

Flipchart Notes from Injured Worker School #3, held at Injured Workers' Consultants on March 22, 2007

Question: What causes the isolation of Injured Workers?

- Pain
- Shame
- Fear of being watched/video-taped and fear to go out
- Inability to relate to "happy people"
- Losing time – things take longer
- Lack of understanding – what's happening
- Powerless
- Too much information.

Question: What are the Benefits of Participation?

- Find there are others in my situation (injured worker groups)
- Regain confidence
- Education – understanding the system
- Finding solutions – Getting hope, getting help.
- Goals/Direction
- Lessens depression
- A place for your good ideas
- Gives hope like a candle
- Being able to share your story
- Bring out of isolation
- Gives me strength
- Makes friends and food
- Gives me power
- Get energy
- Gives recognition
- Reduces frustration.

From Caseworkers:

- Encouragement from their enthusiasm and knowledge
- Provide caseworker with the information
- Have a balance which provides strength
- Gives strength
- For caseworkers – help to understand isolation of injured workers.

From other injured workers:

- find out from others
- what works
- ideas for survival
- Encouragement to do more.

Question: What can be fixed by an appeal? Give examples:

- termination due to compensable disability
- whether deemed earnings correspond to WCB retraining
- coverage of medication (whether due to compensable problem)
- whether an injury took place
- level of compensable disability/impairment

Question: What can be fixed through WCB/WSIB policy change? Give examples:

- whether and/or how Board permits private investigations of IW's
- deeming IW's to have wage progression over time while unemployed
- coverage of maintenance therapy
- experience rating
- rate and way of coverage for clothing allowances
- early and safe return to work policy

Question: What can be fixed by a change of law (the Act)? Give examples:

- Cost of living adjustments
- Deeming
- Universal coverage
- Maintenance therapy
- Dental and extended medical coverage
- Poverty

(Note: The above questions were designed to draw attention to how injured workers' participation changes as you move from one stage to the next)

Question: What factors help the participation of injured workers in meetings/groups?

- sharing, fellowship
- food and warmth
- sharing experiences
- education, learning about the system
- helping people who suffer
- eases our depression
- fighting for justice, being a link in the "chain for justice"
- energy
- "gems" special words that inspire us
- fighting for future generations
- common tasks and goals

- clear focus

Question: What prevents/hinders the participation of injured workers in meetings/groups?

- depression and pain
- being over challenged
- lack of money/financial pressures
- fear the Board will punish you
- family pressures, “if you go they’ll cut your benefits”
- meetings going on and on
- losing heart
- too much anger, “over-venting”
- justice takes too long, cynicism about achieving any

Question: What makes a good activist?

- enthusiasm
- courage
- ability to empower others
- saying things on point, clarity
- ability to delegate
- knowledge
- integrity
- conviction
- inclusiveness
- recognizing other people’s strengths and weaknesses
- fairness
- patience
- ability to listen
- focus: knowing which battles to pick
- Celebrating success
 - o including small ones
- having a sense of history
- accepting peoples level of involvement, preparation
- respect
- encouragement
- ability to make progress visible
- know personal limitation
- flexibility
- stay positive

Question: What mistakes should an activist avoid?

- talking for too long
- fear/bias
- procrastination
- doing all yourself
- seeking personal gain
- lack of focus
- taking on too much too fast
- perfectionism
- know it all attitude
- lack of firmness when needed
- don't expect too much
- "Harping" on what has not been achieved by a group or individual
- Cynicism.

Question: What worked at this session?

- Flexible agenda/timeframe
- Role play – being the Chair
- Brainstorming on qualities of good advocate
- Building on last session
- Focus on action
- Written reflections of activists
- Good mix of prof. activist and injured worker activists
- Written material
- Good sequence of activities
- History of Movement (personal)
- Successes
- Discussion Topics

Question: What needed improvement?

- More detailed look at qualities
- More disciplined on time
- Keep focused
- Day too long
- Too much information
- Provide material ahead of the meeting
- How can we spend more time on written materials
- Create a booklet on our history accomplishments.
"INJURED WORKER BOOK CLUB"

HIGHLIGHTS OF ALL 3 SESSIONS:

- Good knowledge of Deeming
- Developed Material (binder)
 - o Meredith
 - o Deeming
 - o Interaction
- Good agenda
- Specific questions
- Very informative
- Injured worker involvement
- Build on past successes.

NEXT STEPS:

- Meeting with WCB on effects of deeming
- Review materials
- Compress into 3 hour sessions
- How to integrate into Speakers School
- Injured Worker School – first – the Speakers School
- Combine the 2 schools speeches on what you are studying
- Week long school
- Polish the material
- 30/60 hour school – 3 hours per week –
- When can people begin the training?