

# Supporting good mental health: Practical steps for USW local unions

Daily life is full of challenges. Sometimes our mental health suffers as a result. But there are ways that our union can support members who are experiencing mental health injuries.

1

We can bargain language into our collective agreements and make sure members know and understand their rights to access:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Other health benefits
- Sick leave and other leaves
- Short-term disability benefits
- Long-term disability benefits

2

Local union officers, stewards, and health and safety reps can learn about and share information with members about:

- The duty to accommodate
- Sick-leave benefits under Employment Insurance
- Canada Pension Plan disability benefits
- Provincial disability benefits

3

Local union officers, stewards, and health and safety reps can research what mental-health services are available in your area, and share that information with members, including:

- Community mental health clinics and other services
- Mental-health services available through hospitals
- Toll-free crisis and support lines
- Pastoral care options provided by faith organizations, including Indigenous spiritual care

4

Local union officers, stewards, and health and safety reps can become familiar with reliable websites, including:

- Canadian Labour Congress mental-health resources: <https://canadianlabour.ca/uncategorized/mental-health-resources/#affiliates>
- The Mental Injury Toolkit: <https://www.ohcow.on.ca/mental-injury-toolkit/>
- United Way mental-health resources: <https://www.unitedwayeo.ca/categories/mental-health-and-addiction-supports/>

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Local union officers, stewards, and health and safety reps: you have the right to take care of your mental health, too! Helping others can be stressful. The healthier we are, the better we can support our members.