

DVD Training Material

- Ch 3 – Returning to Work

Psychological Injury



Overview

Injuries at work are not always physical. A situation may arise that causes a psychological injury. The process to assist an employee back to the school following this type of injury remains the same whether it's reduced hours on their regular job or alternative duties.

This fact sheet aims to help you understand why return to work is so important, what you can do to help and where you can get more information.

A work-related psychological injury can have a big impact on what your employee is able to do. They may not be able to do what they did previously, either at work or at home. Return to work is a team effort.

Return to Work

Things You Should Know About Return To Work

- The relationship between the school leader and an injured employee can have a significant impact on the speed and sustainability of return to work outcomes. You can make a big difference!
- Your injured employees return to work is a team effort. It involves you, your schools Return to Work Coordinator and Agent, your injured employee, their doctor and an occupational rehabilitation provider (if one is involved). Without your support, it is harder for all those involved to do their part
- Your schools return to work obligations start even before an injured employees claim has been accepted by your schools Agent
- Your employer has legal obligations under the Victorian Workers compensation legislation. It's the role of the Return to Work Coordinator to assist them to meet these obligations. Employers who breach their return to work obligations risk prosecution and significant financial penalties
- Your employee doesn't need to be 100% recovered to return to work. Returning to work is actually an important part of their recovery
- Whether it's on reduced hours in their regular job or on modified or alternative duties, getting your employee back to work is an important part of their rehabilitation while they are recovering.

By playing an active role in the return to work process you can retain the skills and knowledge of injured employee and help build morale in the workplace by showing all employees that the injured employee is valued.

What You Can Do To Help

There are five key steps for employers to undertake to help an injured employee return to work.

1. Obtain relevant medical information about your employees work restrictions and capacity for work to help you plan your employees return to work?
2. Consider whether reasonable workplace supports, aids or modifications are necessary to assist in your employees return to work?

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3. Assess and propose options for suitable alternative duties that is consistent with the employees capacity to the employee and the employees treating health practitioner?
 4. Provide your employee with clear, accurate and current details about their return to work arrangements. Seek to reach agreement on the return to work arrangements wherever possible
 5. Revise and monitor your employee's progress and the return to work arrangements. Revise planning as required such as when a employees capacity changes or new information is received.

Supporting Your Employee

- From the moment you become aware of the employees injury or illness, support your employee. Be respectful and non-judgmental in conversations with the employee and in conversations about them to others involved in their return to work. The first conversations with the employee following an injury/illness often 'set the scene' for how positive the employee will feel about their injury, you, their employer and return to work
- Based on advice from your Return to Work Coordinator, keep in regular contact with your injured employee and make sure they still feel part of the team. If appropriate, invite them to attend meetings, training, send them work newsletters or updates to help them feel connected while they are recovering
- When talking with the employee show genuine interest, talk about their recovery to see how they are going, offer your assistance and don't put unnecessary pressure on them to get back to work
- When talking with the employee focus on what the employee can do, rather than what they can't. Be respectful and non-judgmental when speaking both with and about them.

Where to get more information

- Catholic Education Melbourne – (03) 9267 0431
- Catholic Education Office Ballarat – (03) 5337 7135
- Catholic Education Office Sale – (03) 5622 6600
- Catholic Education Sandhurst – (03) 5443 2377
- WorkSafe Advisory Service – Tel (03) 9641 1444 or Free call 1800 136 086 **OR**
- Email info@worksafe.vic.gov.au