. The day is part of a national solidarity protest against harassment and bullying in all its devastating forms, including cyberbullying.

This year's Pink Shirt Day – Wednesday, February 22 – is an opportunity to raise awareness, spread an anti-bullying message, and make a continued commitment to support initiatives that eradicate bullying in schools and workplaces.

In recent years, HEU and other unions successfully lobbied to have workplace bullying and harassment included as a compensable mental health claim through WorkSafeBC.

On May 31, 2012, *Bill 14* was passed, changing the *Workers Compensation Act* to include: “a significant work-related stressor, including bullying or harassment, or a cumulative series of significant work-related stressors, arising out of and in the course of the worker's employment.”

“There's no question that our members are increasingly working in high pressure environments due to extreme workloads and inadequate staffing,” says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside. “This is a serious, but entirely preventable, contributor to high levels of stress on the job.”

In November 2013, after province-wide consultation with unions and employers, WorkSafeBC introduced amendments to sections 115, 116 and 117 of the *Workers Compensation Act* – to clearly outline the responsibilities of employers, supervisors and workers to create respectful workplaces.

In Canada, pink became a national symbol of anti-bullying after two Nova Scotia teenagers stood up for a classmate who was bullied at school for wearing a pink shirt. They bought and distributed 50 pink tank tops to male students, and they all wore them in a day of solidarity against bullying.

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