

## CUPE 2950 Report Template:

**Member Name:** Lily Liew

**Date:** Oct 27, 2023

**Event Day #** 6

**Event:** Safe Union Spaces Working Group Report

**Session:** Afternoon

**Topic or Issue:** Safe Union Spaces Working Group Report

**Facilitator(s):** Karen Ranalletta, Regional VP (BC and the Yukon); Candace Rennick, Co-Chair

**Facilitator contact info** (if provided): ??

**Q1.** What are the main points and concerns for the topic or issue?

- Safe Union Spaces Working Group was formed in March 2021 by CUPE’s National Executive Board (NEB). The group provided a final report at the National Convention and outlined their efforts since 2021 to address violence, discrimination and harassment in the CUPE union.
- In 2021 and 2022, the group conducted member surveys, focus groups and listening sessions that were compiled in an interim report in April 2022. They found that many CUPE members, mostly women, reported experiences of discrimination and harassment in CUPE, in local and at conventions, CUPE schools and other events. The findings also recognized that members of Indigenous, Black and racialized members, 2SLGBTQI+ members, disabled and younger members are also more likely to face these issues. These incidents were often tolerated by a union culture that made it hard for people to speak up about unacceptable behaviour they have either witnessed or happened to themselves. Many members felt disrespected when they reported incidents or were unaware of processes to address incidents.
- An example of gender-based harassment was provided on the convention floor by a CUPE member who had overheard a trans-gender member being asked at a workplace washroom, “So, they are letting guys in our washroom, now?”
- Another example is sexual harassment of a female member by a male member at a social event.
- Working group includes all women on the NEB and supported by CUPE’s senior leadership.
- The Interim Report focused on two areas for action: Responses and Prevention
  - **Responses:**
    - Review and improve communications by CUPE on complaint and investigation processes
    - The existing Ombudsperson program was reviewed by the working group and trained additional staff and members to be available at all events and create an independent office to support members dealing with gender-based violence and sexual harassment.
    - To improve current restorative justice process, the working group organized training on restorative practices at several events, and included the NEB and CUPE’s staff directors in the training with pilot projects to be launched in Manitoba, Ontario, and BC.
  - **Prevention:**
    - The working group created resources for locals on creating a safer, inclusive union space, and CUPE leaders and staff received training in anti-racism, harassment, bullying, and microaggressions.

- Support was provided for new and women leaders
- Prevention education was provided through guidelines and tools for CUPE events.
- Creation of an independent **Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment Prevention and Support Office** in CUPE, to be staffed and operating **by early Spring 2024**:
  - To provide confidential aid to women and gender diverse members who face harassment or violence in union spaces
  - To reduce incidents by promotion prevention initiatives and assisting affected members
  - Guide members through trial procedure and alternate processs
  - Provide trauma-informed support

**Q2.** Why is this topic or issue important for my local union, CUPE 2950 and/or workplace at UBC?

The Safe Union Spaces Working Group Report is crucial for CUPE 2950 and the UBC workplace because it's about creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. By addressing discrimination and harassment, we stay true to our core values of fairness and solidarity. It also fosters unity and mutual respect, making us a stronger, more effective union. Plus, it ensures that all our members, regardless of their background, have a voice and are treated with dignity. The group is important to our members as it's about upholding our values, strengthening our union, and setting an example for a more equitable workplace at UBC.

**Q3.** How can I apply these learned applications, resources, tools or knowledge at CUPE 2950 and/or my workplace?

We can all actively implement the strategies, policies, and best practices harnessed by the Safe Union Spaces Working Group to promote a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. This includes utilizing the resources and training provided by the Working Group to address discrimination, harassment, and violence, and advocate for their implementation within our workplace.

We can support CUPE and workplace initiatives that enhance unity, mutual respect, and diversity, to ensure that all members feel valued and heard. Applying this knowledge contributes to a safer work environment that aligns with the values of CUPE 2950. As Candace Rennick indicated at the National Convention, "Real, lasting change in CUPE...begins with you, at the grassroots level, in your locals. Making our union safe for everyone is a collective responsibility, and each one of us needs to play our part."

**Q4A.** Are these learned resources, tools or applications and knowledge helpful to your workplace at UBC and CUPE 2950? Yes / No

**Q4B.** If yes, how does it hypothetically change if implemented in your workplace at UBC and CUPE 2950?

Yes, the resources and training provided by the Working Group, when implemented, will help create a safer, more inclusive, and respectful work environment, one that fosters unity, diversity, and effective collaboration among our members at UBC, provincially, and nationally.

**Q5.** Knowledge paving it forward: What tips and other helpful knowledge can you provide to your fellow CUPE 2950 members?

Resources from the 2023 National Convention are available at the CUPE 2950 office or online at <https://cupe.ca/safer-union-spaces>. These resources include:

- Safe Union Spaces: Take the Pledge at <https://cupe.ca/pledge-safer-and-more-inclusive-union>
- Take a 3-hour online workshop on Safer Union Spaces Anti-Harassment and BYSTANDER INTERVENTION Training at <https://cupe.ca/mrm-union-education/workshop/243>
- Review Safer Union Spaces resources at <https://cupe.ca/safer-union-spaces-resources>; some of the resource are listed below:
  - Safe Union Spaces: A checklist for locals at <https://cupe.ca/orders/safer-union-spaces-checklist-locals>
  - Bystander intervention card <https://cupe.ca/orders/bystander-intervention-card>
  - Sample Code of Conduct Language for Locals <https://cupe.ca/sample-code-conduct-language-locals>
  - 12 Things You Can Do to Fight Violence in the Workplace <https://cupe.ca/12-things-you-can-do-fight-violence-workplace>
  - Violence Prevention Kit <https://cupe.ca/violence-prevention-kit-0>
- **CUPE's new Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment Prevention and Support Office (to be open in Spring 2024)**