



Canadian Mental Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous

Accommodations in the Workplace

Presented by:
Lucette Wesley
Canadian Mental Health Association

About CMHA

- One of Canada's most established charities, now 100
- Our policies and programs anchored in evidence and informed by people's personal experience.
- We work towards mental health for all, including people with addictions.
- Over 120 locations throughout Canada; 14 in BC



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What are your Goals for today?



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Today we will review:

- Why accommodate?
- Approach to the conversation
- Free tools
- Ways to accommodate
- What if?



Q: Why is accommodation so important?

Facts

- In any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians will develop a mental illness
- Mental health problems affect all Canadians
- Mental health problems affect an individual's feelings, thinking and behaviour
- Treatment can reduce the symptoms of mental health problems
- Recovery is expected, with *timely, adequate* treatment



Protective Factors

- Social support (relationships)
- Sense of belonging (community or cultural connection)
- Environmental factors (workplace, community, home)
- Personal resilience (physical, emotional wellbeing, personal coping skills, optimism)

Working – in a healthy workplace – contributes significantly to recovery

- routine
- social contact
- activity
- contribution, meaning
- sense of identity
- financial security

Legal and regulatory requirements

Duty to inquire

- “You should have known”
- You have a responsibility to inquire

Duty to accommodate

- You have a responsibility to accommodate a person with a disability

Communicate Effectively:

- Communicate without Judgment
- Spread Positive Talk
- Identify Your Interaction Style
- Create Uplifts (a brief communicative encounter)
- Listen Without Interrupting
- Provide Negative Feedback, Constructively
- Build Reflective Listening Skills
- Monitor Your Communication Style

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/leader-development>



10

Engage Employees:

- Connect with Your Team
- Evaluate Judgments
- Use Appreciative Inquiry
- Distinguish Acknowledgment from Agreement
- Elicit Feedback
- Elicit Opinions
- Invite Solutions
- Reduce Barriers to Providing Negative Feedback

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/leader-development>



11

Improving Self-Awareness:

Envision Your Ideal Self

- Think about how you wish to be viewed by people you work with

Envision Others' Evaluations

- Use specific words and descriptors to consider how you are viewed by the people you manage

Understand Personal Barriers

- A first step toward being comfortable and effective when dealing with negative emotions in the workplace

Use Different Means to the Same End (approaching situations)

- Approaching the same situation in multiple ways, all working toward the same goal



12

Q: How do I communicate when I think there may be a mental illness?

How to have the conversation with an employee

1. Talk to yourself
2. I notice
3. I'm wondering
4. How can I help?
5. Take a moment



14

Step 1: Talk to yourself

- Are you in the right frame of mind to start this discussion?
- Are you aware of your triggers?
- Have you envisioned what success will look like?
- Do you have access to resources you may need?
- Do you have some time blocked off?
- Are you able to defer some of your needs?
(a need for fairness; to be heard; to express yourself; to solve problems)
- Label your assumptions



Assumptions we may make about a worker

- has a bad attitude
- is lazy and doesn't care
- lacks intelligence
- is just a difficult person
- doesn't want to get along with everyone
- is getting or wanting "special treatment"

We also assume they don't want to divulge their personal information.



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Step 2: I notice

Speak to what you see. Mental illness is not invisible. Look for changes :

- physical health
- eating habits
- personal appearance
- sociability
- errors, quality of work, accidents
- punctuality
- response to new tasks and familiar tasks
- working more, unable to take a break



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Step 3: I'm wondering

- Step back from assumptions
- Be curious
- Listen for understanding:
 - ask one question at a time
 - listen for the answers, allow pauses
 - avoid interrupting
 - seek clarification
 - don't problem solve, take more time to gather information than you normally would
 - be aware if you are arguing or defending



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Resources

- Remember that you have resources you can offer:
 - EFAP program
 - Family Doctor
 - BC Nurseline (Healthlink) 811
 - Bounce Back (doctor referral or online)
 - Living Life to the Full
 - Here to Help
- Internal Workplace Resource List



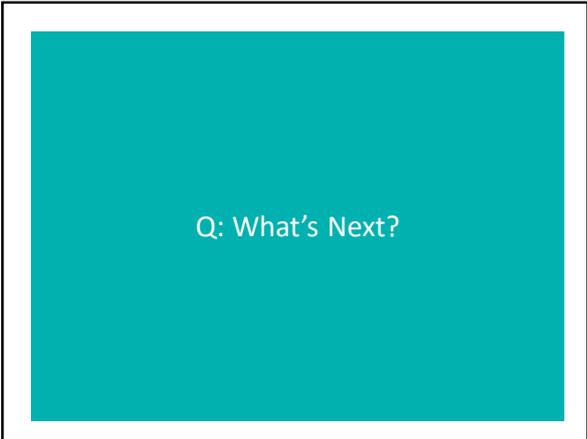
Take a moment

It's important to take a moment to thank yourself and acknowledge that you have approached an important conversation and have started to build a stronger relationship with another person

- Take a walk
- Grab a coffee/tea/water
- Sit in silence for a few minutes



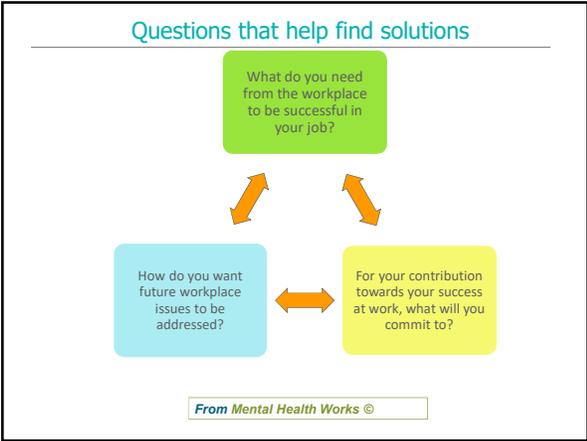
Activity



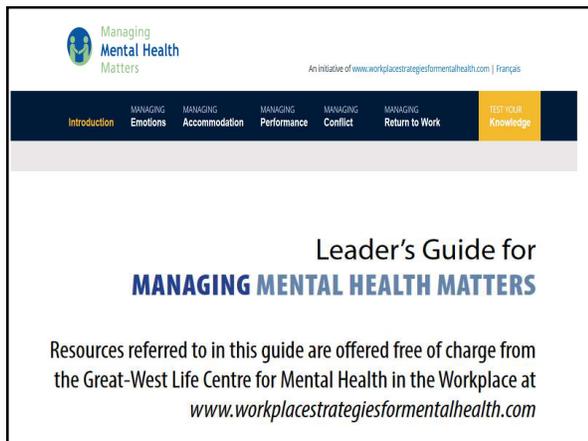
Step 4: "How can I help you..."

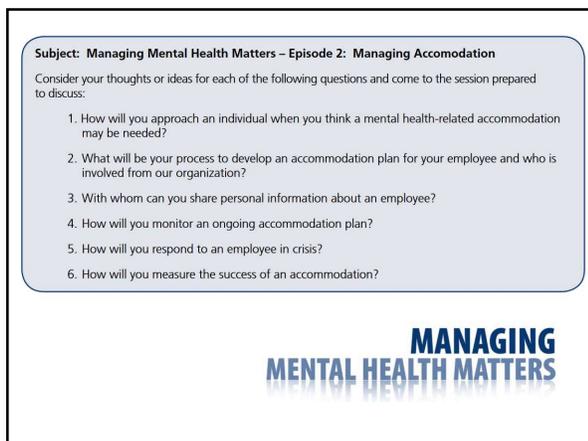
- What can I do to support your success at work?
- How can I help you be successful at work?
- Consider small "a" accommodations (everyday changes and supports)
- Ask what the employee is going to do to also contribute to their success
- If appropriate, write next steps down either with the employee or after the meeting

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Sample Workplace Plan

Request for Workplace Agreement for John Doe

This agreement was developed in consultation with John Doe and union steward, Jane Smith on April 9, 2016. This agreement does not supersede any existing company policies, collective bargaining agreements or applicable legislation. It is developed in good faith that all parties will conform to the spirit and intent of returning John Doe to work in a manner that maintains a balance between health and productivity.

To allow a successful return-to-work for John Doe, the following accommodations are requested to be provided on the first day returning to work:

- An office in a reasonably quiet and low traffic area;
- A team meeting in the morning that encourages all team members to:
 - Share what they have achieved in the past year;
 - Discuss projects they are currently working on;
 - Explain new processes.
- Graduated return-to-work plan (see table below)



Additional accommodations to include:

- During the first eight weeks, John has requested to avoid meetings where the number of participants exceeds eight. In the event that John's input is required, he will contribute in writing and review the minutes of the meeting.
- Scheduled 10-minute weekly meetings with John's manager will be set up to discuss John's workplace progress and well-being. These meetings are intended to:
 - Answer the question: How is everything going? allowing John a chance to reflect on and share his experiences in the workplace over the past week.
 - Monitor commitments and deadlines; ensure that these are renegotiated as required bearing in mind that John's perfectionist tendencies compel him to sometimes commit to unreasonable deadlines or objectives.
- Where possible, supervisors should clearly and specifically state their expectations around task completion in writing and provide John with an opportunity to seek clarification.
- To avoid John's frustration with delays, it is suggested that his manager attempt to mitigate the situation by refusing unreasonable deadlines or providing sufficient support to remove the pressure associated with these.
- Occasionally, John may need to remove himself from the work environment to take a short walk. It would be appreciated if his team could understand how John benefits from this.

John wishes to commit to the following to ensure that his return-to-work plan is successful:

- To complete his computer-based training and all available classroom training within the first three months of his graduated return-to-work plan.
- To resist his tendency to minimize problems so that his manager may have an accurate and honest assessment of how he is doing and how the manager may be able to help.
- To continue his regular check-ups with medical professionals and maintain his healthcare regime that preserves his health and well-being.
- To actually take his breaks, including lunch, to ensure a more productive workday and maintain balance on a daily basis.

To assist his manager in addressing future issues, John has shared that:

- Addressing issues immediately and directly is preferable to 'walking on eggshells' or letting things build into bigger issues.
- His manager may need to closely monitor his perfectionist and over-achieving tendencies in order to ensure John's continued well-being. Questioning his willingness to take on too much can go a long way to sustainable productivity.
- After completion of the graduated return-to-work plan, John will be able and willing to do all required tasks. However, John's tendency to take on too much should still be monitored.
- John wants to continue to experience respectful and courteous discussions with his superiors around performance and workplace issues.
- Feedback that is specific and work-related is preferable to generalities.

The above document accurately describes my request for an effective graduated return-to-work plan.

[Signature]
John Doe
Employee of Your Organization

April 9, 2016
Date





A Sample Return to Work Plan

Return to Work Summary for Gerri Smith RTW Discussion Meeting: 27 May 2017

Present at Meeting:

Gerri Smith (Employee)
John Boggins (Health Services)
Jack Smyth (Chief Production Engineer)
Linda Veitch (HR Manager)

A meeting was conducted on the 27th of May, 2017 in order to discuss plans for Gerri's return-to-work at ACME Roadrunner Productions.

It was confirmed that Gerri will be returning to her role as a quality control specialist in Anvil development.

However, it has been determined that they will shift from being the evening specialist on duty, to assuming a daytime shift. This was deemed to be a positive change by the employee due to the nature of their disability and the challenges associated with nightshift work.

Jack explained that a new product is currently in development since Gerri left, and there have been a number of systems changes to the assembly process.

Jack also explained that while Gerri will be missed by their team on the evening shift, new hires have enabled this change in shift to occur. In addition, the teams are all currently undergoing retraining on the systems changes, so Gerri will not require retraining separate from the team.

Gerri confirmed that their biggest challenge in returning to work will be with memory and stamina.

In order to address the employee's challenges in this regard, John suggested that Gerri avoid time-sensitive tasks during the initial stages of return to work. It is also suggested that a peer-coach be provided to Gerri so as to have a go-to person available during work hours who can clarify or take the time to aid in retraining on our assembly processes.



It was agreed that Gerri will be allowed more time to complete tasks initially, gradually working towards meeting the productivity standard within 6 months. They will also be given a flexible break schedule to accommodate issues with stamina while on the job.

John reminded Gerri of the support services available to staff in the health services area of the complex, and encouraged them to access the EFAP should any minor issues arise. Noting the lack of natural light in Gerri's current office, John recommended that Gerri consider allowing the Company to install a UV-Light lamp in their workspace.

Jack confirmed that there are no vacation allowances during a gradual return-to-work schedule, but that Gerri would continue to accrue vacation days which can be used after the process is complete. The return-to-work will begin on June 11th, 2018 and continue into July. The schedule is as follows:

11 June: M, W, F (3 Full Days)

18 June: M, W, F (3 Full Days)

25 June: M, T, Th, F (2 Full days, 2 Half Days)

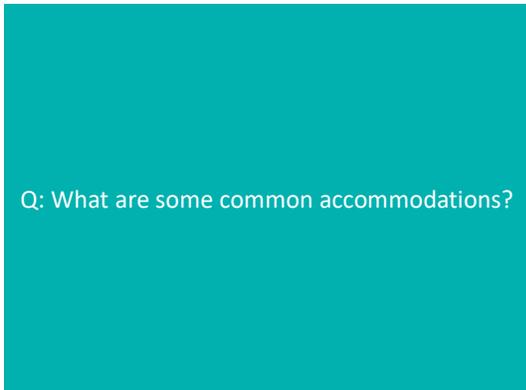
2 July: M, T, Th, F (4 Full Days)

9 July: Full time

Gerri and Jack have both committed to holding weekly performance and wellness check-ins together. Should the schedule or accommodations require amendment this will be placed into writing and submitted to HR. Jack will advise the team that Gerri is to return to the Organization on 11 June, and Gerri has given their permission to let staff know that Gerri will be on a gradual RTW schedule due to a medical concern.

Linda Veitch
Human Resources Manager
ACME Roadrunner Productions

Q: What are some common accommodations?



Management Approach

- Communication and Supervision Techniques
 - How, how often, approach
- Training Approach
 - Re-training, orienting
- Environmental Needs
 - Lighting, noise, distractions
- Flexibility
 - Work hours, breaks, task assignment

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/Accommodation-Strategies>



Specific Work Related Concerns

- Adaptability
 - Flexibility on deadlines, work time
- Attention to Detail
 - Break up tasks, more time, written instructions,
- Memory/Recall
 - To do lists, reminders, written instructions
- Decision-Making or Problem Solving
 - Checklists, check in points, templates, regular check ins



Specific Work Related Concerns

- Exposure to Distractions, Confrontation, Emotionally Stressful Situations
 - Simulation training, support, task exchange, increased breaks, quiet space
- Time Pressures
 - Regular check in, priority setting, set expectations on communication, feedback,
- Relationships
 - Deal with conflict, train staff on supportive/respectful workplace, open honest feedback



Not a one time Event

- Engage the employee – Ask don't Tell
- Specific and measurable
- Discuss plan for relapse
- Document and agree on the plan
- Regular check ins – follow through
- Celebrate achievements
- Evaluate and adjust
- Consider the co-workers



Activity: Putting it into Practice

Q: What if it isn't that simple

What if co-workers have concerns?

- Communicate but respect privacy
- Important to ask the employee what to communicate
- Educate all employees on your accommodation process
- Provide mental illness awareness education to all
- Do not require employees to attend all work-related social functions so that those who are uncomfortable can choose to abstain.
- Encourage all employees to move non work-related conversations out of work areas to avoid the perception of gossip or conspiracy.



What if they need you too much?

Boundaries: The lines we draw to delineate roles and responsibilities

- Personal
- Professional

Establish a boundary by creating an agenda for the conversation, including time and topics



What if they don't disclose?

- Continue to reach out with care and concern
- Set up a follow up meeting
- Monitor for any changes
- Repeat steps 1-4
- Repeat
- You may need to move to performance management



What if there is a risk of Harm?

- Listen actively
- Ask them if they are feeling suicidal/ want to end their life
- Assure them that they can get help
- Never leave someone alone who is at risk
- **If immediate risk**
 - Call 911, get an ambulance
- **If non-immediate risk**
 - Call the Crisis Line 310-6789 or 1-800-SUICIDE
- Ask if wish to call their mental health team



What if there is a long term medical condition?

- Review your own workplace protocols
- Written Workplan
 - Agreed upon accommodations, expectations, approach on relapse, response when not well
- Written job instructions
- Encourage ongoing communication
- Provide encouragement and feedback
- Evaluate effectiveness



What if there is no improvement?

- Is the employee under appropriate care?
- Has the employee cooperated with the accommodation?
- Ensure you've met test within your organization
 - duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship
- If the accommodation is not successful and there is no improvement, talk to HR
- Legal opinion may be warranted.
- If terminating ensure the employee's safety (EAP, way to get home etc.)



What if I'm not sure I have the skill set?

Leaders with strong emotional intelligence:

- Understand emotional triggers
- Are aware of making assumptions
- Listen first, acknowledge and validate
- Ask questions that recognize strengths
- Employ reflective listening skills
- Know how to provide negative feedback
 - respectful, helpful, effective
- Regularly touch base

- www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/leader-development



How do I increase my EI skills?

- Observe
- Look at your environment
- Monitor your emotions
- Examine how you react
- Take responsibility
- Examine how your actions affect others
- Identify areas for improvement and set goals



Managing Mental Health
An initiative of www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com | Français

Introduction Managing Emotions Managing Accommodation Managing Performance Managing Conflict Managing Return to Work **Emotional Intelligence**

Job Assessment New Resource Guide for Your Health & Well-being Your Health & Well-being Your Health & Well-being Your Health & Well-being Your Health & Well-being

Emotional Intelligence Skills Assessment

Related Resources

SUMMARY: Take the Emotional Intelligence Skills Assessment to enhance your ability to manage negative emotions in the workplace.

BEGIN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Purpose
Your assessment responses will provide a confidential and informative profile of your strengths in managing negative emotions and reactions in the workplace. The results will highlight areas in which you may benefit most from additional skills training. Your results can be useful for helping you create strategies for enhancing your effectiveness in managing negative emotions.

Instructions
This assessment contains 52 statements and takes about 10 minutes to complete. The statements cover a range of topics about reacting to and managing negative emotions in the workplace. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.

Keep the following in mind

- Answer based on your own personal experiences in your current position.
- Choose the answer that is true for you most of the time.



What can we do in our workplaces?

Prevention of Harm and Promotion of Psychologically Healthy Workplaces



Workplace Strategies for Mental Health
An initiative of the Green-Wood Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Questions for considering existing policies and process:
(Be prepared with the actual policies, procedures or resources that your organization currently offers and/or ask a knowledgeable representative from your human resources area to co-facilitate this with you.)

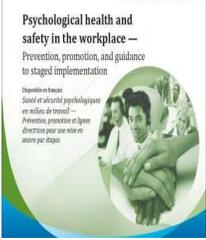
1. How will we approach an individual when we think an accommodation may be needed?
2. What is our process to develop an accommodation plan?
3. Who needs to be involved from our organization?
4. With whom can we share personal information about an employee?
5. What are the limits of our authority in terms of accommodation strategies?
6. What is the expectation for us in terms of monitoring an ongoing accommodation plan?
7. How do we respond to an employee in crisis?
8. What are the resources available in our organization to assist with an accommodation?
9. What policies does our organization have related to accommodation?

The National Standard: Jan 2013

A framework to create and continually improve workplaces, striving to make them psychologically healthy and safe.

www.csa.ca/Z1003

Implementation guide:
www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/issues/workplace/implementation-guide




What is a psychologically healthy workplace?

1. Psychological Support
2. Organizational Culture
3. Clear Leadership & Expectations
4. Civility & Respect
5. Psychological Competencies & Requirements
6. Growth & Development
7. Recognition & Reward
8. Involvement and Influence
9. Workload Management
10. Engagement
11. Balance
12. Psychological Protection
13. Protection of Physical Safety

CMHA training - Psychological Health and Safety Advisor



Additional Training

Workshops are available through the CMHA about:

- Bullying and Harassment
- National Standard
- Mental Health Awareness
- Leadership Training – including for union leaders
- Suicide Awareness & Intervention – Gatekeeper
- Peer Support Program Development and Support



Q: What resources are available if I am struggling/my colleague/an employee is struggling?

Getting help

- Family doctor best first point of contact
- Employee & Family Assistance Program
- Benefits plan may offer psychological services
- Supervisor, Manager, HR or Union

- Crisis Line **310-6789**
- Suicide Help Line – 1-800-SUICIDE
- Canadian Mental Health Association



Workplace Health Resources

- Canadian Mental Health Association
www.cmha.bc.ca
www.cmha.ca
- Mental Health Works
www.mentalhealthworks.ca
- Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health
www.gwlcenreformentalhealth.com
- Guarding Minds @ Work
www.guardingmindsatwork.ca
- HeretoHelp
www.heretohelp.bc.ca



56

Q: What services/resources are available through CMHA?

CMHA Resources

CMHA offers a number of resources for coworkers, friends, family members or yourself.

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL
helping you to help yourself

BounceBack
reclaim your health

heretohelp
Mental health and substance use information you can trust

Confident Parents Thriving Kids

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Gatekeeper Training

Training founded on breaking silence – asking/talking about suicide to raise awareness, support help-seeking, provide a compassionate, non-judgmental and informed response

 **ASIST**
Active Suicide Intervention Skills Training

- 2 day Suicide Intervention Training
- Developed in '83, over 1M people in 30+ countries trained
- Proven intervention model
- Experiential - skills practice and development

 **safeTALK**
suicide alertness to everyone

- Half day Suicide Alertness Training
- Developed in 2006, used in over 20 countries
- Brief training to identify and avert suicide risk
- Basics of recognizing/taking action to connect with resources

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Questions?

Keep in touch!

Canadian Mental Health Association
BC Division
Workplace Mental Health Programs
604-688-3234
www.cmha.bc.ca



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