



Psychological Injury due to Harassment

WorkplaceNL

Health | Safety | Compensation

TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Common employer questions about psychological injury accommodation and return-to-work

How do I talk to my employee about what's going on?

- As a leader, you don't need the perfect words to start a conversation about an employee's psychological well-being — what matters most is showing care and willingness to listen.
 - You can start by saying, *"I've noticed you haven't been your usual self lately. How can I help you right now?"*
- Focus on observable changes, rather than trying to diagnose or make assumptions.
- Listen without interrupting and give the employee space to share at their comfort level.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect for the employee's privacy.
- Where appropriate, connect the employee with available supports or resources.

What am I allowed to say?

- Employees have a right to privacy, so it's understandable if you're not sure what to ask or say.
- What an employee chooses to share will depend on their comfort level and relationship with you.
- Keep the conversation focused on work-related functions, not on the psychological injury.
- Maintain confidentiality — only share information with those who need it to support the employee's work or accommodation and be sure to follow your workplace policies.

Can I ask for a diagnosis?

- Employees have a right to privacy.
- A specific medical diagnosis is not required to provide workplace accommodations.
- Avoid asking for details such as the name of the condition, test results or treatments.
- Employees are only required to disclose information about how their condition may limit their ability to work.
- You can ask about functional limitations and what support may help them.

What kind of accommodations can I offer?

- Understanding the relationship between the job requirements and the employee's functional limits can help guide you to develop an appropriate accommodations strategy.
- Consider options across your workplace, including modifying duties or identifying alternate work tasks in advance.
- Accommodation strategies may include:
 - Contacting WorkplaceNL's Return to Work Facilitator for guidance and ideas.
 - Focusing on the employee's functional abilities.
 - Adjusting tasks, schedules or responsibilities as needed.
 - Exploring creative solutions, such as reassigning or bundling tasks.

How will the employee return to the workplace after being off work?

- There are several ways that you can help a worker successfully return-to-work after being off due to a psychological injury:
 - Discuss the benefits of staying connected to the workplace.
 - Stay in touch with the employee while they are off work.
 - Work together to develop a gradual and appropriate return-to-work plan.
 - Be flexible and adjust the plan as needed based on progress.

I'm not equipped for this!

- It is normal to feel overwhelmed or unsure about how to support an employee recovering from a psychological injury.
- You are not expected to manage this alone — support is available.
- Contact WorkplaceNL for guidance. We can work with you, your employee, and health care providers to support recovery and return-to-work.

How can WorkplaceNL help?

- Engage with the workplace parties as early as possible to support planning and recovery.
- Help facilitate communication between you, the worker and the health care providers.
- Provide education and guidance regarding workplace accommodations and return-to-work practices.