

February 22, 2021

## Wear Your Pink Shirt on February 24 Send a Clear Message about Bullying

Pink Shirt Day is Wednesday, February 24, 2021 in Canada. It began in Nova Scotia in 2007 when a male student wearing a pink shirt was bullied. Two students intervened but wanted to do more to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying. They mobilized the other students and two weeks later, most of the student body wore pink to school, standing in solidarity with the bullied student and all the other victims of bullying. Their message was clear: anyone can bully, anyone can be victimized by bullying, but together we can stop it.

Bullying is a form of aggression where there is a power imbalance; the behaviour is initiated by those that have some type of power over the person or group being victimized. In addition to any physical trauma incurred from physical interactions, bullying can result in serious emotional and psychological problems, including anxiety, low self-esteem, or depression. Peers who witness bullying behaviour can intervene to help the victim.

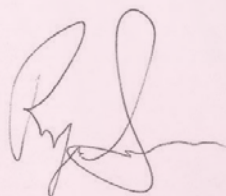
After a year of living with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, harassment and discrimination have become even more common in many workplaces. Over the last 12 months, cleaners, maintenance workers, postal workers, cashiers, and many more, have been on the front lines, helping people stay home and stay safe, and society function. They have been described as heroes and thanked for their efforts and sacrifices, yet frustration, fatigue, and isolation due to restrictions and lockdowns have taken their toll.

Postal facilities have become toxic with intimidation from management. Parcel volumes remain at historic highs, and the difficulty in handling the high demand exposes how fragile the network is after years of centralization and consolidation.

CUPW has a proud tradition of standing up against discrimination. We also have a strong tradition of political advocacy. We negotiate clauses into our collective agreements that prohibit discrimination, promote employment equity, and create safe, harassment-free workplaces. While tremendous achievements have been made, bullying and intimidation remain constant issues where authoritarian bosses are tasked with unrealistic goals. Compounded with the added restrictions placed on everyone due to the pandemic, members are also increasingly experiencing unwelcome attention from customers and coworkers. We must continue working in coalition with community partners to end discrimination and harassment in our schools, workplaces and throughout our communities.

This Wednesday, wear pink to show others that you will not tolerate bullying. Together, we can show everyone that we are united in the efforts to bring this toxic behaviour to an end. Help spread the word to get your community involved by sharing the message of Pink Shirt Day on your social media.

In solidarity,



Ryan Spence  
National Union Representative, Alternate,  
Education

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