

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE RETURN-TO-WORK PROCESS



Working Through It

The return-to-work process can be stressful as you re-adjust to work routine, social interaction at work, and doing the tasks of your job. You may notice that you need more support from your doctor, therapist, family and friends during your return to work. Here are some suggestions on how you and others at work can help during your return to work.

## Some things you may do:

- Take control and responsibility for your well-being. You may also need to pay closer attention to self care.
- Use coping strategies that help you feel well and stay well at work.
- Collaborate with your manager and others involved in the return-to-work planning.
- Think of the return-to-work process as another step in your recovery.
- Practice strategies and ways of interacting that help you to be successful at your job. <http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/accommodations>.
- Prepare for how you would like to answer questions from co-workers about why you were off work.

## Some things a manager may do:

- Keep you connected to what is going on at work by contacting you when you are off.
- Meet with you before or during your return to work to discuss how to support your success.
- Learn enough about your needs to support you and understand what will enhance your safe and successful return to work.
- Discuss how you would like information about you to be shared with co-workers, especially about the changes in work that will affect them as you return to work. When co-workers have adequate information, they can then be supportive during your return to work.
- Respect your wishes about what information is kept private and what is shared with others.
- Discuss and provide any training, information or resources that you may need to get back up to speed.

## Some things a union representative may do:

- Help you to understand the options available to you in the return-to-work process.
- Participate in the development of a return-to-work plan that will allow you to be successful.

- Learn enough about your physical or emotional needs to support you and understand what will enhance your safe and successful return to work.
- Educate members on the benefits and responsibilities associated with accommodating workers so that they can successfully return to work.
- Respect your wishes about what information is kept private and what is shared with others.
- Encourage an atmosphere of respect and support among workers

## Some things an occupational health physician or nurse may do:

- Help develop the return-to-work plan in a way that supports your recovery and ongoing well-being at work.
- Provide you with information about treatment options and community resources.
- In some workplaces, they will review medical reports, ask questions to help move the process along, address health or safety concerns, and ensure that necessary procedures are completed.
- Provide ongoing health education to all employees.
- Provide a safe place when you are not well.
- Keep all personal medical information confidential.

## Some things a human resources professional may do:

- Participate in the development of the return-to-work plan.
- Provide information about extended health benefits, Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) services, disability benefits, sick days, and other information about benefits.
- Provide information about workplace policies or procedures including policies for return-to-work and accommodation.
- Help to address issues of workplace conflict or performance concerns.
- Initiate training and education programs to build a psychologically healthy workplace.

## Some things the claim examiner from the benefit provider may do:

- Stay in contact with you throughout the return-to-work period to exchange necessary information about the claim process and to monitor your progress towards recovery.
- Arrange for medical assessments with a specialist to get treatment recommendations, if appropriate.
- Maintain contact with your employer about the expected return to work timeline.

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- Clarify for your employer any limitations or restrictions that should be accommodated or understood.
- Make a referral to a vocational rehabilitation consultant who can assist with accessing effective treatment and/or the return-to-work planning where appropriate.

### Some things a rehabilitation consultant may do:

- Facilitate a successful recovery and return-to-work process.
- Conduct home visits to gather information and discuss return-to-work planning.
- Recommend additional treatment services.
- Assist with communication among you, your workplace, and your claim examiner and health care providers.
- Help to create the return-to-work plan through discussion with you and your manager. Communicate with your medical treatment providers in developing your return-to-work plan.

- Provide information and support to you and your employer throughout the return-to-work process.
- Monitor your progress at work. Offer help and support to address issues as necessary.

### Some things your family doctor may do:

- Provide effective treatment, and make appropriate referrals to other treatment providers or programs.
- Complete the medical documentation necessary for your claim.
- Provide appropriate information about your abilities and/or limitations as relevant to your work.
- Continue to monitor your condition throughout the return-to-work and beyond.

