



BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Members of the Canadian Council, Women's Advisory Committee

FROM: Hassan Yussuff and Barbara Byers

DATE: October 1st, 2015

RE: **Follow-up to Domestic Violence at Work Survey**

Overview

The results of our survey on Domestic Violence and the Workplace, released in November 2014, have received a good deal of interest from inside and outside the labour movement. We see the results as the start of a conversation—one that we need to have within our movement, with employers and with governments. There is a huge demand for a pathway to move forward, to bring concrete change in three key areas: workplace supports, member education and legislation.

Since the release, both the CLC and our colleagues at Western have received dozens of invitations to share the survey results and discuss how we will follow up. We have made presentations to national and regional union meetings and conferences, women's and health and safety committees, the United Way Centraide National Conference and academic gatherings. The survey has been referenced in employer-oriented research conducted by the Conference Board of Canada, and we continue to receive media requests on the issue.

In addition to building awareness, we have collected promising practices from affiliates and international sources. These have been reviewed by the CLC Women's Advisory Committee. This preliminary research will assist in the development of our tool kit.

As there is interest among some affiliates in developing their own women's advocate or peer support programs, we developed a new week-long course called "Representing and Engaging Women", a significant portion of which is devoted to building capacity to support members who experience domestic violence. This course was piloted at the Ontario Region Women's School in July and a second pilot is planned for the Pacific Winter School.

In December, we met with Labour and Status of Women Minister Kellie Leitch and secured a commitment to hold a roundtable. Unfortunately, the roundtable did not occur before the election. We are committed to working with the new

government to see this roundtable happen, although it is likely the CLC will need to take the lead to organize it rather than waiting for the Minister's office to take it on.

Several provincial and territorial federations of labour have initiated conversations with their respective ministers regarding legislative changes, and we will be following up with them regarding any support we can provide in the fall.

Next Steps

There are three areas of focus in our follow-up:

- 1) Tools to support collective bargaining, including paid leave and women's advocates
- 2) Member education/ awareness, including training for representatives, negotiators, leaders and advocates
- 3) Legislation, especially improved employment standards, Health and Safety and Human Rights legislation

1) Tool Kit

We are in the process of building an online portal, housed on the CLC's website, to serve as our DV at Work tool kit. There would be 3 distinct areas in the portal aimed at three target audiences: elected leaders and negotiators, first responders and the general public or rank and file. Each area would contain tools of specific interest to that particular audience, although some material like the survey report would be available in all three sections. General content will include information about why domestic violence at work is a union issue, how we got here, strategies for moving forward and where we want to be. The material will also provide some information on groups that are particularly vulnerable (i.e. women with disabilities).

Specific Tools/ products

Elected leaders/ Negotiators:

- Survey Report
- Key Principles for Collective Bargaining
- Model Language (Model language, including info for joint health and safety committees) on Paid Leave and Women's Advocates
- International Comparisons
- A comparative chart of legislation and employer obligations in each jurisdiction

First Responders (including staff, stewards, women’s advocates, Health and Safety representatives and others likely to be representing members):

- Information on the union’s role and responsibilities and why domestic violence is a union issue
- Guidelines and tips on warning signs
- How to respond and how to support members
- Links to resources and sources of support
- Information on safety planning
- Information on the employer’s obligations
- Downloadable material for workplace awareness

General public/ Rank and file:

- Survey Report
- Basic information on domestic violence and the workplace (how to recognize it, what to do)
- Downloadable posters and awareness material
- Links to services and supports

Timeline for Product Development

Draft principles for collective bargaining are appended to this briefing note and will be discussed at Canadian Council in November. We intend to have the basic online portal and one public awareness tool ready for launch by November 25 as part of our December 6 activities. After this, we will continue to build the tool kit as we develop new material.

2) Education Plan

We are recommending, and are in the process of developing with our partners at Western, the following courses, presentations and workshops:

a) **A 1-Hour Base-Level Presentation Aimed at Every Worker**

This presentation will cover the basic information about domestic violence—how to recognize warning signs; what to do if you think someone you work with is experiencing or committing domestic violence; and why it is a union/ workplace issue. The objective of this presentation is to build awareness of domestic violence and the impact on the workplace among workers, which will help to build support for collective bargaining initiatives and create a safer climate for people to seek support.

b) **Training for Stewards/ Women’s Advocates/ Staff and other “First Responders”**

A workshop module at least two days long that can be delivered as a stand-alone or integrated into other courses if desired (for example, Representing and Engaging Women). It is designed to empower representatives to recognize and respond effectively, includes role playing scenarios as well as video content and training to deliver the base-level

1 hour presentation. Note that introductory steward courses and the Steward's Handbook may include some material on domestic violence at work but should flag that stewards should seek more advanced training in order to prepare themselves to deal with this issue in the workplace. Several affiliates have indicated that they already offer advanced modules on specific topics and this would easily complement their current education products.

c) **Train-the-Trainer**

Intensive training, likely one week-long, with a small, hand-picked group to work nationally or regionally to deliver the first-responder training "Representing and Engaging Women" or training within affiliates. This will help us build capacity in the movement to carry this work forward. Trainers will need advanced facilitation skills as well as some experience or knowledge of women's issues or workplace violence. Selection should also take into account that course material can be triggering and trainers may need to support participants who find the material difficult.

d) **1-Day Training (or Online Training) for Leaders and Negotiators**

Training on why domestic violence is a union issue, the legal obligations of unions and employers, how to address it with employers in bargaining, and examples of workplace supports and collective agreement language.

e) **To Be Discussed Further:**

Training aimed at men in unions (bystander intervention as well as representation); joint management/ union training; a 3-hour workshop for women's or health and safety conferences; and specialized training for EAP staff.

Timeline and Process for Development

Course material is being developed by Western and the Women's and Human Rights Department. There are draft versions of the base-level presentation and the two-day module. These will be revised based on feedback from the "Representing and Engaging Women" pilot. Western will adapt existing training material for the "Train-the-Trainer". Since access to Western's video scenarios is a key component of this program, Western will provide a budget for curriculum development, licensing access to videos, and producing videos in French. Some English videos may need to be re-produced using union actors.

3) Legislation

The previous Minister of Labour had committed to holding a roundtable with employers, unions and government to discuss promising practices and next steps. Unfortunately we were unable to hold that roundtable before the election campaign began in earnest. She had also indicated a desire to work with labour to adjust federal regulations in order to make explicit reference to domestic violence and clarify employers' responsibilities. We will follow-up

on this commitment with the new minister after October's election, and we will work with the Health and Safety Committee and representatives of workers in the federally-regulated sectors on any changes.

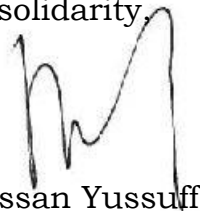
Our tool kit will include a comparison of Health and Safety legislation in all jurisdictions—which will be instrumental in developing a common legislative agenda. Several federations of labour have already engaged their governments and are actively pursuing potential changes. We look forward to meeting with the federation presidents as soon as possible following the election, to develop a common approach and to identify what kind of support would be most useful. We know that Manitoba has already made progress and that the Ontario Federation of Labour and affiliates have raised the issue in the government's consultations on changing workplaces and on sexual violence.

International Work

The CLC is a partner in DV@WorkNet—an international network of researchers, domestic violence experts, social and labour organizations, and employers to conduct research and mobilize knowledge about the impacts of domestic violence in the workplace. The network was initiated by Western's Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children and is supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The next meeting of the network will take place in November in Brussels. The CLC has been assisting with outreach to Global Union Federations in an effort to boost the labour movement's involvement and make links with unions around the world.

We are proud of this work. Our collective efforts will make a real difference in the lives of our members and help build workplace safety. We appreciate the enthusiasm that affiliates and federations of labour are bringing to the project and look forward to continuing the momentum when we discuss the issue at our November Canadian Council meeting.

In solidarity



Hassan Yussuff
President

and



Barbara Byers
Secretary-Treasurer

CC: CLC Executive Assistants
CLC National Directors
CLC Regional Directors

Draft Principles for Collective Bargaining on Domestic Violence and the Workplace

The CLC strongly encourages unions to include provisions designed to protect and support employees who are experiencing domestic violence in line with the following principles. Collective agreement language should at minimum:

1. Provide dedicated paid leave for employees experiencing family or domestic violence;
2. Disclose information only on a “need to know” basis to protect confidentiality while ensuring workplace safety;
3. Implement workplace safety strategies, including risk assessments, safety plans, training and a timely and effective process for resolving concerns;
4. Provide for counselling and referral to appropriate support services;
5. Provide appropriate training and paid time off work for designated support roles (including union health and safety representatives);
6. Provide employees experiencing domestic violence with flexible work arrangements, an advance of pay and other accommodations; and
7. Protect employees from adverse action or discrimination on the basis of their disclosure, experience, or perceived experience of domestic violence.

(Adapted from <https://www.dvandwork.unsw.edu.au/key-principles-and-clauses>)