



**BC NURSES'  
UNION**

*Standing up for health care*

# PINK SHIRT DAY 2022



**LIFT EACH OTHER UP** AND PROMOTE  
CIVILITY AND RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE

[www.bcnu.org](http://www.bcnu.org)

**#PinkShirtDay**

**#LiftEachOtherUp**





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## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022 IS **PINK SHIRT DAY**

*On **February 23**, everyone is encouraged to wear pink to lift each other up, promote civility and respect and display your commitment to end bullying.*

Pink Shirt Day has its roots in Nova Scotia and is part of an annual anti-bullying campaign founded by two teens in 2007.

When a fellow classmate was subjected to an act of homophobic bullying for wearing a pink polo shirt to school, David Shepherd and Travis Price decided to take a stand. They bought dozens of pink shirts at a thrift store and announced they would give them out to students the next day. With the word out, many students took it upon themselves to show up for school in pink rather than wait for one of the tops.

Since then, **Pink Shirt Day** has become an annual event to speak out against bullying in schools, communities and workplaces.

On February 23, and every day, you can make an effort to celebrate diversity, promote civility and respect and advocate for more inclusive workplaces.

Share your experiences with co-workers and don't forget to use the **#PinkShirtDay** hashtag in your Facebook and Instagram posts and in your tweets.\*



Join in on the conversation, lift each other up and take a stand against bullying!

## **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

*BC Occupational Health and Safety legislation defines bullying is any inappropriate conduct towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be intimidated or humiliated.<sup>1</sup>*

## **FACTS ABOUT BULLYING**

- > It's estimated that up to 40 percent of Canadians have experienced workplace bullying.<sup>2</sup>
- > Studies show that 48 percent of nurses have experienced or witnessed bullying.<sup>3</sup>
- > Your employer is required by law to take reasonable steps to address and prevent bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- > Discrimination due to race/racialization, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, and disability, for example, can often compound the experience of everyday bullying and harassment.
- > Workplace bullying is associated with nurses leaving their job, or the nursing profession.<sup>4,5</sup>
- > Exposure to workplace bullying can negatively affect the health of individuals, their co-workers, and their family, resulting in symptoms such as increased stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, fatigue, and depression.<sup>6</sup>
- > Bullying can reduce team communication, job satisfaction, motivation, and morale,<sup>7</sup> and affect patient care.<sup>8,9</sup>

*\*Note: If you are posting on social media, follow applicable employer policies for confidentiality*



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## BULLYING CHECKLIST **COULD IT BE YOU?**

*Anyone can engage in bullying behavior and anyone can be bullied.*

**Self-awareness** is key in addressing bullying and harassment in the workplace. Review the questions below and note situations that you may have actively participated in.

### **HAVE YOU EVER:**

- > Assigned a task beyond the scope of a person's job knowing or hoping they would fail?
- > Denied or discounted someone's contributions at meetings or on a project?
- > Noticed how your attitude to other workers who don't share your job title may be different than the attitude you have with individuals who do share it (e.g. RNs' relationship with LPNs, care aides or other staff)?
- > Refused to pass on crucial information to someone or sabotaged work because you did not want them to succeed?
- > Shouted at, cursed at, or in some way threatened a co-worker?
- > Played malicious pranks on a co-worker?
- > Stolen someone's ideas and taken credit for them yourself?
- > Started or failed to stop destructive gossip about a co-worker?
- > Exaggerated or embellished an event to cause trouble?
- > Targeted someone new, or someone you don't want to succeed or to continue on your team?
- > Denied access to resources such as training or information because you want to see them fail?
- > Uttered threats or shown physical intimidation such as throwing objects?
- > Treated student nurses with disrespect and exercised condescending behaviors towards them?
- > Targeted someone to be fired?
- > Publicly discredited someone?
- > Witnessed bullying and not intervened?

*Source: Building Dignity,  
BCNU, 2009*





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## BUILDING A PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY AND SAFE WORKPLACE

*Bullying and harassment may be a symptom of a psychologically unhealthy and unsafe workplace.*

*The CSA Standard on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace has 13 factors that contribute to a safe workplace. Factor 4, Civility and Respect, is crucial for minimizing the risk of workplace bullying and harassment which includes diversity and inclusion.*

### WHAT IS CIVILITY AND RESPECT?

- > A workplace where all employees are considerate towards each other, clients and patients. Employees are treated with dignity and respect by the employer, clients and each other
- > A workplace where esteem, care and consideration for others are the norm

### WHY IS CIVILITY AND RESPECT IMPORTANT?

- > Greater job satisfaction
- > Better team work
- > Positive work environment and
- > Protection of mental health

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT IS MISSING?

- > Increased turnover
- > Emotional exhaustion

- > Unnecessary conflict
- > Leads to bullying, which affects not only the target but also the bystanders

### HOW CAN I PROMOTE CIVILITY AND RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE WITH A DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION LENS?

- > Become an ally to those who are subjected to discrimination, oppression and/or bullying and harassment in the workplace
- > Learn about the histories and experiences of people who have faced oppression because of their identity
- > Reflect on how your own actions (or non-actions) may contribute to the oppression of others
- > Practise becoming more aware of your biases and how these might be shaping your words and actions
- > Become more aware of how you listen and what you listen for when you hear about an experience of oppression or discrimination

- > Amplify the voices of those who are disempowered

- > Act with open-heartedness and compassion

Source: [www.guardingmindsatwork.ca](http://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca)





BEHAVIOUR	EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
<b>Nonverbal Innuendo</b> > Raising of eyebrows; Making faces	Is there something you want to say to me? Please speak to me directly.
<b>Verbal Remarks</b> > Snide, rude comments > Lack of openness, abrupt responses	I need you to be more clear in your directions and feedback. Is there a way we can structure this to be more specific?
<b>Undermining Activities</b> > Turning away > Being unavailable	I have questions and would like you to help me understand how this situation may have happened.
<b>Withholding Information</b>	It's my understanding that more information might be available regarding the situation that might affect how I approach it (or learn about it).
<b>Sabotage</b> > Deliberately setting up a negative situation	There is more to this situation than meets the eye. Could you and I meet in private to discuss it?
<b>Infighting</b> > Bickering with peers	Always avoid a contentious discussion in a non-private place. This is not the time or the place. Please stop (physically walk away or move to a neutral spot).
<b>Scapegoating</b> > Attributing all that goes wrong to one individual	I don't think that's the right connection.
<b>Backstabbing</b> > Complaining to others about an individual and not speaking directly to that individual	I don't feel right talking about him/her/the situation when I wasn't there or don't know the facts. Have you spoken to him/her?
<b>Failure to Respect Privacy</b>	It bothers me to talk about that without his/her/their permission. I only overheard that. It shouldn't be repeated.
<b>Broken Confidences</b>	Wasn't that said in confidence? That sounds like information that should remain confidential. He/she asked me to keep that confidential.

Source: Bartholomew, Kathleen, RN, MN. "Ending Nurse-to-Nurse Hostility: Why Nurses Eat Their Young and Each Other" (HCPPro, 2006)

## ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YOU EXPERIENCE WORKPLACE BULLYING

**Documentation of bullying and harassment in the workplace is a crucial first step to addressing the issue. Please document every bullying and harassment incident you experience at work in a notebook or electronically.**

- > Ensure you record the following information for each incident:
  - > Date and time of interaction
  - > Location of interaction
  - > People involved
  - > Witnesses
  - > Description of interaction
  - > How the interaction made you feel humiliated or intimidated
  - > Other applicable information

- > Report bullying and harassment to your employer
- > Contact a steward and/or your workplace JOHS committee representative
- > Make a complaint following the employer's bullying and harassment policy and/or file a grievance

**For mental health support, call your Employee and Family Assistance Program and access other available resources**

**Share your story on social media using the #PinkShirtDay and #LiftEachOtherUp hashtags**

*Note: If you are posting on social media, follow applicable employer policies for confidentiality.*



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## LEARN MORE

### References

1. WorkSafeBC – Bullying and Harassment resources  
[www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/bullying-harassment](http://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/bullying-harassment)
2. CBC News  
[www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2011/12/06/wdr-cbsa-bullying-johnston.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2011/12/06/wdr-cbsa-bullying-johnston.html)
3. Havaei F, MacPhee M, Ma, A. “Workplace Violence among British Columbia Nurses Across Different Roles and Contexts” Healthcare, 2020, 8,98.
4. Johnson S, Rea R. “Workplace Bullying: Concerns for Nurse Leaders.” Journal of Nursing Administration. 2009;39(2):84-90
5. Griffen M. Teaching cognitive rehearsal as a shield for lateral violence: an intervention for newly licensed nurses. Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, 2004;35(6):257-63
6. Bullying in the Workplace: A handbook for the Workplace, by the Ontario Safety Association for Community and Healthcare (2009)  
[www.osach.ca/products/resrcdoc/rvioe528.pdf](http://www.osach.ca/products/resrcdoc/rvioe528.pdf)
7. Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety  
[www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html)
8. MSNBC Hospital bullies take a toll on patient safety  
[www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25)
9. US Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation  
[www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)

### Additional Resources

Centre for Occupational Health Psychology  
[www.arladay.ca](http://www.arladay.ca)

Pink Shirt Day – [www.pinkshirtday.ca](http://www.pinkshirtday.ca)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety –  
[www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html)

Employee and Family Assistance Program  
[www.efap.ca](http://www.efap.ca)

University of New Brunswick  
“Toward a Respectful Workplace”

[www.guardingmindsatwork.ca](http://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca)

[www.bullyonline.org](http://www.bullyonline.org)

