

Day of Mourning Talking Points – 2026

Theme: Psychological Health and Safety Is Occupational Health and Safety

(We encourage you to include local statistics for your region, as well as stories from workers and families that reflect this year's theme)

- Today, we gather to mourn and honour workers who lost their lives or were injured because of their work.
- And as we mourn, we recommit ourselves to fighting for the living.
- Every worker deserves to come home safe at the end of the day, both in body **and** in mind.
- But too often, psychological harm at work is ignored, minimized, or dismissed as “just part of the job.”
- Let me tell you: it's not just you. And it should not be considered “just part of the job.”
- Harm isn't only physical; psychological injuries cause harm too.
- Workers are facing burnout, chronic stress, harassment, violence, and other psychological harms caused by unsafe work.
- *And we need to recognize that workplace physical injuries can trigger workplace psychological injuries, which need to be addressed together before someone can return to work.*
- These harms are real. And they are preventable.
- Nearly half of working Canadians say their job is the most stressful part of their daily lives.
- 70% of workers are concerned about the psychological health and safety of their workplace.

- In 2023 alone, more than **8,500 workplace mental health injury claims** were accepted by compensation boards – and we know the numbers are likely much higher. Psychological injuries are widely underreported; workers are discouraged from speaking up, claims are denied, and too many people suffer in silence.
- According to the claims accepted by workplace compensation boards, Health care, education, public services, and the trades are among the hardest-hit sectors due to factors including understaffing, lack of resources, and unreasonable workloads, to name just a few.
- Here in **(community/province)**, workers are also experiencing **(insert local stats, trends, or examples)**.
- And we know these numbers only tell part of the story – because psychological injuries are widely underreported.
- Workers are often discouraged from reporting. Claims are denied.
- And too many people suffer in silence.
- Employers are required to control physical, ergonomic, and chemical hazards at work.
- Psychosocial hazards – like excessive workloads, toxic workplace cultures, violence, and harassment – must be treated with the **same seriousness**.
- Employers must collaborate with workers to identify and control psychological hazards in the workplace. Ignoring them is not acceptable.
- It feels like there are new crises every week, and workers are already carrying a heavy mental load.
- Work should not exacerbate the stress that people are already experiencing.
- Just as we don't accept unsafe scaffolding and we don't accept asbestos exposure...
- We should never accept unsafe working conditions that harm workers' mental and psychological health.

- Every workplace needs a prevention program for psychological injuries – just like there are programs to prevent physical injuries.
- Psychological health and safety are already recognized in some federal and provincial laws across Canada.
- Canada has also ratified **ILO Convention 190**, which requires that your work be free from violence and harassment.
- But recognition on paper is not enough.
- Workers need **enforceable protections**, real prevention, and strong inspections.
- Today, we are calling on governments to:
 - Treat psychological health with the same seriousness as physical health under occupational health and safety and workers' compensation legislation, in every jurisdiction;
 - Ensure that workers are protected across Canada, no matter where they work or what sector they work in;
 - Require proactive risk assessments and prevention plans in every workplace;
 - Develop and implement a national strategy to ensure compliance with C-190; and
 - Ensure strong enforcement through sufficient, unannounced inspections.
- Because no worker should have to sacrifice their health – or their life – to earn a living.
- April 28 is a day of remembrance – but it is also a call to action.
- We owe it to the workers we have lost. We owe it to their families. And we owe it to every worker still on the job today.
- Safe work must mean **safe for both body and mind**.
- Strong unions save lives. And together, we will continue to fight for workplaces that are truly safe, healthy, and respectful for all.