Up Close
Debbie Forward
President

Working for a Better Budget: Assessing the Provincial Governments' Performance

Featuring The Young Workers' Voice

A Four-part Feature for Young Workers

The "More Full-Time RNs Can Save A Lot" campaign

Guest Columnist
Mary Shortall

Registered Nurses' Union
Newfoundland & Labrador

Newfoundland & Labrador Edition
Our health care system is hurting.

Registered Nurses are on the front lines doing everything they can to give their patients the best possible care. Last year, that meant $47 million was spent on vital overtime and sick leave for RNs – just so our system could cope with the demand.

But we can save money, improve patient outcomes, and save lives.

Because more RNs means:

+ Greater odds of survival for patients who experience cardiac arrest in hospital
+ Readmission of surgical patients could be cut nearly in half
+ Better prevention, leading to fewer falls, complications, and infections

For more information, visit RNValue.ca
Established in 2001 as the Workers’ Voice Magazine print edition, now the online Newfoundland & Labrador Edition of New Workers’ Voice Magazine, is a free magazine for all.

It is for all Newfoundland and Labrador workers, unions, associations, students, business owners, managers and government decision makers and anyone else involved in, or concerned with, workplace issues.

Providing independent context and understanding of workplace issues, we are pro-worker and pro-economic development, both private and public. Articles are aimed at worker progress, social justice, safety and education along with the issues and the personalities involved.

An independent publication, we receive no funding from any government, association, union, agency, political party or individual, as such, our revenue is entirely advertising based.

Issued quarterly (4x per year) March, June, September and December.

WRITERS
Danette Dooley, Erica Yetman,

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Win Design Ltd.

WEB DESIGN
Jamie Pettem

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
Sandy Baker, Patricia Dodd, Jean Graham, Jeff Kelland, Gordon Lake

Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the publisher or advisory board.

General comments, letters to the editor, feature story suggestions, guest column suggestions, advertising or other inquiries please contact us at:

New Workers’ Voice
Phone 587-759-2922
email: workersvoice@outlook.com

WINTER 2017 Volume 1, Number 3
INSIDE
The Online Edition of
The New Workers’ Voice

GUEST COLUMNIST
Mary Shortall
Working for a Better Budget:
Assessing the Provincial Governments’ Performance

Up Close
Debbie Forward
President of the
Registered Nurses’ Union
Newfoundland and Labrador (RNUNL)

A Four-Part Feature

Part 1 Everyone was a young worker once
Part 2 Q&A Mistreated at Work
Part 3 Financial Planning for Young Workers
Part 4 Say ‘NO’ to Sexual Harassment and Assault in the Workplace
The provincial government is preparing the spring budget, and has been getting an earful from business lobbyists like the NL Employers Council (NLEC) who are – as usual - demanding that the government slash spending, which would require salary cuts and layoffs.

Government of course, will be considering balancing the budget, but hopefully over many years rather than right away with drastic cuts. And as Common Front NL pointed out earlier this year, they also need to work on what matters to the voting public: a healthy economy that is jobs-rich, fair and sustainable.

Getting closer to that vision means short-term and long-term budget changes. It also means measuring things that matter to people, and leading a public discussion about those measures. When the discussion focuses on narrow indicators like GDP, government spending, and deficits, government feels comfortable overlooking important values like fairness or long-term quality jobs. When the conversation includes indicators of broader values, government will do a better job on budgets and policies that serve those values. What gets measured matters. And it matters a lot for the next budget.

The health of the economy is best served by maintaining a steady fiscal climate and bolstering local demand. Massive spending cuts, like those proposed by the NLEC, would devastate the economy.

As Premier Ball observed, employers would be poorly served by massive cuts; they would reduce demand and purchases in the private sector, likely pushing some firms out of business, and causing job losses in the private sector.

Key for boosting the health of the economy is addressing the real “crisis” – unemployment - which is at a disgraceful level, and could be dangerous if it rises further. The “official” unemployment rate is 14.5%, more than twice the Canadian average. However, when you include people who are involuntarily working part-time, are waiting for jobs, or have given up looking for work, the real rate is above 18% - almost one in five.

When preparing the economy is best served by maintaining a steady fiscal climate and bolstering local demand. Massive spending cuts, like those proposed by the NLEC, would devastate the economy.

GUEST COLUMN

Working for a Better Budget: Assessing the Provincial Governments' Performance

By Mary Shortall

The health of the economy is best served by maintaining a steady fiscal climate and bolstering local demand. Massive spending cuts, like those proposed by the NLEC, would devastate the economy.

Getting closer to that vision means short-term and long-term budget changes. It also means measuring things that matter to people, and leading a public discussion about those measures. When the discussion focuses on narrow indicators like GDP, government spending, and deficits, government feels comfortable overlooking important values like fairness or long-term quality jobs. When the conversation includes indicators of broader values, government will do a better job on budgets and policies that serve those values. What gets measured matters. And it matters a lot for the next budget.

The health of the economy is best served by maintaining a steady fiscal climate and bolstering local demand. Massive spending cuts, like those proposed by the NLEC, would devastate the economy.

As Premier Ball observed, employers would be poorly served by massive cuts; they would reduce demand and purchases in the private sector, likely pushing some firms out of business, and causing job losses in the private sector.

Key for boosting the health of the economy is addressing the real “crisis” – unemployment - which is at a disgraceful level, and could be dangerous if it rises further. The “official” unemployment rate is 14.5%, more than twice the Canadian average. However, when you include people who are involuntarily working part-time, are waiting for jobs, or have given up looking for work, the real rate is above 18% - almost one in five.

When preparing the
budget, government needs to be in “job-creation” mode, not in “slashing” mode. The budget should build the foundation for quality jobs by investing in quality public services like education and health care, diversification, and local procurement. It should make any tax breaks or other subsidies to business, conditional on creating good jobs.

The government should lead a public discussion on the full picture of unemployment (not just the “official” level), as well how many new jobs are full-time, well-paid, good jobs with benefits; rather than temporary, part-time precarious work.

On fairness, we know that poverty harms the economy. However, income inequality - apart from poverty - is also an economic drag. Inequality is also associated with significantly worse outcomes for physical and mental health, drug abuse, educational attainment, imprisonment levels, obesity, social mobility, trust and community life, violence, teenage pregnancies, and child well-being.

After-tax income inequality has been rising in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) since the 1980s, and we are now the third most unequal province and have the third-worst gender wage gap. Fair taxation and spending by governments significantly reduces inequality, so the provincial government needs to pay close attention to inequality measures when designing budgets, and when reporting to its citizens.

On environmental sustainability, government’s low-interest loans for energy efficiency improvements will help reduce energy consumption, while easing the cost of living and creating jobs. That, and the announcement by Premier Ball that NL will work cooperatively with the federal government to bring in carbon pricing by spring, are good starts. Government must continue to adopt policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Investing in renewable energy and creating good, green jobs is an important opportunity; and government should be tracking and reporting on that sector.

The budget is not only a financial plan for government, but an important economic document. It can take the road to austerity, which we know from other jurisdictions will result in unemployment and further economic losses. Or it can take the road to a better future - one that is jobs-rich, fair and sustainable.

Recent budgets have been controversial, to say the least, and the voting public is now watching closely. They will want to see signposts along the way, that tell us we’re heading in the right direction.

Mary Shortall is President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour. The Federation is a member of CommonFrontNL.
Reach out to all Newfoundland & Labrador workers

The New Workers’ Voice, Newfoundland and Labrador online edition, is a free forum for all.

We welcome suggestions for Newfoundland and Labrador stories, features and guest columns. We accept letters to the editor and other input you would like to have in the New Workers’ Voice.

workersvoice@outlook.com
Up Close

President of the Registered Nurses' Union Newfoundland and Labrador (RNUNL)

with Debbie Forward
In its latest campaign, the Registered Nurses' Union Newfoundland and Labrador (RNUNL) puts a human face on the challenges nurses face every day on the job.

The “More Full-Time RNs Can Save A Lot” campaign outlines numerous staffing issues in the workplace.

According to the campaign registered nurses are working long hours because of inadequate RN staffing practices. More than 240,000 hours of overtime were logged by registered nurses this past year, which equals 123 full-time positions. Too much overtime, challenging workloads and work environments, are contributing to more sick leave, burnout, and low morale among Rns.

In terms of financial costs, the price tag associated with overtime and sick leave last year was $47 million. Adding more full-time RNs to the system will save government money, said RNUNL president Debbie Forward, making the move a win for the people of the province, for registered nurses and for government.

Forward said when you decrease RN staffing, you will likely see an increase in patient readmissions. Having more full-time registered nurses can save a lot, she said.
“Most importantly, it can save lives,” Forward said. When health providers and decision-makers are making decisions it's important that they understand the role of a registered nurse within the system, Forward said. “We want to make sure that everyone understands the scope of practice – what registered nurses do. The in-depth knowledge, problem solving, decision-making, critical thinking... no matter how stable or unstable (the patient is), it’s the RN that has that full scope of types of patients they can care for.” Forward doesn’t skirt the fact that government is struggling with the high cost of health care. She is well aware that providing such care is the biggest cost-driver in the provincial budget. “At a time when government is looking to decrease the cost of health care, while, at the same time making sure we improve our outcomes, making sure that people in this province are healthier, then we believe the solution to that is more full-time RNs can save a lot,” Forward said hitting on the new campaign’s title. The campaign highlights registered nurses working in numerous areas of the health care system and what having more RNs could mean to their workload. RNUNL represents over 5,500 registered nurses working in hospitals, long-term care centres, the community, education and research. Long-term care is one of the areas where the union is concerned about staffing levels, Forward said. “We’ve moved to a new model of staffing in long-term care over the last ten or 12 years and we feel that, as a result of that, care is not what it should be in that setting,” she said. Forward said “it’s heartbreaking” to hear stories from her members who feel they can't provide the care their patients deserve – because of working conditions. “The people of our province, the patients, the clients and the community are our responsibility yet we are really struggling to provide them the care that they really deserve. And I’m really proud that we are putting our stories out there and of our members who have had the courage to speak about their workplace,” she said of the most recent campaign. The campaign targets not only the public but also government decision-makers. Forward said results of a public poll showed that 84 per cent of people don't feel there are enough RNs in the system. “I know the public will support government if they make these progressive decisions around more full-time RNs,” she said. When asked about the high cost of RN sick leave on the provincial purse, Forward said “it’s heartbreaking” to hear stories from her members who feel they can't provide the care their patients deserve – because of working conditions.
during her 21 years as president, this has been an issue but positive solutions to address the root cause of the issue have yet to be implemented.

“We acknowledge that we have very high sick leave within the RN profession and that’s right across the country.... so what is it about this profession or this environment that’s driving up sick leave?”

Forward said the union did poll its members about why the sick leave is so high. One of the reasons is the environment registered nurses work in, she said.

When RNs are sick – such as when they are battling a cold – their patients are best served if they stay home.

“If you’re a registered nurse on the front line there are times you know you have to stay away from the workplace so that you don’t spread germs.”

There are other reasons as well, she said, for the high incidence of sick leave among RNs – not the least of which are stress and burn out.

While there will always be need for time away from work due to sick leave issues, Forward said, improving the workplace will cut down on such leave.

The union is calling on the provincial government to complete a core staffing review.

“We believe if we can get core staffing right, we’ve got reasonable workloads, we’ve got good work environments where people are safe... then we’ll see a decrease in sick leave,” she said.

“And this ties into our campaign that more registered nurses can save a lot,” Forward reiterated.

In terms of making RNs more visible in the workplace, the union has undertaken a uniform initiative which now sees more than 70 percent of registered nurses wearing black pants and white tops in the workplace.

“That helps the patients and the public and the other health care providers know who the registered nurse is,” Forward said.

After earning a Bachelor of Nursing in 1980, Forward worked as a staff RN in the S.A. Grace General Hospital’s emergency department for five years.

“I absolutely loved that job,” she said of her early career in front line nursing.
She then held a position as faculty member at the Grace General Hospital’s School of nursing from 1985-1996, teaching in all three years of the diploma program.

“When I travel the province at different sites and I see members that I’ve taught many years ago, it’s very rewarding to know you’ve had an influence on their career and their expertise and knowledge as a registered nurse. That’s quite fulfilling,” Forward said.

She then left her career as an educator to take on the role of RNUNL provincial president – a position she’s held for over two decades.

Forward said she went for the position after being encouraged to do so other people who felt she had the skills and knowledge to be a strong advocate for all RNs in the province.

“I knew it would be a learning curve but I wanted to try it.”

Forward equates taking on the role of president as “taking a big leap off a cliff.”

It’s a leap she’s never regretted taking.

“Forward equates taking on the role of president as “taking a big leap off a cliff.”

It’s a leap she’s never regretted taking.

We now do an annual report which is a report to our members based on targets that we set for the organization... we’re very transparent and accountable to our members. And that has been a real positive initiative for us, as an organization,” Forward said.

Strategic planning with the union’s board of director and staff is also an important goal-setting initiative.

The RNUNL collective agreement expired in June.

Proposals have been exchanged between the employer and the union, she said and, while there has been good dialogue between both sides, Forward cautioned that it’s still very early into the collective bargaining process.

“We’ve received a lot of
information from our members in terms of this round of bargaining. The priorities overwhelmingly for our members are centred around staffing, challenging workloads, healthy work environments, the ability to get a day off when you want a day off (work life/home life balance),” she said touching on some of the issues that will likely be put on the table.

Forward said some registered nurses need to ask for an annual leave day – no matter the reason - months in advance. However, the green light to take the day may not come until the day requested off, she said.

“Even if the day off is to attend their child’s wedding or graduation, they are told they might have to wait until the day before... or they could have to wait until the morning (of the day off) before they are told if they can have it off.”

Members are also adamant that there will be no claw-backs of benefits.

“(Our members) don’t want us to engage in concessionary bargaining... so that’s our position at the bargaining table.”

When talking about challenges registered nurses face in the workplace,

Forward said, every setting has its own challenges.

As an organization, she said, it’s crucial to work to meet the needs of all registered nurses.

“Our members are scattered all across the province – everywhere from the Health Sciences (in St. John’s) that has about 1,200 RNs... or you could be the one RN that works in a nursing station on the coast of Labrador... and the geographic distance could be a challenge in reaching out to that one RN,” Forward said.

Another big challenge registered nurses are facing, she said, is violence in the workplace.

Forward said statistics show that registered nurses are more likely to experience violence in their workplace than prison guards or police officers.

Forward said statistics show that registered nurses are more likely to experience violence in their workplace than prison guards or police officers.

When talking about challenges registered nurses face in the workplace,
than prison guards or police officers.

“And that speaks volumes, not only in terms of workplace injury but when someone is injured and are off work that’s something that they have to incorporate into their lives and how they get through it... it’s one of these key issues that’s really impacting the work environment, it’s causing low morale and stress,” she said.

Ensuring workers feel secure needs to be a priority for all employers, Forward said.

Forward went on to give a concrete example of how it appears that some professions are protected more, security-wise, than others.

“When I go to the Confederation Building to meet with the minister of finance and the minister of health, I will have go in through one door. I will have to bring an ID. I will have to get a tag. Someone will have to come down and get me to escort me to the meeting and maybe escort me out. Yet I can walk through the front door of the Health Sciences, I can walk into any unit and wander the unit. I can walk into anybody’s room. I can eavesdrop. I can watch what’s going on. And no one is asking me what I’m there for.”

Forward said while she understands hospitals have to be accessible, the time has come, she said, to increase security for all staff.

“Making our workplaces as safe as possible has to be on our agenda and that violence of any type: swearing at your RN, pushing, punching, that is not acceptable.”

In addition to violence towards members, Forward said, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is also an issue that needs to be addressed.

Forward credits the Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU) as leading the charge on researching and raising awareness about PTSD in the workplace.

PTSD is also something that registered nurses in this province are dealing with, Forward said, going on to recall an event that unfolded early into her career as a registered nurse working in the emergency department at the Grace General Hospital.

While she doesn't speak specifically about the event for confidentiality reasons, Forward did say when the incident comes to her mind, it's like it happened yesterday rather than decades ago.

Registered nurses are dealing with such trauma on a
regular occurrence, she said. They are constantly exposed to life and death situations and witness various other complex patient scenarios putting them at risk to develop work-related mental health symptoms.

“Yes, it’s part of our job but it has a lasting effect on us... and we need to work together to make sure that we are supporting people... how do we give them the skill sets that - when they are faced with these situations - that they know what to do to help themselves through it.”

Forward has written government on behalf of her members requesting that registered nurses be included in any changes to the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act.

Forward said her union believes all workers should be covered under workers'
compensation related to PTSD and that the legislation should be presumptive.

“We believe if a worker is exposed to certain types of traumatic events and diagnosed with PTSD, the workers' compensation board should presume the PTSD is caused by the workers' employment unless the contrary is proven. This would eliminate the need for people to 'prove' that any one single event specifically caused their PTSD,” Forward wrote in a letter to Service NL Minister Sherry Gambin-Walsh on Oct. 12.

RNUNL is a member of the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions and has been active since 2004 about how a National Pharmacare Program could bring major cost saving to the province.

“I'm quite excited that, for the most part, our provincial government is onside in the concept of a National Pharmacare Program and right now we are challenged in getting the federal government onside,” she said.

It's heartbreaking, she said, when registered nurses hear that their patients not renewing their prescriptions because they can't afford to do so.

When people don't take their medications, she said, they often end up back in hospital which means more money on the system, she said.

RNUNL is a member of the Canadian Labour Congress which is also onboard with the implementation of a National Pharmacare Program.

“One of the big cost-drivers of our health care system is the cost of pharmaceuticals. And I believe that, as a country, if we do not advance in a national program, then the costs to the system are going to continue to rise.”

Forward – who also holds a master of education degree from Memorial University - reiterated several times during the interview just how important it is to advocate on behalf of all registered nurses in the province – so that all patients can get the care they deserve.

“Our members are our reason for being,” she said.

For more information visit www.RNUNL.ca

It's heartbreaking, she said, when registered nurses hear that their patients not renewing their prescriptions because they can't afford to do so.

When people don't take their medications, she said, they often end up back in hospital which means more money on the system, she said.
It’s a terrible feeling, you're at work doing your best... you're just getting into the workforce, just getting your feet wet, maybe it was your first job. A lot of young workers have felt it, a customer, or maybe a coworker approaches, and something in their language, in the way they talk to you and the questions they ask you feel as though you're being looked down upon. You know without knowing its because of your age.

PART 1

There are lots of stories. When preparing to write this article I realized just how many people had experienced this, many afraid to talk for fear it would impact their careers, some of them eager to share their stories and how it made them feel.

These are three stories, three young workers, all in completely different fields... all with similar experiences.

Sheila Brothers is 24 now, but when she was just 19 she had already finished her post-secondary training in hairstyling at Woodford Training Center, she had the tools she needed and was trained as well as anyone else in the industry. She knew going into it the industry was a competitive one, and she felt ready to take that on and build a healthy clientele, Brothers began as an assistant ready to begin her career.

"While assisting in a Salon... I was told I would eventually become a stylist in this store “as long as I worked hard.” said Brothers, “I knew assisting
involved a lot of dirty work but I would do anything to earn respect.” It turned out, hard work wasn't going to cut it.

“The receptionist and assistants were considered 'support staff' which meant we had a great deal of responsibility making sure clients were being taken proper care of,” said Brothers. “I felt that because I was young and didn't have kids, they didn't mind telling me they needed me to come in on my days off.”

“They didn't mind asking me to reschedule outside appointments because they needed me to work, or overbooking themselves which resulted in me having to stay late and be late for/miss outside engagements.”

Not only did Brothers experience mistreatment and judgement from her co-workers, it also came from clientele on occasion.

“I was actually working as a stylist last year, a client tried booking an appointment with her regular stylist who was off sick for the week and was put with me for that day, which she was initially okay with.” said Brothers, “Her haircut was going fine, until she casually asked how old I was and at the time I was 23.”

The mood changed then, as the client became distressed by someone so young doing her hair.

“She was suddenly not okay with that at all and began to panic until a senior stylist asked what the problem was. The client said 'She's just so young! I can't trust her; young people can't do this job. I should have just waited for 'Wanda' to be back! She knows what she is doing.'”

“My coworker said 'If it makes you feel more comfortable, I will finish your hair. But it might interest you to know that this young lady (me) and 'Wanda' went to Hairstyling school together at the same time.'”

It wasn't just a lack of trust because of her age, Brothers says that at many of the places she worked senior staff would make assumptions because she was young.

“(the client) began to panic until a senior stylist asked what the problem was. The client said 'She's just so young! I can't trust her; young people can't do this job. I should have just waited for 'Wanda' to be back! She knows what she is doing.'”
“Both salons had times...where they would hear me say 'I'm pretty tired today' and immediately assume I was out all night the night before, and then lecture me about it!” said Brothers, exasperated. “When in reality, I could have been babysitting, in the emergency room... or unable to sleep due to anxiety.”

“They thought everything I did outside the workplace was their business.” said Brothers.

“This whole experience grew me a thick layer of skin and taught me I needed to demand respect in return from people of authority.” said Brothers.

Tiffany Walsh has been working in the retail industry since she was 15, she worked her way up holding various positions such as key holder, shift lead, shift manager and eventually assistant manager and manager.

Working in retail and holding such high positions as a young worker comes with its own share of problems, but it was what she experienced after moving to Alberta at 19 that really helped her learn what kind of manager she wanted to be.

“In Alberta, before the recession hit, people would jump jobs for an extra 25 cents so the rotation (for store managers particularly) at this company was pretty high.” said Walsh, “As the youngest manager in the region, there was a lot of pressure to prove yourself. You had to show your dedication and prove your work ethic.”

It wasn’t dedication in the normal sense, though, as they expected Walsh to run every store in the city.

“I was asked to support every store within the city and punched anywhere from 55-72 hours a week. Drive to one location to open the store, work six hours there then drive to another location to work another six hours and close.” said Walsh, “After about two months of this they decided to make me a store manager and offered me salary.”

At the time, she thought she was getting a good offer and accepted, she soon realized her salary position offered only 0.15 cents more an hour than her previous position, and with this job she wouldn’t be getting any overtime despite working more than a regular working hours almost every week.

When I realized what was happening, I definitely felt very jaded and disgruntled.” said Walsh, “I was burnt out, under appreciated and not being compensated adequately for the work I was doing.”

When Walsh found out another store manager in her city doing the same position as her was making a salary that was whooping $15,000 more than hers, she decided to talk to management.

“When I made this request it was met with ridicule because I was "to young and didn't need that much". My performance began slipping and my hostility began to
spread to my staff before I finally left."

Though the experience was a difficult one, Walsh says it helped her learn what she deserved as a worker.

"Looking back on it now it really showed me not to settle for anything less than what I'm worth, to work hard but to recognize when someone is taking advantage of you," said Walsh. "To ensure that I also asked detailed questions when job hunting--an interview goes two ways."

"It really showed me the type of manager I did NOT want to be and I believe that because of that job I have grown extensively," said Walsh.

Victoria M works as an LPN...after completing her two year program in post-secondary she came out ready to enter the workforce, with years of training and various clinic rotations under her belt.

"Normally when HR came into our class you're looking at working casual for about 5 years," said Miller. "So I got this position in March with the possibility to be extended"

Walsh was lucky enough to get extended again, even after other people in her position had been cut back to casual. Instead of celebrating her new found job, she found she had to face co-workers who felt she was undeserving of the position.

"There were some people who were kind of upset that they had so much more seniority over me and they had to go casual when I was in a position" said Miller, "But the only reason I got the position in the first place was because no one wanted it at the time that I applied."

In a long-term care, Miller says it's important to be able to have a good relationship and rapport with co-workers, and to have a laugh while performing some of less pleasant tasks.

"There was a lot of people getting mad at me and telling me that I didn't deserve to be extended in the position, it should have been posted and given to someone with more seniority than me, someone who's worked there longer than me basically."

Many young workers reached out about this issue, there's enough stories that someone could spend the rest of their life telling them. What's for sure is that young workers deserve just as much respect in their jobs as anyone else, if they have the training and certification they are just as qualified as anyone else in their field.

Young workers deserve to be recognized for their work and treated with respect regardless of age, after all, everyone was a young worker at some point. ■
Name: Nick Ryan  Age: 24  Field of work: Photography
I've been running my own photo business for the last three years and a lot of the times people are interested in my work, looking to set up appointments and when they find out my age all of a sudden I don't hear back from them, even if we had been chatting previously for weeks.

How did that make you feel? It's pretty tough, especially when you have already put time and effort into building a relationship with a customer only to have them ditch because of your age.

Name: Candace G.  Age: 21  Field of work: fast food
When I worked in fast food I always felt taken advantage of because of my age. No matter what I asked for I would always work Friday, Saturday and Sunday night.

How did it make you feel? I felt underappreciated and it eventually lead me to find another job.

Name: Brittany Oliver  Age: 22  Field of work: retail
I worked a part time job in the mall my entire way through highschool, when I started post secondary I had already built up a lot of seniority and expected them to work with my schedule. At first they would but then they would call me in and be mad when I couldn't make it because of class, it created a really negative environment.

How did it make you feel? I thought I had built a good working relationship with my managers but it really showed me I was just another number in their system at the end of the day.
Name: Warren M.  Age: 25  Field: Health
Working in the medical field I get judged a lot because of my age, even though I’m just as qualified as anyone else a lot of times patients will request someone older.

How does it make you feel? It makes me feel like I’m unable to do my job because it stops me from doing my job.

Name: Shauna Brown  Age: 20
I worked at a gas bar and customers would complain when I asked them for ID for cigarettes and alcohol because I wasn’t old enough to purchase it myself, it made me feel really small and like I couldn’t do my job.

How did it make you feel? It definitely made me more wary of customers and asking for ID even though it was something I had to do on a regular basis.

Name: Stacey Lee  Age: 19
I’ve been a third key holder at a retail store for the last three years, since I was 16. When the managers are not in I’m acting manager and people do not like that. I’ve had grown men cuss me out because there’s “no way I could be in charge here” and accuse me of not knowing what I’m doing because of my age.

How did it make you feel? It definitely helped me grow a tough layer of skin, something which is important in retail. But it never really hurt my feelings or anything, I know I can do my job and that’s all that matters.

Name: Mark Ryan  Age: 23
I finished my business program a year ago so I’ve been in my actual career now for almost 9 months and I get clients not believing me everyday.

How does that make you feel? It makes it really hard to do my job, it almost feels like I’m being punished.

THE CANADIAN MERCHANT SERVICE GUILD

The union representing thousands of ships’ officers and marine pilots across the country. Our members focus on transportation safety and the protection of Canada’s marine environment. Our Guild offices are located in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and British Columbia.

Visit us at www.CMSG-GMMC.ca
for doing well in school and entering the workforce at a young age.

**Name:** Kevin K.  **Age:** 25

I've been in my career in business since I was 19, started my own company at 20 and I still run it today. For the first couple of years no one would believe I owned the company, they all assumed I took it over from my father or someone. But I built it from the ground up.

**How did it make you feel?** Pretty bad actually, I worked so hard to build something and people were trying to take that credit away from me because I was young, that was tough for a while.

**Name:** Katherine W.  **Age:** 20

I've always felt like I was treated really well for my age in all of my jobs.

**How did that make you feel?** Deserving. I worked hard and my age didn't play a factor, I was rewarded for my hard work the same way people twice my age were.

**Name:** Sam G.  **Age:** 22

I've worked security for a few years now, and being a young person in security detail is definitely not easy, some people feel like they can walk all over you and not listen just because they're older.

**How did that make you feel?** Like I wasn't a suitable fit to do my job, but I stuck with it and now I'm glad that I did. I've gained the respect of my coworkers and boss for sticking it out when things got hard.

**Name:** Colin D.  **Age:** 26

I've been working overseas for sometime now, and not only am I young but the language isn't my first language so I get judged a lot for not just my age but for not being as familiar with the language they're speaking. I've actually had clients request I not work on their project because of this.

**How did it make you feel?** It can be really difficult, I worked hard to get this position and am more than qualified, but because of a few small things like my age and not being a native speaker of the language I sometimes get pushed off of things that I deserve to be a part of.

**Name:** Steve P.  **Age:** 24

I've been working in my grade since I finished school 3 years ago, have had steady work since and I probably know more than most of the guys I work with, but because they're all in their forties customers immediately approach them even if they're busy and walk right by me. I've even had customers say 'he's too young to know how to fix that' when I'm the trained technician for that particular problem.

**How does that make you feel?** It can be a real pain, I'm just trying to do my job and sometimes I can't because of it.

**Name:** Mandy L.  **Age:** 25

I'm a teacher and a lot of times I'll get comments from students parents along the lines of 'oh you're not much older than them yourself' and that really undermines my authority especially when they're saying it in front of students.

**How does that make you feel?** It can be hard enough to get respect as a teacher, yet alone a young teacher, so when parents make comments like that it makes me a little mad.

**Name:** Courtney W.  **Age:** 23

I work solely on the phone for my job and don't have any interactions with customers face to face, but somehow people will still question my age over the phone based on how my voice sounds and immediately asked to be transferred to another agent.

**How does that make you feel?** Really terrible honestly, I'm just as capable as anyone else but because my voice gives away my age they want someone else. I hate having to transfer people to my coworkers for that reason.
Entering the working world as a young person straight out of post-secondary is an out of this world experience. The days of kraft Dinner and Ramen Noodles are over, free clinics and one-ply toilet tissue are a thing of the past. You’ve scored a job with what your new coworkers tell you are “great benefits” and you started that RRSP your dad told you to open with your signing bonus. Now what?

Financial Planning for Young Workers

PART 3

By Erica Yetman

It’s a little like learning how to swim. You hear about it or see it on TV, eventually you’re ready to test the waters yourself. You have your floaty wings on and with a SPLASH you’re suddenly not sure if it was such a good idea. It’s cold and it’s scary and you’re not quite what to do, but once
you kick kick kick and make it to the surface and the sun hits your face you can't believe you've never swam before.

Most young adults walk blindly into the world of banking with a little advice from their parents and an hour long appointment at the bank or human resources. They hand you pamphlets about your benefits and insurance and retirement and you attempt to make your way through a wall of terms you're just seeing for the first time.

You realize you might need a dictionary. Or some help. This is the time to find a financial advisor. A scary term, a terrifying concept for many young adults. Most of us barely know what finance is, let alone that we should have someone to advise us in it.

Here's the good news, it's not that scary. Your financial advisor can take those foreign pamphlets and break it down for you, explain it in terms you can understand. They can take into account your expenses, medical needs and future plans to determine the best course of action for you and your new paycheck.

Neil Trahey is a financial advisor with a large company in Canada, and he helps his clients protect their financial future. He's happy to say 90% (CHECK PERCENT) of his clients are young adults looking to invest in themselves and their futures.

There are a lot of things to look at when it comes to finances, one of the first things Trahey will discuss when someone comes in to sit down with him is debt and savings, and for young people just entering the workforce it's extremely important to make your savings a bill.
"Your cell phone comes out once a month, your car insurance comes out once a month, and your savings comes out once a month," said Trahey.

When it comes to savings, things need to be taken seriously, something many young workers don’t realize when they first begin their careers.

"There’s two types of people: you have people that get their paycheque and spend, spend, spend, and then if there’s anything left over they’ll put it into a savings account or an RRSP," said Trahey. "That's not the way you want to do it. You want to be the person who gets their cheque, and have something like an automatic payment set up, so that as soon as you get your cheque $50 or $100 – whatever you feel is affordable – goes into a TFSA or an RRSP."

A tax-free savings account is defined as a “way for individuals who are 18 and older and who have a valid social insurance number to set money aside tax-free throughout their lifetime,” states the Government of Canada website.

An RRSP is a Registered Retirement Savings Plan is a savings plan that you contribute to and is taxable.

When writing this article I approached many young people about their spending habits, budgets and savings. For the most part, the ‘savers’ were non-existent. The majority of young workers I spoke with neither budgeted their spending, nor had currently started any form of savings beyond keeping a couple of extra bucks in their chequing accounts ‘incase of emergency’.

If you're lucky enough to have a job that offers benefits, it's not enough to just have a meeting with someone from HR. It's important to go over your benefits package piece by piece with someone that can explain to you what it provides.

"You want to take your benefits booklet... and go sit down and have a meeting to make sure of what you have." said Trahey, "Most young people start a job and it's 'oh ya, I have benefits' or 'I have some money going in for retirement' and that's kind of where you leave it."

"It's like 'cooler talk', someone says 'oh, we got great benefits' and you just take it at face value and you don't look any deeper into that." said Trahey, "You really want to take a deeper dive into understanding what you're covered for with your benefits."

Many group benefit packages will cover health and dental, long term disability and life insurance to a certain amount, says Trahey, but it's important to figure out how those things work. Such as how much money would you obtain if you were to go off on long term disability? How much and what is covered under health and dental?

Having someone with expertise in the area can help hash out the numbers for you and what you're actually paying for in your group plan, says Trahey, and to make sure there's no holes in it.

Something young people should consider looking into, says Trahey, is critical illness insurance. "For one example, critical illness insurance is very important
to have. It's very cheap for young people to get personally, said Trahey. "But it's something that a group plan normally won't cover."

Critical illness plans cover 24 different illnesses ranging from heart attacks and strokes to loss of limbs and paralysis, says Trahey. "That is something you want to make sure you go out and get yourself personally if your employee isn't covering for you."

While long term disability will continue to pay the bills, critical illness insurance pays a lump sum in the event of one of the 24 illnesses covered to help people deal with heightened costs of dealing with illness.

"It's can also be set up to double as a back-up retirement savings too, says Trahey. If you reach age of retirement without having to use your critical illness insurance, you can cancel your policy and get back every dollar that you paid in.

"It's a double edged sword because it's going to cover you insurance wise all the years you're working…and then when you get up there in years and the insurance isn't as important anymore because you have a pile of assets built heading into retirement you can cancel the policy and take back everything." said Trahey.

If you're not quite ready to take on everything at once take it one financial step at a time. Follow a budget, start a savings account, learn about insurance and what you need. Talk to your parents, talk to your bank and go talk to a financial advisor.

You are responsible for your future and taking control of your financial independence is an important step into adulthood that we all have to take, as daunting as it is, it can be done.

At the end of the day the financial world goes as deep as the ocean, it connects us all, everything comes back to how you handle your finances.

You can dip your toe in the waters, but eventually you have to take the plunge.

It'll be a whole lot easier if you know how to swim."
Radio for the community, by the community.


New volunteers are always welcome. Visit our website for training dates.
PART 4

It's been a topic of conversation around water coolers for decades; employees speaking in hushed tones about what is and isn't acceptable, unions trying to rationalize what is and isn't to be deemed harassment. What makes it sexual in nature?

It can be anything from an off-hand comment to a slap on the rear-end, work is a place to make friends and build relationships, but certain things are off limits and shouldn't be brought into the workplace.

Just because you might fool around with your buddies in a certain manner, doesn't mean it's appropriate to tango with co-workers the same way.

The Canada Labour Code defines sexual harassment as any conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence or humiliation or that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion.

Under the same code, every employee in a workplace is entitled to employment free of sexual harassment, and all
employers have a duty to ensure employees have a safe and comfortable environment in which to perform their work duties.

Unfortunately, that is often not the case. Many workers have experienced some form of harassment in their careers. According to a 2014 survey by Canadian Business, 43% of women surveyed experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace, a rate three times higher than the percentage of men surveyed.

The survey showed young men were the least likely to experience sexual harassment, while nearly half of women surveyed experienced some form of sexual harassment in their careers.

Isabella Dinn is a 18 year old from St. John’s, Newfoundland who has held a part-time job since she has been eligible. When she finished high school, she switched to full-time at a well-known, national coffee chain when she had a harrowing experience at work.

Dinn identifies as a lesbian - a fact which her coworkers at the time were well aware of - and a fact she believes played a factor in her experience. “I was just standing by the cash register when I felt an arm wrap around me, I look up and two of my male coworkers were standing there and I was stuck between the two of them.” said Dinn. “They then began asking me some very personal questions about my thoughts on my female coworkers.”

One of the men held his grip on her until she forcibly pulled herself away, shaken.

“After this encounter, I felt extremely anxious and panicked. I left the floor at work and went to the bathroom and tried to calm my breathing.” said Dinn. “I felt extremely uncomfortable and scared and I just wanted to go home and not see those two people any more.”

She said all she could do when she got home was cry about what had happened while trying to push away feelings of guilt crashing down on her as part of her felt it was her fault she was subjected to this type of behaviour, because of her sexuality.

“I was extremely mad and upset for a while over this encounter, especially because I knew this happened to me because of my sexuality” said Dinn. “And the fact that these two men find the idea of two girls together sexually exciting and they wanted to use me to get that excitement.”

Afterwards, Dinn dreaded the thought of ever having to work with those two people again, but gathered up the courage to go into work the next day and face them, only to be further taunted in the same manner til she had to leave once again.

Dinn continued to work at her job for another year after the
incidents, and things never changed, she was too afraid of nothing being done to address the incident with her supervisor.

“I always felt extremely uncomfortable around him, he continued to say inappropriate things to me which also made me extremely angry,” said Dinn, “Because somehow this person gets to keep their job while I felt extremely unsafe at my job everyday.”

Unfortunately, Dinn’s story echoes that of many other women who have dealt with sexual harassment in the workplace.

Speaking with a human resources manager for a well-known national company that works closely with major players in the oil business found that many larger business have harassment policies in place, though not purely sexual harassment, there are policies in place and steps put down for how to handle such situations.

This particular company has recently launched a “Speak Up” line - which is a confidential line available 24/7 to employees where they can report any grievances they have at work. That could involve anything from harassment to bribery and corruption in the workplace.

“That line is available to them 24/7 to call.” she said. “When they call the line they can chose to give their name or not, and then it goes to a HR advisor on the mainland and they usually work with our office to determine the severity of the allegations.”

“If there was a situation with harassment, we work with offshore so its remote sites, the employees when they’re orientated are always told they can reach out to me.” they said.

While each company may have different policies in place, it’s a businesses job to protect employees from all mistreatment at work.

“If there were facts that led us to believe that the claim was harming one of the employees then both of them would be taken from site.” she said. “At that point, they would be left on pay and an investigation would be started.”

Neither involved would be able to return to work until the investigation is completed.

But what is do you do if you experience sexual harassment at a job you haven’t even be hired for?

Now available in most bookstores or online.

Author Jeff R. Kelland’s “Grace Ungiven and the Innocents Left to Yearn: A Novel” (published by Xlibris) speaks clearly and effectively to the complex and disturbing conflict between the Catholic Church and the countless lives it has touched – from its leaders on down to its humblest adherents. It demonstrates how the Church’s structure, doctrine and liturgy made the epidemic of child sexual abuse by clergy possible, and explores the range of effects it has on followers. The book follows the story of a deeply troubled man, estranged and living in self-imposed exile for many years due to sexual abuse he experienced as a Catholic altar boy, who reappears to bring the abusing priest to justice. The effect of his efforts on all the persons involved provides insights into the all-encompassing, everyday influence of the church on the personal lives of followers, even before people consider the sex abuse scandal.
Samantha Mercer went for a job interview for a Summer student position on break from University when she was 16. Going in, she thought it would be just another position to give her some extra pocket money, but when she sat down for her interview she realized what she had gotten herself into.

“I got a call for an interview and went,” said Mercer, “When I got there it was a warehouse full of men. The only other female worked in the office.”

At that point, Mercer was a little nervous, being a young women working in a warehouse full of men was not how she imagined spending her Summer. After that, things got worse.

“The questions he asked me involved where my boyfriend lived and if I was hit on by someone in the warehouse would my boyfriend feel the need to come knock one of them out,” said Mercer, “Shocked by the question, I told him my boyfriend lived in Newfoundland so it would actually be impossible.”

Mercer was uncomfortable with the questions but desperate for summer work, and admits because of that she went along giving him the answers he thought he wanted.

“I kind of went along giving him the answers he needed so I didn’t seem like a threat or a distraction to the other men working there.” said Mercer.

After the interview, Mercer was received an email from the man who interviewed her, only to be shocked by what he had sent.

“The email said something along the lines of ‘great interview, but I’d like you to tell me a secret. And if you tell me a secret about you, I’ll tell you a secret about me.’ said Mercer.

Appalled by his request, Mercer sent him back an email to the effect of not looking to be in the position because of her looks. He then tried to explain that he only sent such a scathing email because he wanted to see her response to “know what kind of girl she was.”

Things like this happen to workers young and old everyday. It’s a scary thought going into the workforce when you could be subjected to this type of treatment on a daily basis. It’s important to know your rights as a worker and know what is and isn’t acceptable in a workplace.

If you or someone you know is experiencing harassment in the workplace, don’t be afraid to speak up to that person and let them know you won’t tolerate that.

“He then tried to explain that he only sent such a scathing email because he wanted to see her response to “know what kind of girl she was.”
type of behaviour. Most of the time if you address something face-to-face that person will realize their behaviour was inappropriate and stop.

If that doesn't work, take your complaint to human resources where they can launch an investigation into the behaviour in question. In today's world, this type of behaviour will not be tolerated in the workplace. You have a right to a safe and comfortable environment, and speaking up for yourself will ensure you get it.

The United Nations Women’s Watch program says sexual harassment can be anything from requests for sexual favors to unwelcome behaviour, the also offer a detailed list of actions that could be deemed sexual harassment.

So if you’ve experienced something that you’re not sure constitutes sexual harassment but has impacted your work environment and made you uncomfortable, discuss it with your supervisor and let them know your feelings. Nothing can change if it isn’t addressed.

If you were a victim of sexual harassment, know that you are not alone, and there are people who care and who will listen. A quick google search will bring up an endless fountain of support groups filled with people who can relate.

All workers, young and old, deserve a safe and respectable atmosphere in which to do their work, and if something has disturbed your atmosphere the best thing for you and your co-workers is to stand up and say no way.

The survey showed young men were the least likely to experience sexual harassment, while nearly half of women surveyed experienced some form of sexual harassment in their careers.