The Organizing Model of Grievance Handling

Stewards do more than process grievances. You play an important role in strengthening the union in your workplace. Here are ideas for making the grievance experience a positive one for your Local

1. What opportunities does this create to educate and involve the member?

2. What is the likely outcome of the grievance? Can mobilizing around the issue resolve the problem?

3. How can the grievor's involvement in the process be maximized?

4. What specifically can the grievor do to:
   - help solve the problem/contribute to a satisfactory outcome?
   - help build the union in the process?

5. Is this an issue requiring confidentiality and discretion? Why/why not?

6. Do we have the grievor's consent to involve others?

7. Who else might be affected by this issue? How do we know / how will we find out? In what ways are they affected or connected to this issue?

8. How important is it to these members?

9. How can they be involved?

10. Who else needs to be involved?

11. Has this been an issue in the past? Who was involved and what was the outcome?

12. What would be the specific goal(s) and/or objective(s)?

13. What actions could be considered? For what purpose?

14. What are the specific educational opportunities this issue creates? (e.g., one-to-one with the grievor, newsletter/bulletin, information session, steward contact system with membership, PSAC seminar/course, joint training with the employer)

15. How can this issue contribute to additional stewards/better trained stewards and what specific activities do we need to consider in order achieving this?

16. Who will do what by when?

17. What follow up is required?

18. How and when will we evaluate the results?

Applying the Organizing Model Scenario

Euphrasia is an administrative assistant working in a busy department. Month-end is always a hectic time as reports must be finalized and forwarded by deadline. It is Friday and Euphrasia and her colleague France are in the office alone. The month-end report is due by the end of the day but it is not finished at quitting time. France leaves, indicating she has to pick up her son from childcare. Euphrasia phones and e-mails her supervisor for approval to work overtime, but gets no response. She decides to stay late to finish the report and puts in an overtime claim the Monday following. The claim is denied because Euphrasia did not have prior approval to work the overtime. She contacts you to file a grievance.

As Steward for the area, you have heard talk from others about how stressed staff are working in this department. You suspect some staff are working overtime without pay in order to finish up work on time. On two occasions in past, staff have taken time off for stress-related illness.