

Working Through It



Working Through It: A Leader's Guide



mooddisorders.on.ca



mentalhealthworks.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

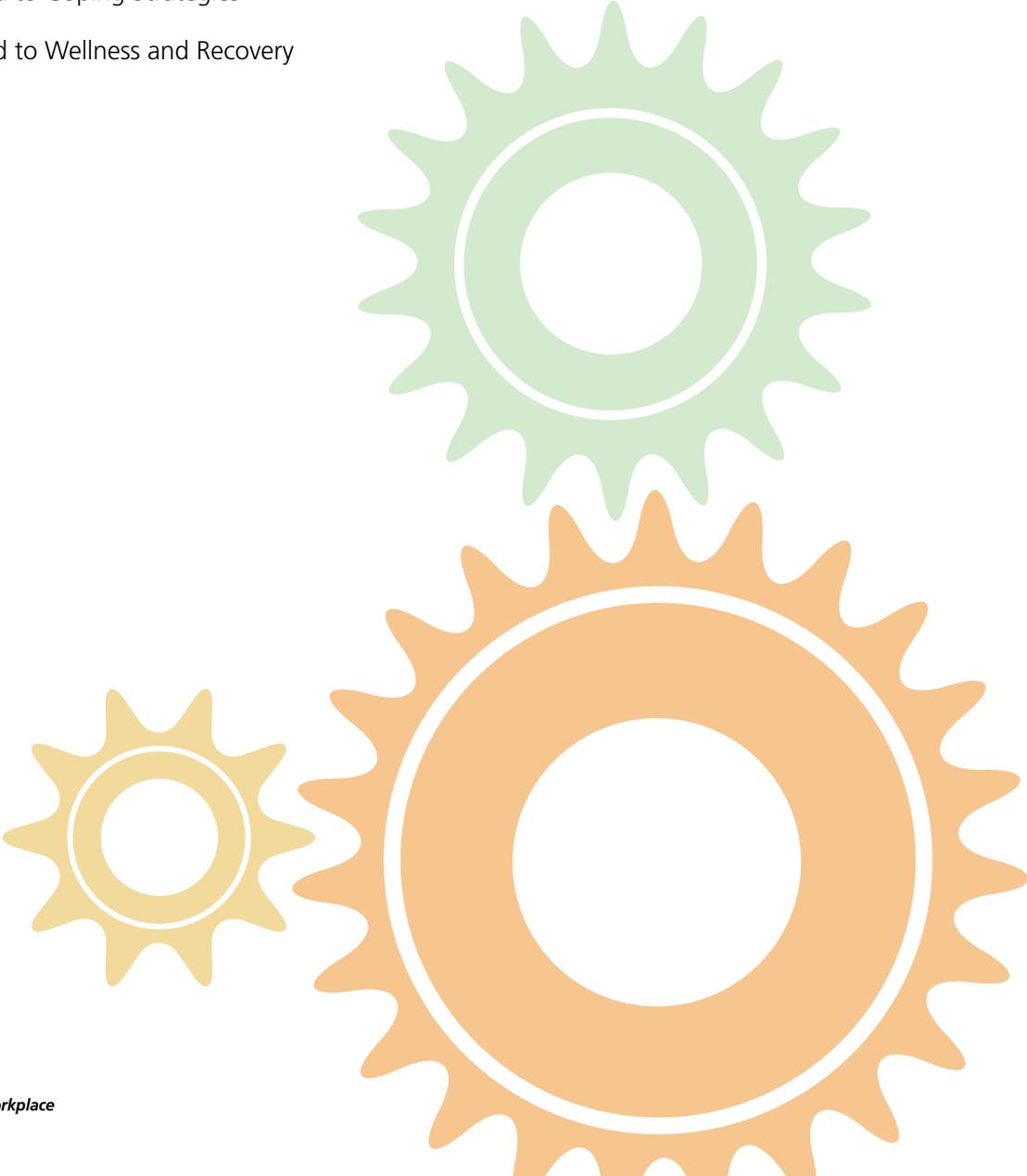
REFERRING INDIVIDUALS TO WORKING THROUGH IT 2

AWARENESS EDUCATION FOR LEADERS 3

SUBSCRIPTION TO WEEKLY EMAILS..... 4

APPENDIX OF VIDEOS AND OTHER RESOURCES..... 5-53

- Resources Related to Mental Health Awareness
- Resources Related to Workplace Issues
- Resources Related to Coping Strategies
- Resources Related to Wellness and Recovery



WORKING THROUGH IT: A LEADER'S GUIDE



Working Through It can be used in workplaces in a number of ways:

- As a private **resource for individuals** who may be struggling with health, personal, financial or workplace issues, and are looking for practical strategies and inspirational stories to help them cope. In this section you can learn how to share this opportunity with those who may benefit.
- To provide **awareness education** for supervisors, managers, union stewards or other leaders whose responsibilities include supporting or managing employees who may have mental health issues.
- As a cost-effective and time-efficient workplace awareness campaign. **Subscribe to an email service** that sends you a five-minute educational opportunity each week. These will include links to one of the short video clips or to a document that helps us understand approaches to mental wellness at work.

Refer to the Appendix (pages 5-53), which helps you identify the **wealth of information** that is contained within *Working Through It*. You will find a description of each of the videos, as well as copies of each of the printable resources. This allows you to zero in on the particular need you wish to meet. Some of the topics include:

- The stress response
- Taking charge of our well-being
- Ideas for resolving conflict at work
- Talking to co-workers
- Roles and responsibilities in the return-to-work process
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Claiming group disability benefits

REFERRING INDIVIDUALS TO WORKING THROUGH IT

When someone is struggling with a mental health issue, you may be concerned about invading privacy or being seen as harassing. *Working Through It* provides practical coping strategies, through videos and related resources, that can be used by individuals at work, off work and when returning to work. Review this resource yourself to make it easier to recommend it to others.

Every situation is unique depending upon your history with the individual, the nature of your relationship, and current circumstances. Here are a few tactful ways of referring individuals to *Working Through It* that you may want to adapt for your own use.

General

"I was just reviewing the Working Through It resource. Have you heard of it? It is for those who may be struggling with work or other issues, and it seems to have some good information. I am not sure if any of it would be of value to you right now, but I am happy to send you the link."

Mental health issues

"Sometimes things can seem overwhelming. There is a resource that includes videos of people who have gone through tough times at work talking about how they coped, and what they did to get back to a place of wellness. I can send you the link to Working Through It if you want to see if any of their strategies might be useful for you."

Disability leave

"It can be hard to navigate the disability system, especially when you are not feeling well. I heard about a resource called Working Through It where someone from the insurance industry talks about how to get help filling out the paperwork, how to respond to the letters and how to make things happen more smoothly. Do you want me to send you the link?"

Returning to Work

"Before you return to work, you may want to hear about how some other people found a way to return successfully that was healthy for them. Working Through It includes their stories, and speaks about creating a plan that works for you, talking to co-workers, helping your supervisor help you and coping with any workplace stressors. Would you like me to send you the link?"

Co-worker issues

"It can be tough to work through these types of issues and the impact on workplace relationships. There is a resource called Working Through It that shares approaches to dealing with gossip, conflict and other issues in the workplace. I can send you the link if you want to have a look."

Job Insecurity

"I remember hearing people in one of the videos on Working Through It talk about how they dealt with the worry of losing their jobs. They share ideas for dealing with debt issues or replacing income when unemployed. It is really practical. Do you want me to send you the link?"

AWARENESS EDUCATION FOR LEADERS USING WORKING THROUGH IT

What follows is an outline of a session you can facilitate for your leaders, including supervisors, managers, union representatives and executives. This will better prepare them to support employees with mental health issues.

Suggested three-hour awareness session for leaders

While *Working Through It* is available online, if you do not have a good Internet connection you may wish to request a copy that will be mailed to you on a USB device. Send us your request, along with your mailing address, by visiting Contact Us at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com.

The following framework can be modified to meet your timing needs and group size.

10 minutes	<p>Introduction of the topic:</p> <p>Explain why this is an issue – turnover, absenteeism, disability, conflict, performance problems, human rights complaints, duty to accommodate, grievances, etc.</p> <p>Share senior management’s support for the strategy of addressing mental health issues.</p> <p>Be explicit that this is part of a wider strategy that includes education, training, changes in processes and procedures, development of resources and measurement of effectiveness.</p> <p>Discuss how participants will be recognized for their efforts to support positive workplace mental health and why this matters to them.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Identification of issues:</p> <p>Hold an open discussion about what supervisors see that may indicate an employee has a mental health concern. You are looking for examples of behaviours rather than symptoms.</p> <p>Ask what makes these behaviours challenging for leaders.</p> <p>Record the answers to use in a follow-up meeting to brainstorm solutions.</p>
60 minutes	<p>Viewing the first half of the video:</p> <p>Before viewing, ask participants to write down the following discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information learned about mental illness (“aha” moments or “I did not know that!”) • Questions that arose • One “test the team” question to ask the group <p>They will be engaging in discussion about these points half way through watching the video.</p> <p>If you are viewing online, go to www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/wti/WatchAllPage.aspx. If you are viewing from a DVD or USB device, click on “Play All”.</p> <p>Pause at the end of Dr. Anthony Levitt talking about “Concerns with Medication” and before Gord Conley talks about “My Experience in a Treatment Centre” (approximately 60 minutes).</p>
15 minutes	Facilitate discussion about the three points.
10 minutes	BREAK
50 minutes	Resume the video and ask participants to continue thinking about the discussion points.
20 minutes	Facilitate discussion from the second half of the video using the discussion points.
5 minutes Wrap up	<p>Ask participants what they will do differently as a result of what they have learned.</p> <p>Consider assigning the first episode on <i>Managing Mental Health Matters</i> (www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/mmhm) as a next step in leader education.</p> <p>To learn more about facilitating <i>Managing Mental Health Matters</i>, see the <i>Managing Mental Health Matters</i> Leader’s Guide available at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/mmhm/pdf/MMHM_Leader_Guide.pdf.</p>

SUBSCRIPTION TO WEEKLY EMAILS

If you are a manager or team leader, you are likely already thinking about how you can help support a mentally healthy workplace within your team. How about having access to a sustainable, no-cost approach that is available to you every week?

If you are someone who is struggling with mental health issues in the workplace, you are also invited to subscribe and have this information delivered to your inbox each week. You may also want to review other resources available in the Employees section at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com.

Subscribe now to the *Working Through It* weekly email service that will include links to a short video clip or a resource document that you can share with employees to inform and inspire them about taking charge of their mental health issues at work, off work and when returning to work.

The purpose of this service is to open dialogue, increase understanding and remove some of the stigma that surrounds mental health issues. Viewing the videos and resources will take, on average, less than five minutes of an employee's time each week. They are not intended to be sent to specific individuals, but rather to your entire team including, if possible, any team members who are away from work on leave.

To make this even more effective, consider what's being discussed in each week's email and use it as an opportunity to open dialogue within your team.

The timing to get started using this resource is ideal. The National Standard of Canada on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace encourages employers and organizations to increase awareness about mental health and mental illness in the workplace.

Here is an example of a weekly email:

EMAIL #1: INTRODUCTION

Subject: Working Through It: Mental Health Awareness at Work

It's reasonable to assume that, on occasion, we may find ourselves overwhelmed, stressed or challenged by pressures that affect us at work. There is a resource called *Working Through It* that I'd like to share with you that includes videos of people who went through tough times at work. They share their coping strategies and what they did to get back to a place of wellness. These emails can help all of us be more aware of our mental health at work, and how we can reach out to those who may be struggling.

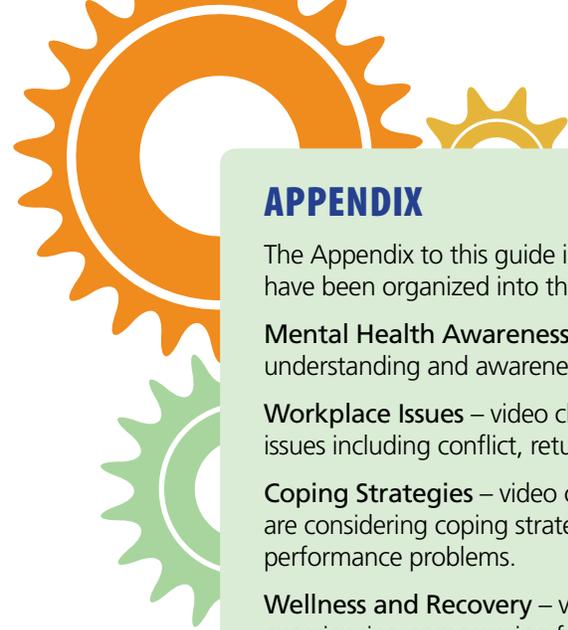
Please watch for the weekly emails I'll send you under the subject line: Working Through It – Mental Health Awareness at Work.

I'd really appreciate it if you'd put aside a few minutes of your workday to watch the short videos or review the resources. And please feel free to come and see me if you have ideas or would like to talk more about the approaches provided.

This week's video clip tells you a bit about this resource. See the video entitled Introduction. *(There would be a link directly to the first video entitled Introduction.)*

[YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURE]

Note that you can amend the email as you see fit before sending it out, or simply forward it as is. This is an easy way to increase awareness about workplace mental health and it can be an ongoing, cost and time-efficient strategy.



APPENDIX

The Appendix to this guide includes descriptions of all videos and other printable resources, which have been organized into the following categories:

Mental Health Awareness – video clips or printable resources that could be used to help raise understanding and awareness of mental health and mental illness in the workplace.

Workplace Issues – video clips and printable resources that could be used to help resolve workplace issues including conflict, return to work, productivity, and workplace plans.

Coping Strategies – video clips or printable resources that are particularly relevant to those who are considering coping strategies for stressors including emotional distress, financial pressures or performance problems.

Wellness and Recovery – video clips or printable resources that are particularly relevant to those experiencing or recovering from mental illness and those who may assist with disability management.

Within each category in the Appendix, the titles of the videos are indicated in bold type, and the relevant printable resources are indicated below each video. Both types of resources are always available at no cost from the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace website at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com. A complete and up-to-date copy of this Leader's Guide is also available on the website.

Resources Related to Mental Health Awareness

What is happening? Why is it such a struggle?	10
Printable Resources:	
What are you experiencing	28
Stressors and other triggers	51
Well-being checklist.....	42
Is your reaction out of balance?.....	48
The stress response.....	41
Never Give Up	10
Our Insights	11
It was difficult to accept I needed help	12
Printable Resources:	
Is your reaction out of balance?	48
The stress response.....	41
Potentially harmful coping strategies	49
Creating your own workplace plan	31-32
Talking to co-workers	52
Getting help at work	46
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Ideas for resolving conflict at work	47
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Helping others help you at work.....	34

Recognizing symptoms	12
Printable Resources:	
Is your reaction out of balance?.....	48
The stress response.....	41
Potentially harmful coping strategies	49
Creating your own workplace plan	31-32
Talking to co-workers	52
Getting help at work	46
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Ideas for resolving conflict at work	47
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Helping others help you at work.....	34
 Perceptions of mood disorders	 13
Printable Resources:	
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
 Resources Related to Workplace Issues	
 Who can help me at work?	 13
Printable Resources:	
Getting help at work	46
Helping others help you at work.....	34
 What should I say?	 14
Printable Resources:	
Things to consider before disclosing	53
Talking to co-workers	52
 If I continue to struggle, should I stay at work?	 14
Printable Resources:	
Creating your own workplace plan	31-32
Getting help at work	46
Claiming group disability benefits	29-30
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Self-care strategies	50
 What happens when I go back to work?	 15
Printable Resources:	
Creating your own workplace plan	31-32
Things to consider before disclosing	53
Talking to co-workers	52
Getting help at work	46
Roles and responsibilities in the return-to-work process	37-38
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Helping others help you at work.....	34

Help your supervisor support you	15
Printable Resources:	
Is your reaction out of balance?.....	48
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Creating your own workplace plan.....	31-32
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Ideas for resolving conflict at work.....	47
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Resources at work	16
Printable Resources:	
Getting help at work.....	46
Helping others help you at work.....	34
Resources Related to Coping Strategies	
What can I do to feel better?	16
Printable Resources:	
The stress response.....	41
Potentially harmful coping strategies.....	49
Getting help at work.....	46
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Helping others help you at work.....	34
Self-care strategies.....	50
How can I cope better at work?	17
Printable Resources:	
Is your reaction out of balance?.....	48
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Creating your own workplace plan.....	31-32
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Ideas for resolving conflict at work.....	47
Managing emotions at work.....	36
If I continue to struggle, what should I do?	17
Printable Resources:	
Is your reaction out of balance?.....	48
The stress response.....	41
Potentially harmful coping strategies.....	49
Creating your own workplace plan.....	31-32
Talking to co-workers.....	52
Getting help at work.....	46
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Ideas for resolving conflict at work.....	47
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Helping others help you at work.....	34
How can I manage financially?	18
Printable Resources:	
Getting help at work.....	46
Claiming group disability benefits.....	29-30
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Income sources if you are unable to work.....	35
Debt management.....	33

How can I begin to feel better?	18
Printable Resources:	
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
How do I stay well?	19
Printable Resources:	
The stress response.....	41
Potentially harmful coping strategies	49
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
What if things go really wrong?	19
Printable Resources:	
Crisis planning.....	44-45
Be aware of triggers	20
Printable Resources:	
The stress response.....	41
Potentially harmful coping strategies	49
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
Stay in the present	20
Printable Resources:	
The stress response.....	41
Potentially harmful coping strategies	49
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
Getting the paperwork done	21
Printable Resources:	
Getting help at work	46
Claiming group disability benefits	29-30
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Income sources if you are unable to work	35
Debt management	33
Navigating the disability supports system	21
Printable Resources:	
Getting help at work	46
Claiming group disability benefits	29-30
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Income sources if you are unable to work	35
Debt management	33

Resources Related to Wellness and Recovery

Don't go it alone	22
Printable Resources:	
Creating your own workplace plan	31-32
Getting help at work	46
Claiming group disability benefits	29-30
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Self-care strategies	50
Help your doctor to help you	22
Printable Resources:	
Getting help at work	46
Claiming group disability benefits	29-30
Concern about losing your job.....	43
Income sources if you are unable to work	35
Debt management	33
Supports that may be available	23
Printable Resources:	
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
Finding the right treatment	24
Printable Resources:	
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
Concerns with medications	25
Printable Resources:	
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
About cognitive behavioural therapy	26
Printable Resources:	
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50
My experience in a treatment centre	27
Printable Resources:	
Taking charge of our well-being.....	40
Managing emotions at work.....	36
Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work.....	39
Self-care strategies	50

**What is happening?
Why is it such a struggle?**

OTHER RESOURCES

- What are you experiencing?
- Stressors and other triggers
- Well-being checklist
- Is your reaction out of balance?
- The stress response

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Self-screening tools](#)

[Gossip, rumours and speculation](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK STOP NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS


What is happening? Why is it a struggle?
playing

What is happening? Why is it such a struggle?

Awareness *These stories take a look at the challenges and struggles others have faced in understanding and accepting their need for help.*

Never Give Up

LINKS

<http://www.mooddisorders.on.ca>

<http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca>



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK STOP NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS


Never Give Up
playing

Never Give Up

Awareness *These moving stories reinforce that while mental health can be an ongoing endeavor that takes persistence, there can be success.*

Our Insights

[LINKS](#)

[Credits](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

← BACK
STOP
NEXT →

VIDEOS

 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Bonnie Pedota play video ></p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Melonie Long play video ></p>
 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Marvin Burr play video ></p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Gord Conley play video ></p>
 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Sean Millier play video ></p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Hazel Gabriel play video ></p>
 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Donna Hardaker play video ></p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Constantin Nastic play video ></p>
 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Rosie Pardhan play video ></p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">Journey: Phillipia Wright play video ></p>

Our Insights

Awareness Create understanding and awareness by sharing these stories of people who have experienced and worked through mental illness.

Bonnie is a teacher who experienced panic attacks.

Marvin is a soldier who suffered post-traumatic stress disorder.

Sean is an entrepreneur who experienced serious clinical depression.

Donna is a mental health professional with clinical depression.

Rosie is a professional woman who was diagnosed with cancer and subsequently experienced clinical depression.

Melonie is an office worker who experienced bipolar disorder and cutting, and was suicidal.

Gord is a lawyer with clinical depression.

Hazel attributed her symptoms to personal issues and denied it was depression.

Constantin suffered multiple traumas and used substances to cope.

Phillipia experienced post partum depression and was too embarrassed to seek help.

If I continue to struggle, what should I do?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Is your reaction out of balance?
- The stress response
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Creating your own workplace plan
- Talking to co-workers
- Getting help at work
- Concern about losing your job
- Taking charge of our well-being
- Ideas for resolving conflict at work
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Helping others help you at work



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

← BACK
STOP
NEXT →

VIDEOS

If I continue to struggle, what should I do?

Participants
play video

It was difficult to accept I needed help

Participants
playing

Recognizing symptoms

Dr. Lemire
play video

It was difficult to accept I needed help

Awareness Denial, shame and stigma can make it difficult to admit we're having difficulties or to reach out for help. These individuals share the value of getting the help they needed.

If I continue to struggle, what should I do?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Is your reaction out of balance?
- The stress response
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Creating your own workplace plan
- Talking to co-workers
- Getting help at work
- Concern about losing your job
- Taking charge of our well-being
- Ideas for resolving conflict at work
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Helping others help you at work



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

← BACK
STOP
NEXT →

VIDEOS

If I continue to struggle, what should I do?

Participants
play video

It was difficult to accept I needed help

Participants
play video

Recognizing symptoms

Dr. Lemire
playing

Recognizing symptoms

Awareness Dr. Francine Lemire shares some of the symptoms that can help us recognize when someone may be experiencing a mental health issue.

How can I begin to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Taking charge of our well-being](#)
- [Managing emotions at work](#)
- [Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work](#)
- [Self-care strategies](#)

LINKS

- [Getting effective help and treatment](#)
- [Treatment options](#)
- [Medication and treatment cost support](#)
- [Finding resources in your area](#)
- [Talking about medication](#)
- [Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)
- [Going off medications](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS

How can I begin to feel better?
play video >

Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
play video >

Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
playing

Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >

Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >

About cognitive behavioural therapy
Participants
play video >

My experience in a treatment centre
Participants
play video >

Perceptions of mood disorders

Awareness *Dr. Anthony Levitt, a leader in treating mental illness, shares that with the right support and treatment, people suffering from mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety disorders, can and do get better.*

Who can help me at work?

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Getting help at work](#)
- [Helping others help you at work](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS

Who can help me at work?
playing

Resources at work
Susan Jakobson
play video >

Who can help me at work?

Workplace Issues *These stories look at the benefits of accessing support at work including human resources and occupational health professionals, Employee Assistance Programs, and community resources.*

What should I say?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Things to consider before disclosing
- Talking to co-workers

LINKS

[Gossip, rumours and speculation](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
▶ NEXT

VIDEOS



What should I say?

playing

What should I say?

Workplace Issues Finding the words to share that you are having difficulties at work can be challenging. Whether to disclose a mental illness is a personal choice. These individuals discuss what they did or did not choose to say at work about their mental health.

If I continue to struggle, should I stay at work?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Creating your own workplace plan
- Getting help at work
- Claiming group disability benefits
- Concern about losing your job
- Self-care strategies



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
▶ NEXT

VIDEOS



If I continue to struggle, should I stay at work?

playing



Don't go it alone

Mandi Luis
play video ▶

If I continue to struggle, should I stay at work?

Workplace Issues These stories look at how difficult it is to consider appropriate options when mental illness is a factor, as well as strategies that can be used to remain productive through periods of being unwell.

What happens when I go back to work?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Creating your own workplace plan
- Things to consider before disclosing
- Talking to co-workers
- Getting help at work
- Roles and responsibilities in the return-to-work process
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Helping others help you at work

LINKS

[Gossip, rumours and speculation](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS



What happens when I go back to work?
playing



Help your supervisor support you
Mary Ann Baynton
play video >

What happens when I go back to work?

Workplace Issues *There are strategies and accommodations that can go a long way to helping employees successfully reconnect to their work and workplaces after an absence due to a mental health issue.*

How can I cope better at work?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Is your reaction out of balance?
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Creating your own workplace plan
- Concern about losing your job
- Ideas for resolving conflict at work
- Managing emotions at work

LINKS

[Understanding needs at work](#)

[Conversations that consider needs](#)

[Gossip, rumours and speculation](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS



How can I cope better at work?
play video >



Help your supervisor support you
Mary Ann Baynton
playing

Help your supervisor support you

Workplace Issues *Mary Ann Baynton, Program Director for the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, shares strategies for those experiencing mental health issues or other difficulties at work. Learn how to “coach up” so that your supervisor or others can better understand how to be supportive at work.*

Who can help me at work?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Getting help at work
- Helping others help you at work



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS

Who can help me at work
play video

Resources at work
Susan Jakobson
playing

Help your supervisor support you
Mary Ann Baynton
play video

Resources at work

Workplace Issues Susan Jakobson, Director Health, Safety and Wellness, discusses who may be able to provide support to those experiencing difficulties at work.

What can I do to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- The stress response
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Getting help at work
- Concern about losing your job
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Helping others help you at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

- [Treatment options](#)
- [Finding resources in your area](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS

What can I do to feel better?
playing

What can I do to feel better?

Coping Strategies These individuals share practical strategies they've used to feel better and reclaim their well-being both at work and outside of work.

How can I cope better at work?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Is your reaction out of balance?
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Creating your own workplace plan
- Concern about losing your job
- Ideas for resolving conflict at work
- Managing emotions at work

LINKS

[Understanding needs at work](#)

[Conversations that consider needs](#)

[Gossip, rumours and speculation](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS



How can I cope better at work?
playing



Help your supervisor support you
Mary Ann Baynton
play video >

How can I cope better at work?

Coping Strategies *These individuals share strategies and steps they have taken to cope with situations at work during a time of emotional distress, including concerns with their own productivity and performance.*

If I continue to struggle, what should I do?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Is your reaction out of balance?
- The stress response
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Creating your own workplace plan
- Talking to co-workers
- Getting help at work
- Concern about losing your job
- Taking charge of our well-being
- Ideas for resolving conflict at work
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Helping others help you at work



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS



If I continue to struggle, what should I do?
playing



It was difficult to accept I needed help
Participants
play video >



Recognizing symptoms
Dr. Lemire
play video >

If I continue to struggle, what should I do?

Coping Strategies *People should not have to go through this alone. These stories underline the importance and benefits of reaching out for help.*

How can I manage financially?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Getting help at work
- Claiming group disability benefits
- Concern about losing your job
- Income sources if you are unable to work
- Debt management

LINKS

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

⏪ BACK
⏹ STOP
NEXT ⏩

VIDEOS



How can I manage financially?
playing



Help your doctor help you
Dr. Lemire
play video >

How can I manage financially?

Coping Strategies Worrying about financial considerations can be an enormous weight on individuals who are also dealing with mental health issues. These stories share some of the strategies and resources that can help reduce these stressors.

How can I begin to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Taking charge of our well-being
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Treatment options](#)

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)

[Finding resources in your area](#)

[Talking about medication](#)

[Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)

[Going off medications](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

⏪ BACK
⏹ STOP
NEXT ⏩

VIDEOS



How can I begin to feel better?
playing



Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
play video >



Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



About cognitive behavioural therapy
Participants
play video >



My experience in a treatment centre
Participants
play video >

How can I begin to feel better?

Coping Strategies These stories look at the different approaches that can be used to reclaim mental health and wellness.

How do I stay well?

OTHER RESOURCES

- The stress response
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Taking charge of your well-being
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Self-screening tools](#)

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)

[Finding resources in your area](#)

[Talking about medication](#)

[Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)

[Going off medications](#)



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS



How do I stay well?
playing



Be aware of triggers
Participants
play video >



Stay in the present
Participants
play video >

How do I stay well?

Coping Strategies *There are a variety of strategies that can be used to promote and protect mental health and overall wellness that translate into benefits for work and life.*

What if things go really wrong?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Crisis planning



Rollover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS



What if things go really wrong?
playing



Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
play video >



Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >

What if things go really wrong?

Coping Strategies *It's helpful if there's a plan in place to address a recurrence of mental health issues. These stories provide some of the logistics and benefits of having a crisis plan, peer support, community support and support at work.*

How do I stay well?

OTHER RESOURCES

- The stress response
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Taking charge of your well-being
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Self-screening tools](#)

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)

[Finding resources in your area](#)

[Talking about medication](#)

[Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)

[Going off medications](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
▶ NEXT

VIDEOS

How do I stay well?
Participants
▶ play video

Be aware of triggers
Participants
▶ play video

Stay in the present
Participants
▶ play video

Be aware of triggers

Coping Strategies *The ability to recognize and manage our emotional triggers is an important skill for reducing stress and maintaining wellness.*

How do I stay well?

OTHER RESOURCES

- The stress response
- Potentially harmful coping strategies
- Taking charge of your well-being
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Self-screening tools](#)

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)

[Finding resources in your area](#)

[Talking about medication](#)

[Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)

[Going off medications](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
▶ NEXT

VIDEOS

How do I stay well?
Participants
▶ play video

Be aware of triggers
Participants
▶ play video

Stay in the present
Participants
▶ play video

Stay in the present

Coping Strategies *Focusing on past problems or worrying about the future tends to exacerbate stress. Staying in the present is a coping strategy others have used to help improve overall wellness.*

How can I manage financially?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Getting help at work
- Claiming group disability benefits
- Concern about losing your job
- Income sources if you are unable to work
- Debt management

LINKS

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS



How can I manage financially?
play video >



Help your doctor help you
Dr. Lemire
play video >



Getting the paperwork done
Participants
playing



Navigating the disability supports
system
Ann Morgan
play video >

Getting the paperwork done

Coping Strategies *These individuals share how they worked through the required processes and managed stress related to financial concerns during leave for a mental health disability.*

How can I manage financially?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Getting help at work
- Claiming group disability benefits
- Concern about losing your job
- Income sources if you are unable to work
- Debt management

LINKS

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS



How can I manage financially?
play video >



Help your doctor help you
Dr. Lemire
play video >



Getting the paperwork done
Participants
play video >



Navigating the disability supports
system
Ann Morgan
playing

Navigating the disability supports system

Coping Strategies *A rehabilitation consultant provides clarification and helpful advice about some of the standard processes and questions that might be encountered during a disability claim.*

If I continue to struggle, should I stay at work?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Creating your own workplace plan
- Getting help at work
- Claiming group disability benefits
- Concern about losing your job
- Self-care strategies



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

⏪ BACK
⏸ STOP
▶▶ NEXT

VIDEOS



If I continue to struggle, should I stay at work?
[play video >](#)



Don't go it alone
Mandi Luis
[playing](#)

Don't go it alone

Wellness and Recovery Peer support is gaining recognition as a valuable approach for people experiencing mental health-related problems, and reaffirms that no one should have to go through it alone.

How can I manage financially?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Getting help at work
- Claiming group disability benefits
- Concern about losing your job
- Income sources if you are unable to work
- Debt management

LINKS

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

⏪ BACK
⏸ STOP
▶▶ NEXT

VIDEOS



How can I manage financially?
[play video >](#)



Help your doctor help you
Dr. Lemire
[playing](#)



Getting the paperwork done
Participants
[play video >](#)



Navigating the disability supports system
Ann Morgan
[play video >](#)

Help the doctor to help you

Wellness and Recovery This video provides a doctor's perspective on the challenges that those dealing with a mental health problem might face, and some tips and strategies for making things easier.

How can I begin to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Taking charge of our well-being](#)
- [Managing emotions at work](#)
- [Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work](#)
- [Self-care strategies](#)

LINKS

- [Getting effective help and treatment](#)
- [Treatment options](#)
- [Medication and treatment cost support](#)
- [Finding resources in your area](#)
- [Talking about medication](#)
- [Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)
- [Going off medications](#)



Rotover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK STOP NEXT ▶

VIDEOS



How can I begin to feel better?
[play video >](#)



Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
[playing](#)



Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



About cognitive behavioural therapy
Participants
[play video >](#)



My experience in a treatment centre
Participants
[play video >](#)

Supports that may be available

Wellness and Recovery People often aren't aware of the wide spectrum of supports that are available to help them through work-related, financial, family, social and other issues that can impact our mental health.

How can I begin to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Taking charge of our well-being](#)
- [Managing emotions at work](#)
- [Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work](#)
- [Self-care strategies](#)

LINKS

- [Getting effective help and treatment](#)
- [Treatment options](#)
- [Medication and treatment cost support](#)
- [Finding resources in your area](#)
- [Talking about medication](#)
- [Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)
- [Going off medications](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS



How can I begin to feel better?
[play video >](#)



Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
[play video >](#)



Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[playing](#)



Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



About cognitive behavioural therapy
Participants
[play video >](#)



My experience in a treatment centre
Participants
[play video >](#)

Finding the right treatment

Wellness and Recovery Dr. Anthony Levitt looks at the importance and challenges of getting the right treatment and support.

How can I begin to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Taking charge of our well-being
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Treatment options](#)

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)

[Finding resources in your area](#)

[Talking about medication](#)

[Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)

[Going off medications](#)



Hover the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

← BACK
STOP
NEXT →

VIDEOS

How can I begin to feel better?
play video »

Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
play video »

Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video »

Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video »

Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
playing

About cognitive behavioural therapy
Participants
play video »

My experience in a treatment centre
Participants
play video »

Concerns with medications

Wellness and Recovery Dr. Levitt urges those suffering with mental health issues to be open to choosing from among a broad range of effective treatment options.

How can I begin to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Taking charge of our well-being
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Treatment options](#)

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)

[Finding resources in your area](#)

[Talking about medication](#)

[Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)

[Going off medications](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

<< BACK
STOP
NEXT >>

VIDEOS



How can I begin to feel better?
play video >



Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
play video >



Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
play video >



About cognitive behavioural therapy
Participants
playing



My experience in a treatment centre
Participants
play video >

About cognitive behavioural therapy

Wellness and Recovery While *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy* is designed to help those with mental health issues, we can all benefit from developing these skills which help us to step back and assess situations before we react.

How can I begin to feel better?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Taking charge of our well-being
- Managing emotions at work
- Strategies for managing difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work
- Self-care strategies

LINKS

[Getting effective help and treatment](#)

[Treatment options](#)

[Medication and treatment cost support](#)

[Finding resources in your area](#)

[Talking about medication](#)

[Dealing with the side effects of medications](#)

[Going off medications](#)



Roll over the screen to access the play and sound buttons.

◀ BACK
STOP
NEXT ▶▶

VIDEOS



How can I begin to feel better?
[play video >](#)



Supports that may be available
Karen Liberman
[play video >](#)



Perceptions of mood disorders
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



Finding the right treatment
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



Concerns with medications
Dr. Anthony Levitt
[play video >](#)



About cognitive behavioural therapy
Participants
[play video >](#)



My experience in a treatment centre
Participants
[playing](#)

My experience in a treatment centre

Wellness and Recovery *As we gain greater understanding of the ways in which mental health issues can affect our workplace and co-workers, we also see how important getting the right treatment and support is. This video looks at the support provided in a treatment centre setting.*

27

The Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace
www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com



WHAT ARE YOU EXPERIENCING?

Working Through It

Feeling down

- Feeling empty or nothing
- Feeling irritable, anxious
- Having difficulty with memory, slowed thinking
- Being unable to concentrate or make decisions
- Feeling tired, fatigue, exhaustion, lack of energy, lethargy
- Having a lack of motivation or interest
- Feeling restless or agitated
- Feeling tearful throughout the day
- Having significant changes in appetite
- Not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much
- Feeling worthless, inadequate, guilty or shameful
- Avoiding social contact, feeling misunderstood, betrayed or victimized
- Feeling sad, hopeless or helpless
- Using alcohol or other substances as a coping strategy
- Having thoughts of death or suicide

Feeling anxious and uneasy

- Feeling rapid heart beat
- Sweating
- Having racing thoughts
- Having difficulty with relationships, school or work performance, social activities and recreation
- Having excessive, uncontrollable worry about events or activities
- Feeling unusually irritable, angry or “jumpy”
- Having difficulty sleeping well
- Having flashbacks
- Avoiding people and places that remind you of events
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling fear in social situations because you think you are going to be judged or that you will make a fool of yourself
- Having excessive, persistent fear of specific objects or situations
- Using alcohol or other substances as a coping strategy

Feeling hyper-energetic

- Feeling intensely elated, overly energetic, “high”, “better than good”
- Feeling unusually irritable
- Having unusually high self-esteem, feeling invincible
- Having a decreased need for sleep without feeling tired
- Talking more than usual, feeling pressure to keep talking
- Having racing thoughts, many ideas coming at once

- Being distracted easily, jumping from thought to thought
- Accomplishing or beginning more work than usual, feeling restless
- Working all the time without rest or balance
- Having heightened sense of sexuality
- Having excessive pursuit of pleasure (e.g., financial or sexual) without thoughts of consequences
- Having poor judgment, risky behavior, excessive spending, excessive gambling
- Seeing, hearing or thinking things that are unusual or bizarre
- Using alcohol or other substances or activities as a coping strategy

Feeling unsafe or misunderstood

- Feeling that everyone is against you
- Feeling that everything you say is misunderstood
- Feeling the need to always be on guard
- Feeling that you are always being monitored and watched
- Feeling constantly judged or criticized
- Feeling that you are in danger

Feeling like you are “losing it”

- Not feeling like yourself
- Being told you are acting differently
- Being extra sensitive to lights, sounds and smells
- Seeing, hearing or thinking things that are unusual or bizarre
- Having problems with memory and concentration
- Feeling on the edge all the time
- Feeling like you may snap
- Feeling overwhelmed most of the time
- Feeling ungrounded
- Being unable to let things go

If you are in crisis

If you are in crisis, or believe you may harm yourself or someone else, call 911 or your local emergency response service. If you need urgent medical or psychiatric attention, go to the nearest emergency hospital now. Some of the above are signs and symptoms that can be linked to the most common mood disorders. If you are concerned that you are experiencing any of these, visit www.checkupfromtheneckup.ca for a self-assessment that you can take to your doctor.



CLAIMING GROUP DISABILITY BENEFITS

How does the group disability claim process work?

Employers buy group benefit plans from insurance companies to provide disability benefits to employees. The insurance company is the “benefit provider.” Group disability insurance plans are designed to give you some income while you are unable to work due to injury or illness. The term “benefit” refers to money paid out by the benefit provider to an employee who is considered to be disabled and who qualifies for benefits under the plan. The amount is based on a percentage of the employee’s income. Eligibility for benefits is based on the terms of your group benefit plan. To apply for benefits, you will make a claim.

Information on eligibility is usually explained in a booklet written by the benefit provider, that you can get through your human resources department or your manager. It is important to remember that the details of group plans vary. You should refer to the benefit plan booklet for details about your coverage.

Who can help me through the claim process?

The disability claim process can sometimes be difficult, especially when your life is disrupted by injury or illness.

Some people who may be able to help you navigate the process include:

- your manager
- human resources representative, benefit plan coordinator
- union representative
- occupational health nurse
- family doctor
- the benefit provider’s claim examiner
- rehabilitation consultant
- friend or family member

What are the first steps in applying for disability benefits?

Contact your manager, union representative or benefit plan co-coordinator (this person is often someone in your human resources department) to request information on your coverage and the necessary forms to complete. Often there will be three forms to be completed: one by you, one by your doctor, and one by your employer.

How is the claim decision made? How long will it take?

All completed forms are sent to the claim examiner who then assesses if you are eligible for benefits under the plan.

Typically, to qualify for short term disability benefits, you must be considered unable to perform the duties of your own occupation because of illness or injury.

Typically, to qualify for long term disability benefits, in the first two years you must be considered unable to perform the duties of your own occupation because of illness or injury. Typically, to qualify for benefits beyond the two-year mark, you must be considered unable to perform the duties of any occupation, because of illness or injury, for which you may have training, education or experience.

The claim examiner may ask you for additional information after you have submitted the forms. The claim examiner may need further details about your situation, or more information from your doctor. Often the claim examiner will phone you to collect or request this information. Claim decisions can take from one week to several weeks.

To reduce delays in the claim process:

- Call your claim examiner to ask questions about the status of your claim and what you can do to move the process along.
- Send requested documents by fax and ask your doctor to do the same.

When will I get paid, how much, how often and for how long?

Short term disability benefits are usually paid every one or two weeks.

Long term disability benefits are usually paid monthly.

Benefit amounts are typically calculated as a percentage of your regular income. The percentage amount depends on your benefit plan. Benefits will continue as long as you continue to meet the definition of disability set out in the group benefit plan, or if you reach the maximum benefit period as specified in the plan.

What can I expect if my claim is approved?

If your claim is approved you can generally expect your claim examiner to request periodic medical updates and assess your readiness for return to work.

An independent medical examination (IME) may be arranged for you if the claim examiner wants a second medical opinion to provide clarification of your diagnosis and functional abilities. The IME may also make recommendations for treatment and return to work planning. A copy of the IME report is usually sent to your doctor who can review any recommendations with you.

In some circumstances, your case may be referred to a rehabilitation consultant who may meet with you to discuss recovery and return-to-work planning

...2



CLAIMING GROUP DISABILITY BENEFITS

The rehabilitation consultant may help the people involved in your claim communicate with each other, including your medical treatment providers and your employer. The rehabilitation consultant can help with return-to-work planning and by providing support and guidance during the return-to-work process.

http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtil/disclosing_your_illness

What will my employer be told?

Privacy regulations protect your private medical information. Benefit providers are restricted from sharing your personal and medical information with your employer.

The claim examiner may share information about your limitations and restrictions with your employer to help with return-to-work planning.

What if I'm not 100 per cent well when I return to work?

What if I get sick again?

When you return to work after a period of disability, it is often recommended to do it gradually, depending on your situation. Getting back to work may help you in your recovery. The return to work usually starts when you are sufficiently recovered to participate in some work activity. Ongoing recovery may take place as you return to work. Commonly, hours and duties are modified for a period of time to allow employees to transition back to work safely and successfully. Feeling productive at work and re-connecting with co-workers often contribute greatly to recovery.

<http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtil/accommodations>

If your condition worsens following your return to work, you may again be eligible for disability benefits. Your claim may be reopened if your disability is considered a recurrence (as defined in the benefit plan) or you may have to submit a new claim.

What if my claim is denied or my benefits are terminated?

Claim denial or termination is usually a result of not meeting the definition of disability as set out in the group benefit plan. If your claim is denied or terminated, you would usually hear from the insurance company by letter.

If you do not understand the reasons your claim is denied or terminated:

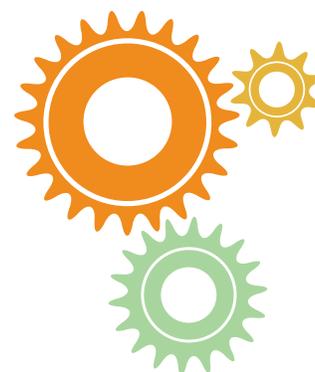
- Contact your claim examiner to ask for an explanation.
- Ask about your options and next steps.
- Ask your claim examiner if there is an appeal process and, if so, what additional information may be required to proceed.
- Request that reasons and next steps be sent to you in writing.
- Review the information received with your doctor or someone who can help you take the next steps.
- You may want to ask your employer about any other options including a modified return to work, severance, early retirement, and other benefit entitlement such as employment insurance.

If you are not satisfied with the answers from the benefit provider, you may be able to use the benefit provider's complaint resolution process. If you continue to not be satisfied, you may wish to seek legal advice although it is not usually necessary to hire a lawyer to communicate with the benefit provider about termination of benefits.

You may also contact the Canadian Life and Health OmbudService, a national health insurance dispute resolution system for consumers, found at <http://www.olhi.ca>.

For more information about sources of legal advice, go to:

http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtil/legal_concern.





CREATING YOUR OWN WORKPLACE PLAN

A workplace plan is a tool you can use to help figure out what changes you may need at work in order to be successful. It can be used to find what accommodations you may need, and also can be used when formal accommodation is not happening, but when workplace issues are hard to resolve.

Sample workplace plans

To see samples of workplace plans that have been used successfully by employees, and to learn more about the process, go to: http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/workplace_planA and http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/workplace_planB.

If you have a disability, including a medical condition such as depression or anxiety, that requires a formal accommodation, go to <http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/accommodations> for more information about how to request an accommodation.

A workplace plan is a document that helps you identify what you need to be successful at your job. It is not a legal contract, but is actually a request from you to your employer asking for reasonable changes that will allow you to be successful at your job. It helps because as you develop it, it puts your suggested solutions “on paper” and gives you and your manager a way to discuss your needs. Other people could help you develop this plan including your manager, human resources representative, occupational health nurse or doctor, your union representative, or even a trusted co-worker.

How to move forward

This plan can be an informal way to move forward through workplace issues whether you are at work or returning to work. It is recommended that if you are returning to work, it be done gradually, allowing you to build up your strength and confidence as you get back up to speed.

Ideally, you would work together with your manager to develop your workplace plan. It does not supercede any existing company policies, collective bargaining agreements or legislation. It is developed in good faith with the intention of having you be successful at work while maintaining a balance between productivity and health. Your manager may not know how to help you. This process can give your manager ideas that are right for you.

It is suggested that you and your manager review your workplace plan regularly to see if any changes need to be made to ensure your continuing success at work.

The Mental Health Works workplace plan

The following Mental Health Works workplace plan process is used in a variety of circumstances ranging from everyday issues to complex return-to-work planning. We are sharing this with you to give you a process to help yourself and help your manager to better support your success at work.

The plan asks you to answer three questions:

- What do you need to be successful at your job?
- How do you want future issues to be addressed, should they arise?
- For your contribution to being successful at your job, what will you commit to?

What do you need to be successful at your job?

Consider what you think of as problems at work. We’ve given you some ideas and examples below. Also consider what you expect your manager to identify as problems. Then come up with possible reasonable strategies that you and your manager can discuss to meet your needs and the needs of the workplace. The examples show possible solutions. Your situation may require different solutions. These examples are not the only solutions, just ideas to stimulate your own thoughts.

- **The way work is assigned**

An employee who is struggling with competing demands at work and last-minute requests from his manager may write in his workplace plan:

“I understand the need to be flexible around last-minute client requests. Last-minute requests that interrupt my other tasks may cause me to feel overwhelmed because I am then unable to finish my other tasks on time. When my manager asks me to take on a last-minute task, I will ask my manager to help me prioritize my other tasks.”

- **The way your work is monitored**

An employee who would describe his or her manager as a “micro-manager” causing distress:

“I understand my manager’s need to monitor my work for quality and accuracy. When my manager interrupts my work to make changes several times a day, I become agitated and lose focus and confidence in my abilities. I would like to be able to give my manager regular updates with a schedule that works for both of us. And I would like my manager to wait until our scheduled meeting to give me feedback or make changes, unless the issue is urgent.”

A different person may welcome the immediate feedback. Another employee may request to have feedback given in writing.

...2



CREATING YOUR OWN WORKPLACE PLAN

- **The way information and direction is given to you**

An employee who has difficulty remembering verbal instructions:

"I prefer to have instructions about my tasks given to me in writing. Or, they can be given to me verbally and I will immediately write down what I've heard, and check back with the person who gave me the directions to make sure I've got it right."

- **The way others interact with you**

An employee who regularly cries at work:

"I would like to have people at work not worry or react if they see me crying. I would like them to just allow me a few minutes to compose myself. If this happens during a meeting, I will excuse myself and return as soon as I am able to participate calmly in the meeting."

How do you want future issues to be addressed, should they arise?

You can help your manager by anticipating where you may have difficulty, and giving concrete suggestions on what to do. Here are some examples:

- **If you appear to be distressed or unwell**

"If I appear to be angry with a raised voice, I would like my manager to say to me, 'I notice you seem uneasy. Would you like to continue this discussion at another time?'. "

- **If there is a performance issue that needs to be addressed with you**

"If my manager notices that the quality or quantity of my work is dropping, I would like my manager to send me an email, asking to speak with me about the specific tasks that she is worried about. Receiving the email will give me time to collect my thoughts before we meet to discuss the problem and knowing which specific task is the problem will help me prepare."

Another person may have a different request for the same situation:

"If my manager notices that the quality or quantity of my work is dropping, I would like my manager to speak to me face-to-face as soon as possible, saying, 'I've noticed changes in your work and I'd like us to find a time to talk about it'. I would prefer that my manager not send me an email about it because that will just increase my anxiety."

- **If there is conflict**

"When my manager and I experience conflict between us, I ask that we both refrain from speaking in anger. We may need to request to discuss the issue at another time when each of us is calm enough to have a civil conversation."

For your contribution to being successful at your job, what will you commit to?

Sharing what you will do to be successful at work shows your manager that you are engaged in the process and gives you strategies that are specific to your needs. Here are some examples:

- **An employee who often feels groggy and unwell in the morning and avoids calling his or her manager:**

"I will make every effort to let my manager know if I am going to be late because I understand that not knowing where I am is disruptive to my manager's day."

- **An employee who has had emotional outbursts at work:**

I will make every effort to control my emotions at work. If I feel that I am not able to maintain my composure, I will remove myself from the workplace for a few moments until I feel in control of my emotions. I will leave a note on my chair so that people know where I am."

- **An employee who doesn't take breaks or lunch:**

"Every morning and afternoon I will leave my desk to take a break for 15 minutes. I will also take a break at lunch away from my desk. Taking these breaks will help me keep a healthy perspective on my work."

- **An employee who gets caught up in work and misses counseling appointments:**

"I will leave work to go my scheduled counseling appointments, knowing that attending my appointments contributes to my ability to do my job well."

Thinking about and offering solutions, instead of focusing on problems, is often an effective way to move forward toward a better working situation.



DEBT MANAGEMENT

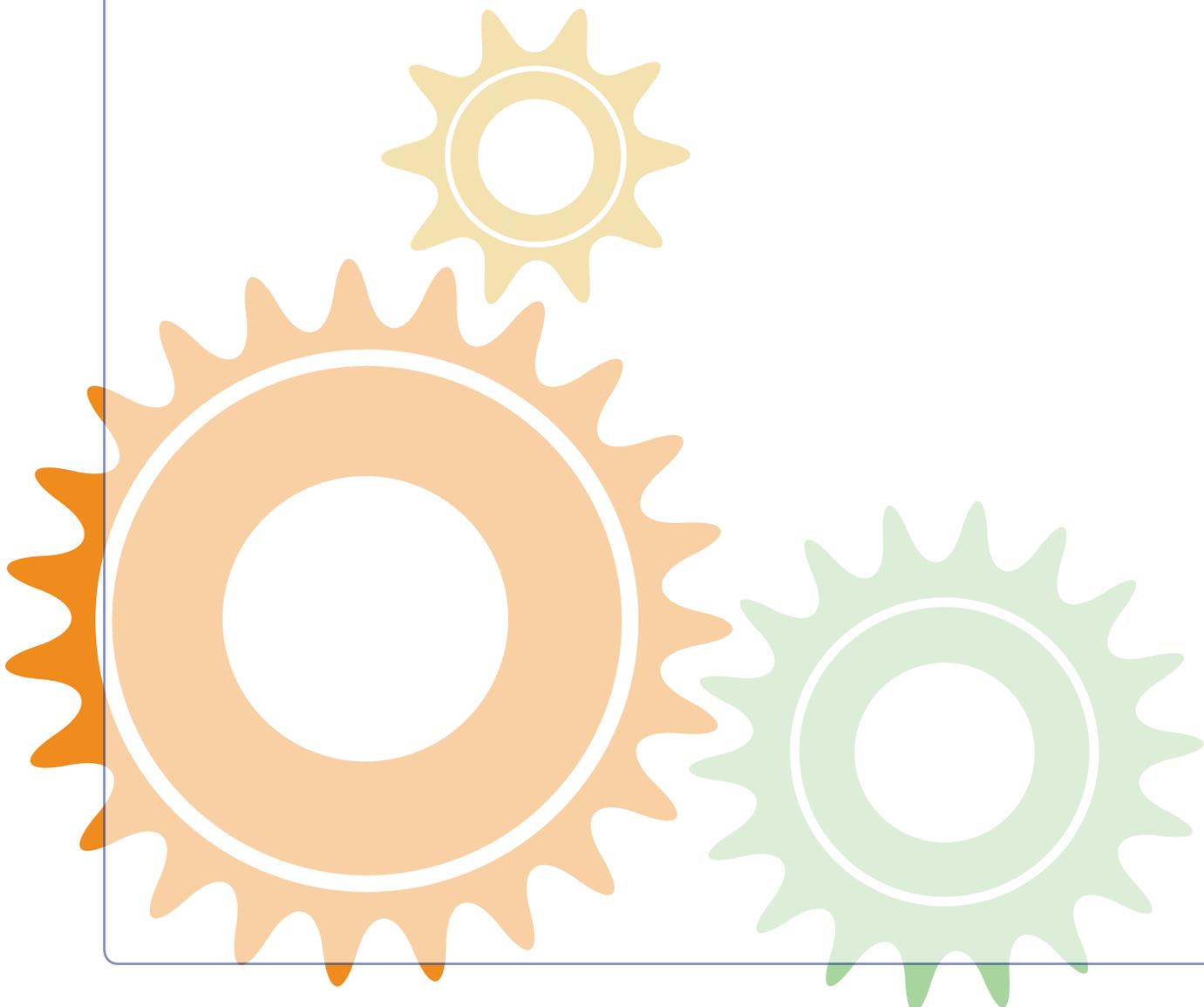
Many people experience stress and anxiety related to debt and financial management.

Financial stress can have a harmful effect on your mental health and overall well-being.

If your financial situation is causing you stress and you are finding it hard to cope, you may benefit from asking a friend or family member to assist you in exploring your options including getting professional guidance.

If your employer offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), you can use the services of a financial counselor who can help you prepare a budget and offer debt management advice. All services provided by the EAP are confidential. Contact your employer's EAP provider for more information.

For more information visit http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtildebt_management.





HELPING OTHERS HELP YOU AT WORK

Reaching out for help may feel uncomfortable, but when you are struggling at work, this may be necessary for your well-being.

The following are some ideas that may make it easier for others at work to help you.

- **Making requests based on what you need rather than focusing on what you think others are doing wrong**

For example, instead of saying to your manager: “You need to stop criticizing me all the time.”

You might try: “I am in a place right now where I am having a really hard time dealing with criticism. I’m working on building my confidence. Would you be willing to give me specific direction on what you’d like me to do, rather than focusing on what I am doing wrong?”

- **Helping people to understand your reaction**

If you are finding yourself reacting to workplace situations with anger, frustration or by crying, you can help your co-workers by giving them information about your reaction.

For example, you might try telling them: “ I know I may overreact in certain situations. I am working hard to increase control of my emotions. Please know that my reaction is not about you.”

Another example: “When I am pressured to work faster and can’t spend time on the quality of my work, I may become upset and start crying. I’m working hard to manage my reaction, but sometimes I won’t be able to completely prevent it. Please ignore my tears.”

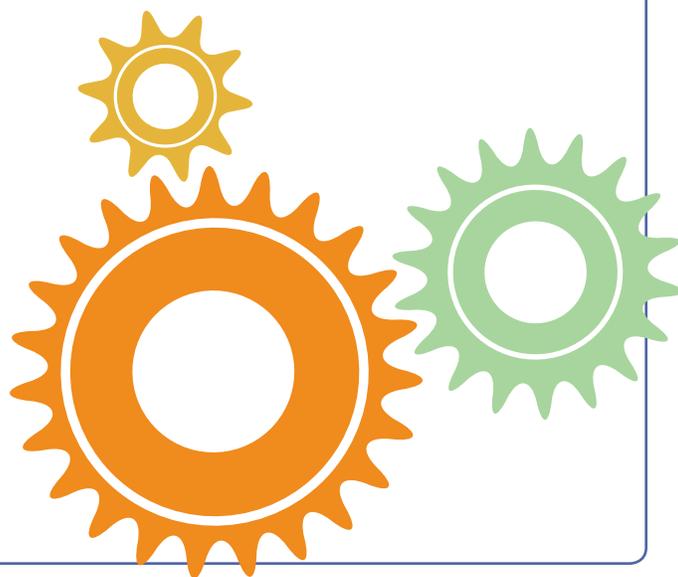
- **Asking for help with deadlines**

Rather than waiting until the last minute and missing the deadline, let your manager know when you are struggling to get things done.

- **Dealing with gossip**

Sometimes the best way to deal with this is to counter with “positive gossip”. This means talking about what people have done right or well.

http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/gossip_rumours_speculation





INCOME SOURCES IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO WORK

There may come a time when your symptoms prevent you from being able to perform the duties of your job.

This can be very upsetting for a number of reasons:

- Fear of losing your job
- Decrease in self-confidence and abilities
- Concern about how to manage financially if you are unable to work

Managing finances is stressful for most people at the best of times. When you are unable to work due to illness or injury, you may want to ask someone you trust for assistance in looking into financial resources and options.

If you have disability insurance coverage through your employer, you may qualify for disability benefits.

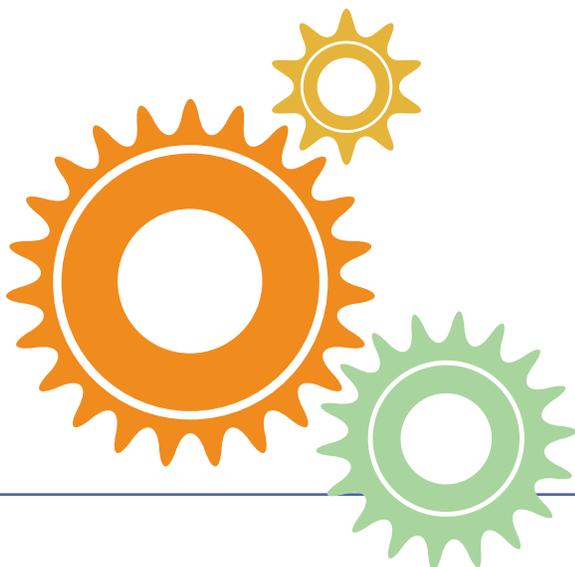
Workers compensation benefits:

You may qualify for Loss of Earning benefits if you have suffered significant psychological and/or emotional distress as a consequence of a traumatic accident or event in the workplace, and your employer is registered with a workers compensation plan. To find out further information about your province's workers compensation program, see http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/workers_compensation/index.shtml.

Government sponsored benefits

- **Employment Insurance (EI):** These benefits are paid under the federal employment insurance program, for people who are unable to work because of sickness, injury, or quarantine.
- **Canada Pension Plan disability benefits (CPP):** These benefits are paid by the federal government to people who qualify, if their illness is severe and prolonged.
- **Social Assistance/Welfare:** These benefits are paid by the municipal government to provide financial and employment assistance to people in temporary financial need.
- **Provincial Disability Support Program:** These benefits are paid by the municipal government to provide financial help for people with disabilities to help pay for living expenses, like food and housing.

For more information on government benefit programs, see http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/income_sources.





MANAGING EMOTIONS AT WORK

Planning for them

When you know that you may become emotional, plan in advance how you will manage tears, frustration or anger in a way that preserves your dignity and well-being.

Writing it down

When you write down your fears, hurts or concerns, they often lose their power over you. Writing it down can put things in perspective so that you can find a way forward.

Talking about it

Find a trusted person or professional to share what you are feeling. Talking about things is often the first step to taking back control of your thoughts, emotions or feelings.

Paying attention to what works

When you have successfully dealt with a stressful situation or emotion, record what you did both as a reward for your success and to refer to when you are not sure what to do. Acknowledge when you take a step in the right direction.

Finding a friend

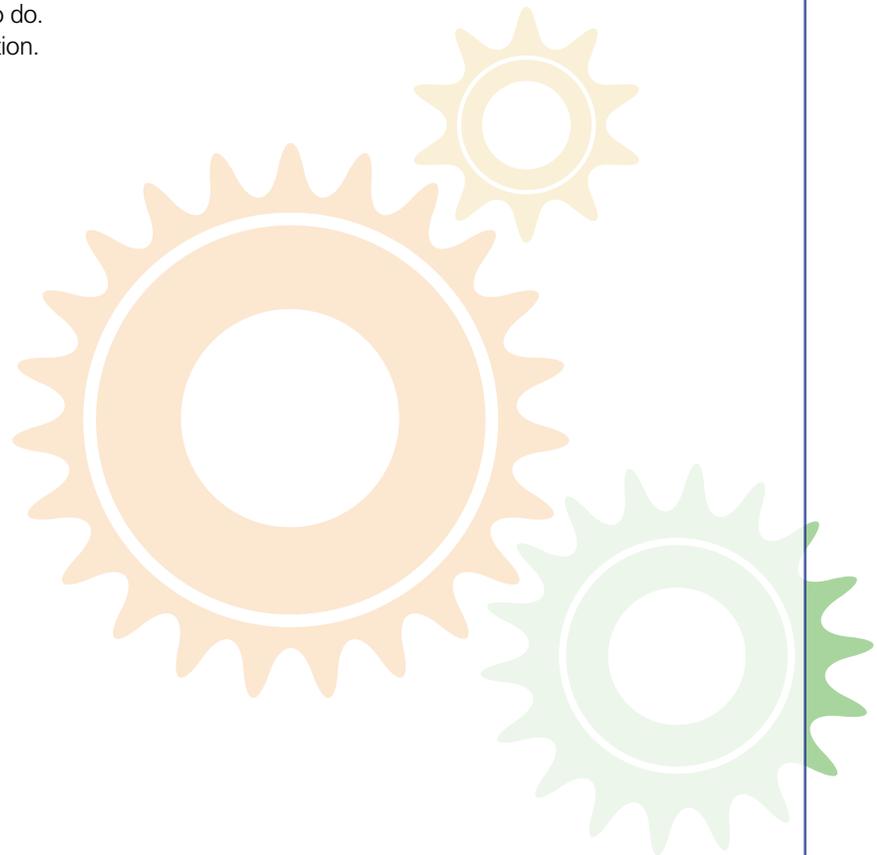
Having someone at work who understands what you are going through can be an important source of support. If this is not possible, find a friend outside of work whom you can call when you need support.

Taking a break

Use your breaks to go for a walk, find a quiet place to sit or otherwise relax and refocus. Do not work through breaks and lunch when you are stressed.

Breathing

When we are stressed or anxious our breathing tends to become more shallow. This sends a message to the brain that there is a risk of dying from lack of oxygen, which in turn creates a stress response. Breathing deeply and slowly goes a long way to help your body to return to a less stressful state.



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.

...2

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE RETURN-TO-WORK PROCESS



Working Through It

- 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.

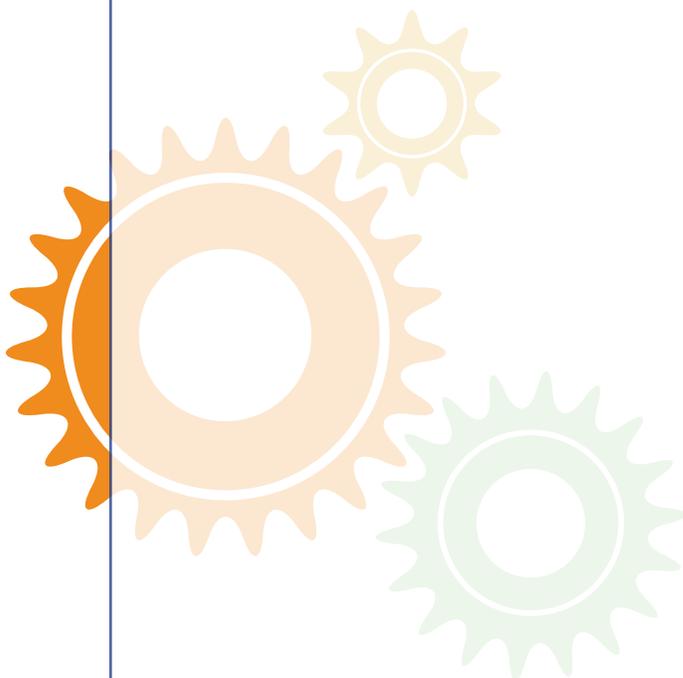
Some things a rehabilitation consultant may do:

- 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.



STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING DIFFICULT THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOURS AT WORK



Working Through It

Here is a chart to help you see how you may be able to change difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work by using different strategies.

- Constant negative thoughts
- Crying
- Panic attacks
- Angry or emotional outbursts
- Confusion
- Anxiety

Thoughts, emotions, and behaviours	Alternative strategies	Example
Having constant negative thoughts about yourself and others.	<p>Be aware of the constant thoughts</p> <p>Challenge the information in the thoughts.</p> <p>Consider replacing them with more productive thoughts.</p>	<p>From: I'm such an idiot! Why am I so stupid?</p> <p>To: I feel frustrated. I want to do my part. I will ask for help when I do not know what to do.</p> <p>From: If I tell that I made a mistake I'll get fired.</p> <p>To: People rarely get fired for making a mistake. And, by taking responsibility for my mistake, my manager may see that I care about my work and want to improve.</p>
<p>For more information and tools to help with negative thoughts, go to www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/antidepressant_skills.</p>		
Being unable to control crying at work.	<p>Be aware of negative thoughts, or feelings that may trigger the crying. Consider alternative responses.</p> <p>Consider that crying can be a way of relieving stress, and you can plan for crying time during breaks in your workday.</p>	<p>From: When I hear co-workers laughing together in the kitchen I think that they all hate me and I start to cry.</p> <p>To: When I hear co-workers laughing together in the kitchen, I realize that I feel lonely at work. I'll consider ways to connect with co-workers so that I can feel included.</p> <p>From: I just have to keep my tears bottled up inside me all day.</p> <p>To: Knowing that I can get relief can help me to hold off from crying while I am working. I can find a discrete place for me to cry during my breaks and at lunch if I feel the need to cry.</p>
Having panic attacks at work.	<p>Be aware of how negative thoughts or feelings may lead to panic attacks. Consider other ways to respond or plan</p> <p>Plan ahead of time what you will do if you are experiencing a panic attack.</p> <p>Consider talking to someone you trust at work and seeing if they can support you during or after the attack.</p>	<p>From: When I look at all the emails I haven't answered, my heart pounds and I feel tense.</p> <p>To: Today I'll organize my day before I open my email.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Plan: I will tell a co-worker whom I trust that I am having panic attacks. I will ask if she could cover the phones for 10 minutes during or after an attack.</p>
Having angry or emotional outbursts at work.	<p>Be aware of early signs that anger is rising. Learn what physical signs your body gives you that your anger is rising.</p>	<p>From: When I'm angry I can't control what I say, and say things that I wish I could take back.</p> <p>To: I've learned that when my anger is rising I get a knot in my stomach. When I feel that knot, I force myself to slow down my thoughts and take several deep breaths so that I don't speak in anger.</p>
Feeling confused and unable to remember details at work.	<p>Consider other ways of having information given to you.</p>	<p>From: I am having a hard time remembering information when people tell me things verbally.</p> <p>To: I learned that I do better when people share information with me in a written format. So I carry a notebook with me to write things down, or I ask the person to please send me an email.</p>
Feeling anxious	<p>Consider alternatives to behaviours at work that could contribute to feeling anxious at work.</p>	<p>From: I'm used to drinking lots of coffee or pop all day, even though it makes me feel jittery.</p> <p>To: I remind myself that another cup of coffee could make me feel nervous for the rest of the day.</p> <p>or</p> <p>From: I feel overwhelmed with my work and think that I will get in trouble for not getting it done.</p> <p>To: I will express my concerns to my manager and ask for help to prioritize and manage my workload.</p>

Taking charge of your health and well-being may include these suggestions:

Become informed

- Keep an ongoing list of resources that contribute to your well-being (people, print and on-line).
- Develop a plan for how and when to use these resources.

Advocate for yourself

- Learn what contributes and what takes away from your well-being.
- Consider how to increase things that contribute to your well-being.
- Consider how to decrease the things that take away from your well-being.

Examine your relationships with family and friends

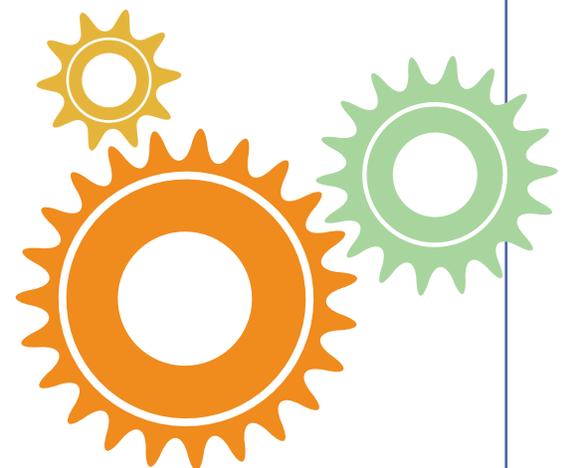
- Assess what is working, what is not working, what helps, what does not help.
- Talk to those who are close to you to help them understand what they may be able to do to help you.
- Develop a plan for how to reach out when necessary.

Examine your lifestyle

- Look at how you are living your life: diet and nutrition, sleep and rest, exercise, creative activities, social activities.
- Consider what helps you to improve your energy, confidence, self-esteem, coping skills, and sense of inclusion while maintaining your well-being.

Create a plan

- Set goals and benchmarks
- Monitor progress
- Revise the plan as needed
- Don't get discouraged
- Celebrate small achievements





THE STRESS RESPONSE

You are sometimes unable to choose what happens to you, but it may be possible to choose or manage your response.

When you are stressed, any or all of the following may happen to you:

- Your muscles tighten
- Your heart beats faster
- Your blood pressure rises
- Your breathing becomes shallow
- You perspire more
- Your jaw tightens or clenches
- You have racing thoughts
- You feel angry, frustrated, attacked, threatened or fearful

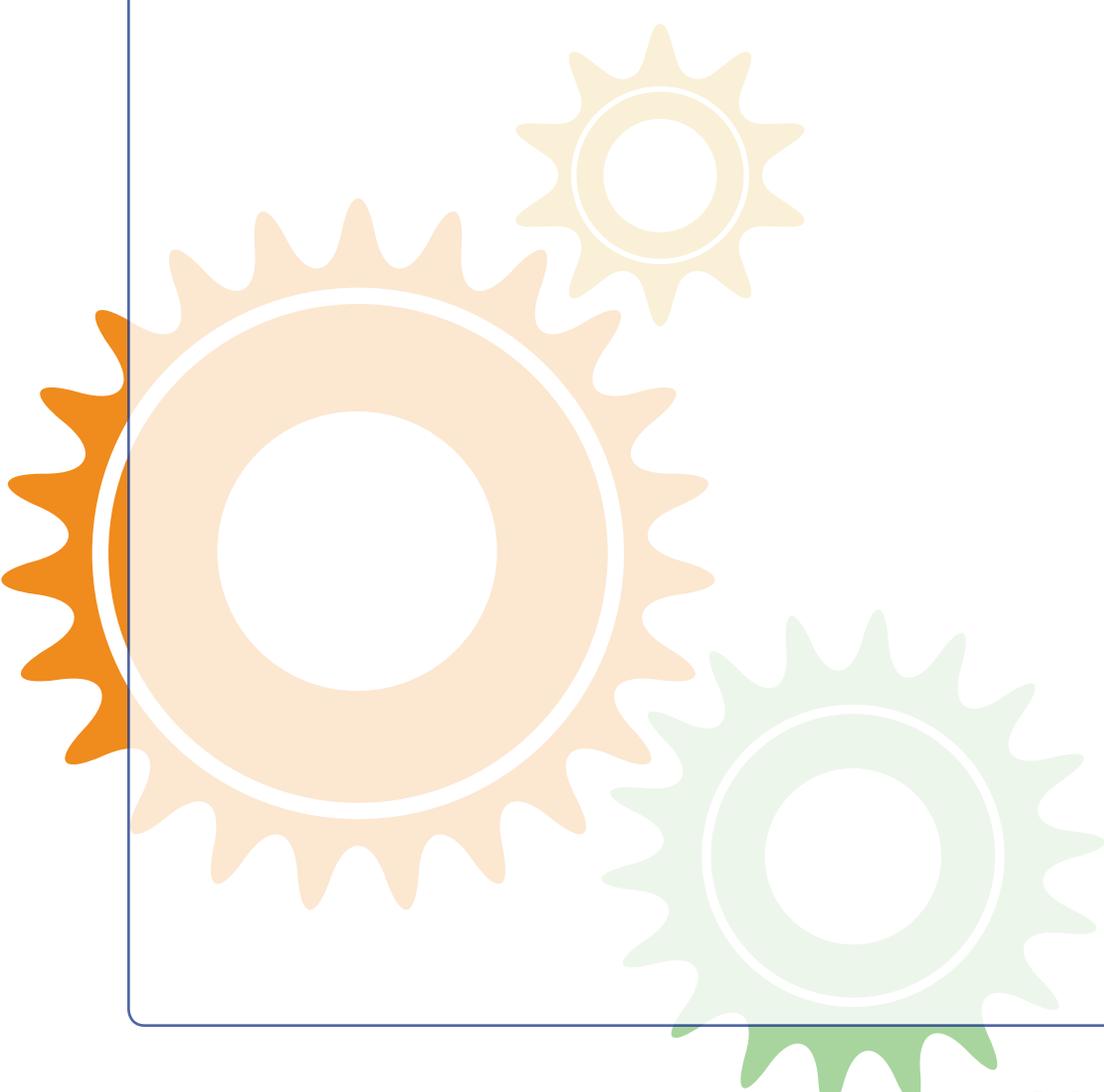
Managing the stress response

While the above reactions are often involuntary, there are deliberate actions you can choose to manage your response.

The following are some techniques which may help you to control the stress response:

- Taking time to pause before you react or say anything
- Breathing deeply and slowly to help reverse or stop some of these reactions
- Relaxing your muscles by thinking about where the tightness is and releasing it
- Diverting your attention from the stress by focusing on something else (e.g., counting, reading, listening to music)
- Reminding yourself that this will pass
- Sitting quietly until the responses subside
- Allowing yourself the opportunity to understand what your feelings mean for you, rather than trying to simply stop them

If these do not work for you, you may think about seeking help from a health care provider to develop your own strategies to respond to stress.





WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

Working Through It

Sometimes when we are struggling, it's hard to step back and get a clear look at how we are doing. Here are questions you can ask yourself to help you get a picture of what's going on with you.

If you find that you are agreeing with some or many of these statements, you may want to visit your doctor to help you figure out what's going on. You can take this sheet with you to help you talk to your doctor or therapist.

What's going on with my body?

- I often feel exhausted, even early in the week.
- I frequently feel dizzy or nauseous.
- I have problems with digestion, such as stomach bloating, pain or gas.
- I regularly experience diarrhea or constipation.
- I have no appetite, or I'm overeating.
- I frequently have muscle, joint, headache or chest pain.
- I'm craving junk food.
- I'm finding it hard to maintain a reasonable weight.
- I'm having trouble sleeping well or I am sleeping all the time.
- I do not feel rested when I get up in the morning.

What's going on with my emotions?

- I frequently feel anxious or upset.
- I feel like crying all the time.
- I am very fearful.
- I often feel tense at work.
- I often feel guilty about letting my team down.
- I feel angry when someone makes a mistake.
- I feel angry or upset when someone points out a mistake I've made.
- I lack confidence in myself and the work that I do.
- I'm finding it hard to remember what it feels like to be happy.
- I keep my feelings bottled up inside.
- I feel like I am never good enough.

What's going on with my thoughts?

- I often feel I can't handle everything I have to do.
- I feel like I have little or no control over my life.
- I don't have patience the way I used to.
- I frequently worry about work even when I'm not at work.
- I spend a lot of time thinking about and complaining about the past.
- I see people's faults and mistakes more than their strengths and contributions.

- I see the negative things about myself more than the positive.
- I often think that there is only one way to do something.

What's going on with my job?

- I have difficulty concentrating at work.
- I find it difficult to make decisions at work.
- I seem to be disorganized at work.
- I find it difficult to start tasks.
- I find it difficult to read and remember what I've read.
- I am finding tasks that used to be easy more difficult now.
- I feel like I am a burden to the team.

What's going on with the people at work?

- I don't think I'm being treated fairly at work.
- I don't feel valued by a lot of the people I work with.
- I'm finding it hard to rely on my co-workers.
- I don't laugh with co-workers anymore.
- I often say things in anger or frustration that I wish I could take back.
- I seem to take things more seriously than my co-workers.
- I'm tired of hearing other people's problems.
- I feel like I am letting everyone down.
- I am becoming dependent on one person at work that I feel safe with.
- I'm withdrawing from people at work.
- I'm afraid that others will realize my work is not good enough.

What's going on with my behaviour?

- I lose my temper at work.
- I no longer want to be around people.
- I don't understand why I can't get my work done.
- I find I'm playing computer games when I'm supposed to be working.
- I'm using sleeping pills more than I used to.
- I'm drinking more alcohol than I used to.
- I'm spending money or gambling more than I used to.
- I'm using prescription or recreational drugs more than I used to.
- I use coffee, alcohol or drugs to help me get through the day.
- I find it difficult to relax.
- I sit at work and feel frozen, unable to do anything.
- I cannot make sense of what I am reading anymore.
- I cannot produce my work the way I used to.
- One moment I am smiling and the next moment I am crying.

If your answers are causing you concern, consider taking this list to your doctor or therapist.



CONCERN ABOUT LOSING YOUR JOB

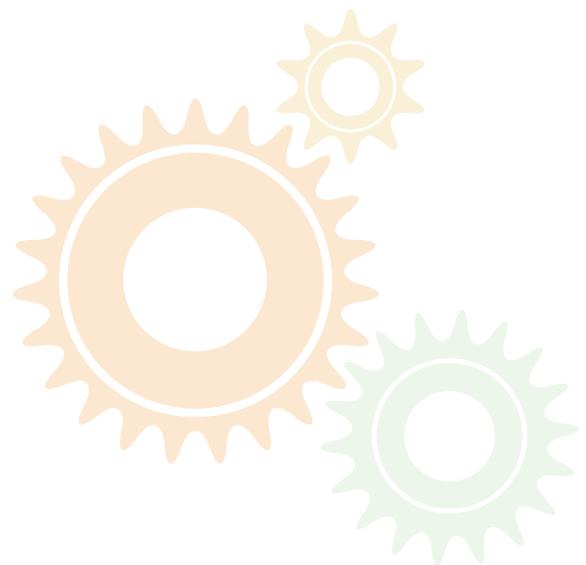
Fear of losing your job can be the result of:

- Economic uncertainty
- A critical manager
- Missed deadlines or errors
- Restructuring
- Co-worker conflict
- Self-doubt
- Excessive stress or worry
- Health concerns

In all cases you may be able to improve your control of the situation by:

- Asking your manager what you can do to be successful at work
- Considering if you have the knowledge, skills, training and resources to do the job well
- Finding agreement with your manager on how your success will be measured
- Getting advice or help from someone you trust

- Thinking about and building on your strengths and abilities
- Exploring your options
- Checking out your own well-being, because physical or mental health problems can impact your performance and your perspective
- Learning what options you have if you do lose your job. The links below provide information on some practical options.
 - Debt and Credit Management Services http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/debt_management
 - Employment Supports http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/employment_supports
 - Alternative Income Sources http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/income_sources
 - Accessing Legal Supports http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/legal_concern





CRISIS PLANNING

If you are currently in crisis, or believe you may harm yourself or someone else, call 911 or your local emergency response service. If you need urgent medical or psychiatric attention, go to the nearest emergency hospital now.

Planning ahead

Distress lines and mobile crisis units

Find the local numbers for these services and keep them handy for yourself or others in need.

- Distress or crisis phone lines are open 24-hours-a-day if you need to talk to someone. They offer free, anonymous telephone contact with people who have been trained to help during times of emotional crisis, offering assistance and information.

- Mobile crisis units may provide help over the phone or at a person's home. A crisis worker will assess the situation and help to deal with the present crisis.

Creating a written crisis plan

Sometimes in spite of doing everything we can to take care of ourselves, we will still experience crisis. Together with your doctor, therapist, family, friends and other supportive people, you can plan ahead, just in case you experience crisis. Here is a form you can use to build a written plan, just in case you need it.

Crisis Plan for:

Date:

My wishes for medication and treatment	
Significant history that people should know if I am in crisis (e.g., trauma, addiction, physical illnesses)	
What has worked well for me in the past	
Things that have not worked well in the past	
List of support people with contact information	
Other people to contact to tell that I am not home, if necessary	

<p>Caring for children or other dependents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who will care for them - when someone explains the situation to my children or other dependents, this is what I would like them to be told 	
<p>Needs that are special to me (e.g., diet, religion, allergies)</p>	
<p>Things to remind me of when I am in crisis: things that matter to me, things that I value, my strengths, my worth, my contribution</p>	
<p>Other information or comments</p>	

For more information and crisis response contact information go to <http://checkupfromtheneckup.ca/crisis.html>.



GETTING HELP AT WORK

There are people at your workplace you may be able to go to for help. Here are some suggestions you may use to help these people help you.

Talking to your manager

- These are the things that are a problem for me right now and here are some ideas for what might make it easier for me to do my job. Can you look at them and let me know what is possible?
- Can we book some time to talk about my work performance? I'd like your input on how I can better manage my time, prioritize tasks, etc.
- Can you please let me know if you notice any changes in my performance so that we can talk about it?

Talking to your union representative

- I am having a really hard time with some issues at work. What does the collective agreement say about this?
- I don't think that I am being treated fairly by my co-workers and manager. What are my rights as a union member and who should I talk to?
- What other ideas do you have about how I might resolve this or make it easier?
- How can I deal with the reaction of other workers?

Talking to an occupational health physician or nurse

- This is how I am feeling at work right now. Do you think it is health related? Do I need to make changes at work?

- What do you recommend that I do? What help is available?
- My family doctor has me on this treatment. Could you look into this and let me know of any other approaches you think could be helpful?

Talking to a human resources representative

- What does my extended health benefit plan cover?
- What is involved in applying for short- or long-term benefits?
- What other benefits does my employer offer?
- I am struggling to do my job well. What is available to me in terms of training or resources?
- What do our company policies say about accommodation or discipline?

Talking to a counselor through your Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)

- How can I deal with problems with my co-workers or manager?
- What can I do about my financial troubles?
- What can I do about my family issues?
- How can I cope with my stressors at work or at home?
- Where can I get help for my addiction?
- How can I get help to deal with my fear, anger, frustration, lack of energy, etc?





IDEAS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT AT WORK

Here are some things to think about when looking to resolve conflict with others at work.

Understanding your own needs

Conflict is often the result of unmet needs. Some examples of needs at work are recognition, fairness, understanding, security, predictability, balance, etc. Try to understand your own needs in a way that is not just wishing for someone else to change what they are doing. To understand more about identifying your own needs go to http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtil/understanding_needs.

Getting a different perspective

You may be going through some challenges unrelated to work that reduce your ability to handle conflict. When you step back, you may be able to see that the issue itself is not insurmountable, but because of everything else going on, you may have a lower tolerance.

Getting a second opinion

Discuss the facts of the conflict with a trusted person who can help you check your perceptions. http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtil/gossip_rumours_speculation

Managing your emotions

Often the most challenging part of resolving any conflict is when the situation causes strong emotion. Sometimes it can be difficult to manage our emotional reactions and be able to see what can be changed for the situation to get better. Sometimes a trained counselor can help us learn to manage our emotional reactions more effectively. For more information on this go to Managing Emotions at Work resource.

Blaming or shaming others

When we accuse someone else or point out their flaws, their natural reaction may be to justify, defend, counter-attack or withdraw. It's hard to open up to new ideas and resolve conflict when we think we are under attack.

Seeing yourself as a victim

If we believe that we are under attack, our natural reaction may be to justify, defend, counter-attack or withdraw. We may also look for evidence that everyone is against us, and have difficulty seeing positives.

Thinking about underlying issues

If you have conflict with someone at work, it is unlikely that you are their biggest concern. In most cases, family, finances, health, reputation or security are primary issues. Consider what might be behind their behaviours.

Talking it out

Once you understand your own needs, sit down in private and seek to understand the needs of the other person. Find out what is necessary for you both to move forward towards resolving the ongoing issues. Remember to resist blaming or shaming. Focus only on the solution (what changes can be made), even if the others go back to the problem. If this seems too challenging, ask someone respected by all parties to help you with this step. If we want someone to move forward towards a better resolution we need to understand how he or she would benefit from a change in circumstances as well. http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtil/considering_needs

Getting commitment instead of compliance

When everyone involved can be part of creating the solution and walking away with their dignity intact, the long-term success is much more likely. When someone is threatened, forced into action, or cannot see what benefit the change holds for them, they may comply for a time, but may not feel as committed to the solution.

Letting go

Whether the resolution is exactly what you had hoped for, or just good enough, do not let it continue to affect your well-being. If you need help letting go of negative or frustrating thoughts, reach out to someone who can help you do this, perhaps a trusted friend or counselor. Holding on to these thoughts can be damaging to your mental and physical well-being.

Sometimes conflict with co-workers can seem overwhelming. We may wonder why we can't resolve issues easily, and feel frustrated and hurt. Sometimes we may believe that the conflict is caused entirely by someone else, and do not see our part in it. At other times we may think it is all our fault. It may be hard to accept, but your needs and the needs of the person you are in conflict with are both important. Resolution can happen when everyone's needs are met. See http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wtil/understanding_needs.



IS YOUR REACTION OUT OF BALANCE?

Sometimes when we are struggling, it's hard to see that our reactions may be out of balance. Here are some examples of situations that describe reactions. If you see that some of your common reactions are out of balance, this can give you

important information about what might be happening. If this is the case, you may want to find a way for you to regain your balance and well-being.

Something happens	Reaction that may be out of balance	Reaction that may indicate a balanced approach
Your manager comments on an error in your work.	<p>You feel extreme anger at your manager.</p> <p>You feel guilty about the error for days</p> <p>You can't sleep that night.</p> <p>You call in sick to avoid seeing your manager.</p>	<p>You ask questions to understand what happened.</p> <p>You discuss strategies with your manager to prevent the error from happening again.</p> <p>You discuss with your manager how criticism affects you, and ways that are easier for you to hear feedback.</p>
Something happens	Reaction that may be out of balance	Reaction that may indicate a more balanced approach
A co-worker strongly disagrees with a new idea you have put forward at a team meeting.	<p>You feel very hurt and angry with the co-worker.</p> <p>You cry in the washroom, feeling alone and misunderstood.</p> <p>You share gossip about the co-worker.</p> <p>You decide not to share your other ideas at team meetings.</p>	<p>You let your co-worker know how you're feeling in a productive way, e.g., "I feel surprised that in the meeting you said my idea wouldn't work."</p> <p>You ask questions to get more information from the co-worker about why there is disagreement.</p> <p>You look for solutions to the disagreement.</p> <p>You remind yourself that your ideas are important, and that disagreement between people is normal.</p>
Something happens	Reaction that may be out of balance	Reaction that may indicate a more balanced approach
Your work is piling up and you know you are going to miss an important deadline.	<p>You can't eat because you are so tense.</p> <p>You are unable to focus on work for long periods of time and do "busy work" such as surfing the internet, going for coffee, or shuffling papers, to pass the time.</p> <p>After the deadline has passed, you complain to your manager that you didn't have enough time and that it isn't your fault.</p> <p>You feel very anxious and panicky as you think about future deadlines, and the pile of unfinished work.</p>	<p>As your work is piling up, you take a few moments to step back and reorganize.</p> <p>You share your concerns with your manager that you don't think you can meet the deadline. You also share possible solutions to the problem.</p> <p>If the deadline will still be missed, as soon as you know, you share this information with your manager.</p> <p>Together with your manager, you make plans to avoid missed deadlines in future.</p>



POTENTIALLY HARMFUL COPING STRATEGIES

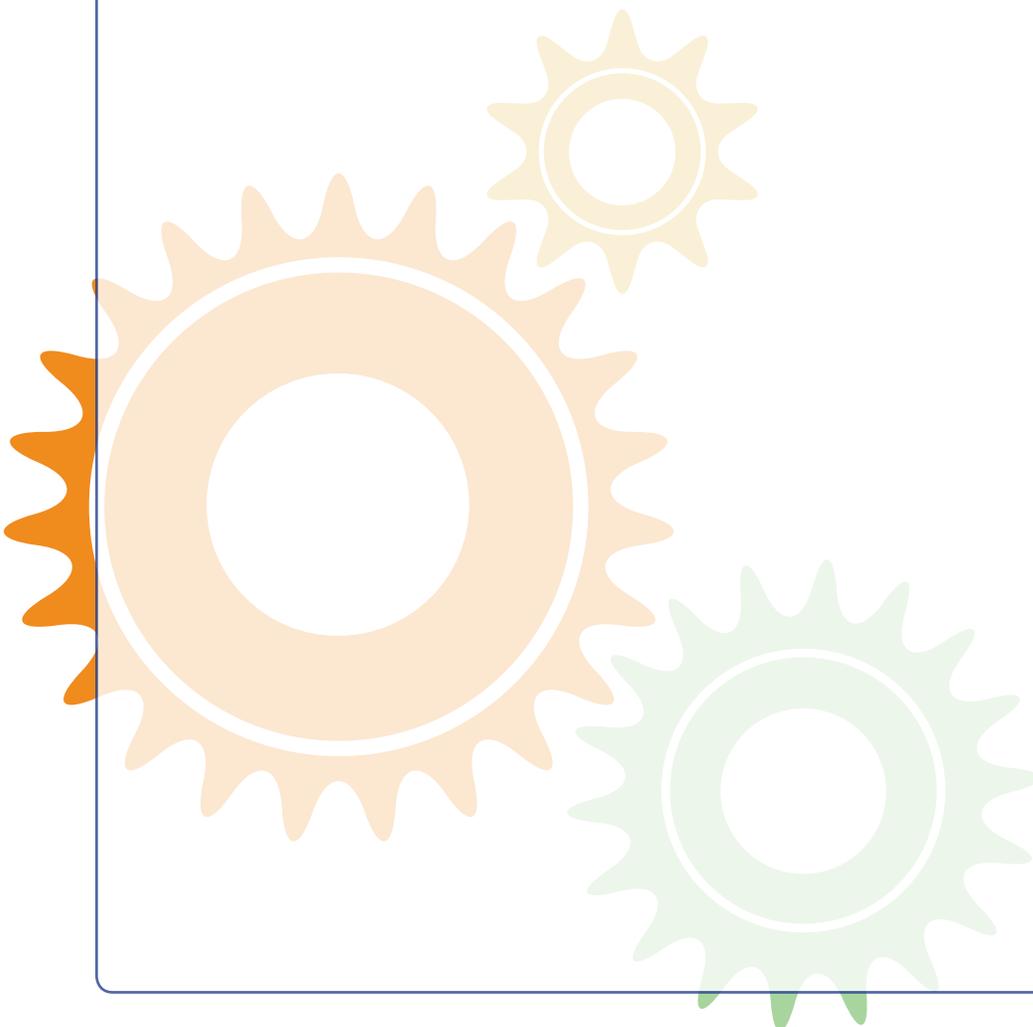
It is natural to want to reduce physical and emotional pain and fill up voids in our lives. It is possible to do this through relationships, work, recreation, exercise, alcohol, drugs, internet use or gambling. Any of these coping strategies can develop into addictions.

If your behaviors are causing problems in your life, at your work, or in your relationships, it may be necessary to consider other options.

Simply stopping addictive behaviours that are serving a purpose of reducing pain or filling voids is difficult. What many people need is to replace these harmful coping strategies with more healthy choices that serve the same purpose.

Always ensure that your behaviours are within your employer's policies or rules so that your job will not be at risk. This may involve the use of substances, fitness to work, internet use, use of company expense accounts, etc.

For more information on changing the way you cope, go to: www.mooddisorders.ca.





SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

- **Creating and maintaining healthy daily habits**

- Finding out what daily habits contribute to your well-being
- Creating a plan that will help you maintain your healthy daily habits
- Staying active doing things that you enjoy
- Being aware of your thoughts and how they are affecting you

- **Following your treatment plan**

- Talk to your health professional about any concerns
- Keep your medical appointments
- If you are taking medication, take it as prescribed
- If you are in counseling, keep your counseling appointments
- Be aware that many herbal and naturopathic products are unregulated and do not have consistent amounts of active ingredients. They can also interfere with other prescribed medications. Check with your doctor before using any herbal or naturopathic products.

When we begin to feel well, we sometimes think that we can skimp on our treatment and not keep to it. If you are having trouble keeping to the treatment plan and would like to make adjustments, it is not recommended to do this on your own, even if you think you know best. Any changes in treatment plans are best done in consultation with health professionals who can work with you to find solutions that are right for you.

- **Learning healthy ways to manage stress**

Finding out what works for you to relieve stress in a healthy way is an important part of staying well. We're all different, and what works for one person may not work for another. Here are some suggestions:

- Engaging in physical activity
- Finding ways to use humour
- Finding ways for creative self-expression
- Learning how to meditate, using deep breathing, practicing yoga, praying
- Spending time in nature
- Getting acupuncture treatments
- Doing hobbies or other pleasurable activities
- Joining a club
- Writing in a journal

- **Taking care of your body**

- Trying to make healthy food choices
- Seeking natural light every day
- Giving yourself enough time for sleep
- Staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water
- Finding regular physical activities that you enjoy
- Seeking help to end addictions

- **Avoiding or quitting temporary fixes that can create other problems, such as**

- Excessive consumption of coffee
- Alcoholic drinks
- Tobacco
- Overuse of prescription medication or using medications that are not prescribed for you
- Overuse of over-the-counter medications
- Street drugs

- **Making time for yourself**

- Taking regular vacations and other breaks from work
- Reading a good book
- Listening to your favorite music
- Going for a walk

- **Asking for support from:**

- Family
- Friends
- Support groups



STRESSORS AND OTHER TRIGGERS

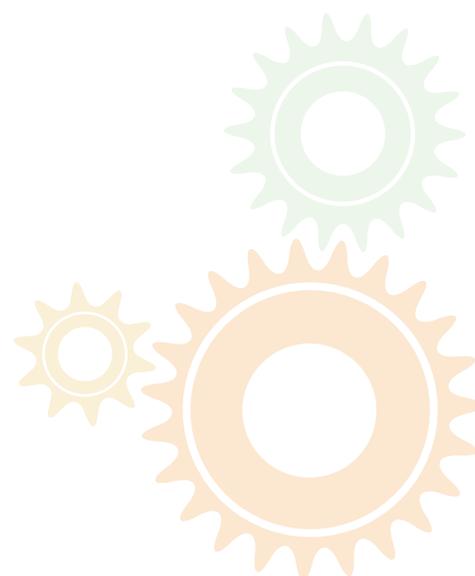
Triggers are events or experiences that may negatively impact your physical and mental health. When you are juggling multiple stressors, regaining well-being may be more difficult without help. Also, chronic or ongoing stress can result in physical or mental health problems.

Some examples of stressors or triggers are:

- Loss of a loved one
- Breakdown of a romantic relationship
- Changing jobs or losing a job
- Conflict in the workplace

- Conflict in the family
- Accident
- Injury
- Trauma or witnessing a traumatic event
- Illnesses
- Sleep deprivation
- Significant life changes (e.g., having a baby)
- Major change in health, behavior or circumstances of a family member
- Major change in finances

If you are dealing with one or more stressors, let your health care provider know and ask what you can do to reduce or manage the effects on your health.





TALKING TO CO-WORKERS

Often when people don't understand behaviors, they make assumptions. Making assumptions may cause people to say things at work that you find hurtful, confusing or that make you feel pressured to respond. Generally, people don't intend to cause harm, but may not think carefully about how their words affect you, and may not be aware of your needs.

You can choose how you respond to comments or questions about how you are coping, why you may be doing things at work differently, reasons why you were away, or your current health status. Take time to consider how much information you want to share and how you want it shared.

Usually, co-workers respond better when given enough information to understand what is going on.

If you are returning to work, talk to your manager before you start back about how you want information handled. For more information, see http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/talking_to_coworkers.

Some possible responses to questions and comments

So what was wrong with you? Why were you off for so long?

I was off work because I was ill. It took me a long time to feel better, but I'm feeling much better now. I'm very glad to be back and to reconnect with you and with the team.

It must have been nice to have all that time off! I would love a vacation right now.

You sound pretty stressed. I wish that I had been on vacation. Actually I was working really hard to get better, so that I could return to work and be part of the team again.

We all bent over backwards to do your work while you were away.

I am grateful that you filled in for me while I was away. I was also working really hard while I was away to get better so that I could come back and do my part.

Why are you not back full time? Are you still sick?

My doctor has suggested that I return to work gradually, so that I can adjust slowly back to full days. I've been told that this is often the best way for people to return to work successfully.

Why are you only doing some of your tasks?

It is part of a plan put in place to accommodate me so that I gradually build up to my full workload.

Why are you only doing the easy tasks?

It is part of a plan put in place to accommodate me through a successful transition back to my regular duties.

While you were away, your replacement did a fabulous job. She cleaned up all your files. We're going to miss how organized she was!

I am feeling a bit vulnerable right now, and it's kind of hard for me to hear about how great my replacement was! I'm really looking forward to contributing to the team again.

See also Understanding Needs at Work http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/understanding_needs and Conversations that Consider Needs http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/considering_needs.



THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE DISCLOSING

Disclosure means sharing information about an illness or condition.

There are things to consider before disclosing at work:

Think about policies at your workplace

- Does your workplace have a workplace accommodation policy?
- Does your workplace have a diversity policy?

Think about your relationship with your manager

- Would you describe your relationship with your manager as supportive and respectful?
- If your manager were to change, what are the chances the relationship with your new manager would also be supportive and respectful?

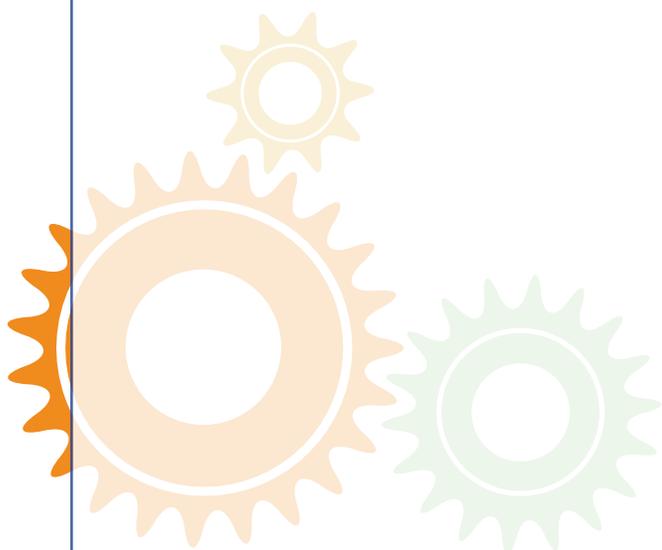
Think about your workplace culture

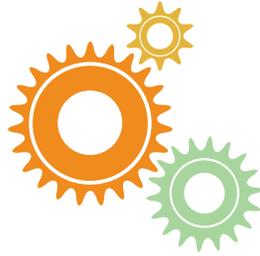
- Are differences among individuals respected and celebrated?
- Are people with disabilities respected and fully included?
- How are people who have a mental illness or addiction talked about? Are jokes made that make fun of people who have a mental illness or addiction?
- Do you know of anyone at work who has disclosed? How were they treated by co-workers and management?

Think about your own needs

- Would keeping this a secret be a burden to you?
- Would sharing this be a relief for you?
- Do you feel comfortable talking about your situation?

For further information, go to: http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/talking_to_your_employer.





Working Through It

www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/wti



mooddisorders.on.ca

mental health
WORKS

mentalhealthworks.ca