

Dear brothers and sisters,

Thank you for sending me to the Steward training at Nanaimo on Nov 23 to Nov 25, 2016.

I attended three modules which I'm going to share with you a summary of my most significant learnings in each module. I hope you find this information helpful and I hope our Union becomes more powerful and united day by day.

Module#1: Resolving Grievances without going to Arbitration

This module was about the process of conflict resolution between employee and employer. This process starts with COMMUNICATION and INFORMAL NEGOTIATION with the employer and continues, if necessary, with Mediation, Arbitration, Litigation and Legislation. Communication is highly recommended as the primary solution since it's quicker and we have more control over the process, compared to Legislation which may take up to years and we have less control over the outcome.

Below is the list of my three most important take aways:

- a. The power of Union is in unity of members. Supporting our brothers and sisters in Union, standing for each others' rights and maintaining solidarity is what makes us powerful and makes our voice to be heard.
- b. In each situation remember to examine **6Ws: Who, Where, When, What, Why and Want.**
 - b.1. Who: Who were involved in the situation?
 - b.2. Where: Where the incident occurred?
 - b.3. When: When the incident happened?
 - b.4. What: What happened in details?
 - b.5. Why: Why the incident happened?
 - b.6. Want: What each side of the conflict wants?
- c. Approach your shop steward if you have any questions with your rights. Shop stewards will either answer your questions, if they know the answer, or they will research to find your answer. Ask for help if you need to. We are here to support each other in the Union.

Module#2: Creating Accommodation-Friendly Workplaces

This module, as its name suggests, is about the process of requesting for Accommodation from the employer. Pursuant to human rights laws, members are entitled to ask for accommodation for Disability, Gender, Religion and Family status special situations. Accommodation **MUST** be reasonable, **NOT** perfect. Accommodations must be supported by strong documentations and must fall within the Collective Agreement.

It's members responsibility to request fair and valid accommodations which respects fairness, equity and accountability for all brothers and sisters in the pertained workplace.

As mentioned earlier, if you have any question about your current accommodation or an accommodation that you might be entitled to, please approach your Union rep or Shop steward and they will either answer your question or will attempt to find your answer.

Module#3: Mediating Member to Member Conflict

I think all of us are familiar with the concept of conflict. Below are some examples of the most common conflicts in a workplace that were discussed in the training session:

- 1- Silence when senior employee directs junior.
- 2- One employee is allowed to micromanage others. Divided to two subcategories: a- when the micromanager is NOT happy with what is delegated by leadership to her/him to do, and b- when the micromanager enjoys micromanaging others.
- 3- Back and forth work criticism.
- 4- Lack of cooperation between senior and junior, hence no work gets done.
- 5- Higher pay-band bullying lesser pay-band.
- 6- Conflict because of resentment or jealousy: I should have that job.
- 7- Conflict because of belonging to two different camps (Team A VS Team B in a workplace).
- 8- Spilling over a conflict into the workplace from outside relationships.
- 9- Conflicts created by leadership such as drawing cards to identify members' seniority instead of identifying the seniority based on hours served (for term employees).

Mediation is a voluntary settlement negotiation facilitated by a neutral third party who has no decision-making power. The goal is to reach an agreement that can be put into practice.

Mediator facilitates the process of mediation and the parties control the outcome. Mediator may do gentle reminders to bring both parties on the same ground of shared values such as respect, trust, fairness and equity. Mediator may remind the involved parties that **as members of the Union we have a charter not to hurt our brothers and sisters**. A mediator does NOT arm-twist, does NOT lean on any one party and does NOT suggest that a party is being unreasonable and should compromise.

Mediator should defend **member's right**, and not the member.

In solidarity,

Naji Khodashenas