



More CUPE members now covered by WorkSafeBC mental-health presumption

The BC Ministry of Labour added 11 new occupations to the mental-health presumption under the Workers Compensation Act this week. This will allow more CUPE members faster access to treatment and workers compensation benefits for psychological injuries.

The newly added occupations include:

- Harm-reduction workers
- Respiratory therapists
- Shelter workers
- Social workers
- Transition house workers
- Victim service workers
- Withdrawal management workers

The mental health presumption fast-tracks the claims process with WorkSafeBC. This provides workers faster access to treatment and workers' compensation benefits once a formal diagnosis of the psychological injury has been made. These changes will help ensure the workers who are counted on to care for others also receive the support they need.

Most of the occupations now covered are well defined. For further clarity, ***Harm-reduction worker*** means a worker whose duties include, for the purpose of reducing the risk of toxic drug poisoning and other drug-related harms, supporting and monitoring persons who consume drugs, and who work primarily in one or more of the following:

- The community
- Residential facilities or units in which supportive housing services are provided
- Premises used to provide public health interventions, including sites commonly known as safe consumption sites, or at which other types of overdose prevention services are provided

While all workers can be exposed to a traumatic event or events and sustain a psychological injury, members who work in occupations recognized with the WorkSafeBC presumption have a disproportionate level of sustaining these injuries.

Work still needs to be done to create psychologically healthy workplaces in the health and social services sectors. While CUPE continues to fight for the safety of all workers, we recognize these changes by the Ministry of Labour will provide much needed support for workers who experience psychological injuries.