

## Addressing Workplace Mental Health: Basic Skills for Unions

<b>Length</b>	6 hours, delivered in one day or two consecutive half-days
<b>Audience</b>	Union and bargaining agent representatives, shop stewards, union officers

### General program description

*As a primary cause of disability, mental illness is second only to heart disease. Union leaders have a unique opportunity to raise awareness, intervene, and prevent mental health issues in their members.*

In this 6-hour workshop, union board officers, representatives, and shop stewards will learn and apply effective approaches and techniques to use when workers are struggling on the job. Through facilitated discussions and interactive experiences, participants raise their awareness, deepen their understanding, and learn practical tools and approaches to address the complex issues of mental illness and mental health in the workplace. They learn how to apply useful techniques for more effective conversations and lasting solutions to performance problems and accommodation situations with workers who have mental health issues.

The workshop leverages the unique role of the union rep or steward as someone knowledgeable about workplace culture and processes, as an advocate for the individual worker, and as a champion for health and safety in the workplace. Psychological health and safety issues are discussed as a logical extension of the important work unions do in advocating for healthy and safe workplaces.



## Learning objectives

Participants in this interactive workshop will:

- Recognize possible signs that a worker's mental health is deteriorating which enables early intervention and treatment
- Question their own and others' attitudes and assumptions about workers who are having performance issues
- Acknowledge the impact of the union rep's and co-workers' attitudes and responses on the worker who is struggling
- Consider worker behavior from a needs perspective, and gain valuable insight from contact with productive workers who live with a mental illness through videos of real people sharing their stories
- Practice effective listening skills to gain insight into worker needs and support success at work
- Examine specific risk factors and protective factors in the work setting that impact the psychological health and safety for all employees, particularly those who are facing mental health challenges
- Understand and apply the Wellness Works approach to help workers find solutions to workplace issues through a collaborative process that actively engages the worker who is struggling
- Identify action items to insure effective accommodation in the workplace and increase success with return to work
- Learn how to improve psychological health and safety in the workplace to create an inclusive organizational culture that benefits everyone

*Unions play a critical role in the health and performance of workers. Equipped with the critical knowledge and appropriate skills to address mental health issues in the workplace, union leaders can be an effective resource that benefits workers and their families.*

For information on bringing  
**Wellness Works** to your organization,  
please contact us at  
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