

ONTARIO REGIONAL OFFICE – BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L'ONTARIO
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MEMORANDUM

To: School Board Local Presidents and CUPE National Staff Servicing the School Board Sector

From: OSBCU Violence Task Force

Date: August 20, 2026

Re: **CUPE Psychological Health and Safety Resources and Conference**

The rise in incidents of workplace violence and harassment and their impacts on education workers are well [reported](#). Short- and long-term disability, trauma and burnout are direct results of the mental harm caused by these preventable hazards. Yet, other factors, which the employer has direct control over, are also leading to harm. These psychosocial factors include, among others, **excessive workload demands, unsustainable work pace, lack of recognition or reward, poor supervisor support, and lack of control over how work is performed**. Too often, the cumulative harm of psychosocial hazards may take years to recognize and recover.

Unfortunately, many people believe that psychosocial factors “**come with the job**” or are part of the workplace culture. While it may be impossible to eliminate every risk in the workplace, we can treat psychosocial hazards like other hazards. In other words, they can be identified, assessed to determine their effects on workers, eliminated or controlled, and monitored to determine if controls are effective in preventing harm. Employers in Ontario have broad legal duties to provide safe and healthy conditions regardless of where they work.

While the Government of Ontario is slow in enacting [specific](#) responsibilities on employers and supervisors to assess and mitigate psychosocial hazards, organizations, including CUPE, have developed resources and guidance for employers, workers and health and safety committees and representatives towards protecting workers’ psychological health and safety. We’ve included some of those resources below.

Some of these resources are based on the standard [CAN/CSA Z 1003, Psychological Health and Safety at the Workplace](#). Although it is considered the gold standard in its field, there are technical challenges to implement it. As such, the principles within the standard are used to develop other workplace psychological health and safety strategies.

For many years, CUPE has developed PHS resources and guidance to form the [Psychological Health and Safety Toolkit](#). The kit officially launched in the fall of 2025. Here are some of the resources within the kit:

- [Guidelines: Psychological health and safety](#) – A guideline that provides the foundations to connect the ways in which work creates stress, the ways that stress-related injuries affect

mental wellness and strategies to restore safe and healthy work for psychological well-being. It includes an overview of psychosocial hazards and effective mitigation strategies designed to ensure your work is safe and healthy for all.

- [Conducting Psychosocial Hazard Surveys In Your Workplace](#) – One of the first steps in addressing psychosocial hazards is to identify them. A workplace survey is a part of the identification process. This fact sheet explains the strategies for conducting an effective survey and how to use the results to effect change.
- [Critical Incidents and Stress](#) – This fact sheet describes critical incidents, how they affect workers, preventative actions, and ways to respond to traumatic events.
- [Peer Support Programs](#) – This fact sheet describes peer support programs and how they can support members who experience critical incidents or a traumatic event.

There are also fact sheets on [Overwork](#), [Work-Related Stress](#), [Resilience](#) and [Well-Being at Work](#).

Additionally, the kit includes helpful ways in which members and union representatives can support other members: [How To Have Difficult Conversations at Work](#) and [Talking to Members About Mental Health](#).

As part of the Year of Health and Safety, CUPE National, with support from CUPE Ontario, will host a conference focused on psychological health and safety. The conference, From Stress to Strength: A Worker Wellbeing Summit, will feature speakers and panellists sharing success stories and strategies towards psychologically healthy and safe work through prevention, intervention, and postvention.

The conference takes place November 17 – 20, 2026 in Niagara Falls. Visit the [CUPE Ontario events page](#) for more information.

Other Mental Health at Work Resources:

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)

[Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers](#)

[Opening Minds – Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)