



How to support workers who have psychological injuries

This document lists ways to support and protect workers who have work-related psychological injuries. It's designed to help you and your employee develop an appropriate stay-at-work or return-to-work plan.

Remember to focus on what the worker is able to do while keeping their safety top of mind. Different strategies will work for different people, so ask the worker what types of supports they think will help, using the table below as a starting point.

Someone with a psychological injury may have difficulty with:

Deadlines, time pressures, and productivity expectations

Tolerating stress

Multi-tasking

Maintaining sustained attention and concentration

As an employer, you can support them by providing:

- More time to complete priority tasks at higher quality
- Support or resources if speed is crucial
- Checklists of tasks to be completed in order of priority

- A flexible schedule
- Supportive employment services (e.g., work coach, peer support)
- Increased support during stressful situations
- Team building focused on resilience, emotional intelligence, civility, and respect
- Permission for some work to be done from home

- Fewer tasks at a time until capacity is reached
- Modifications to work processes that allow the employee to focus on one task at a time
- Clear, specific, and measurable expectations for tasks
- Training/retraining to support proficiency and time management
- A flow chart of tasks that must be performed at the same time, labelling or colour-coding each task in order

- A flexible schedule
- A quieter work environment
- The option to listen to music using headphones
- Earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones
- A clutter-free work area
- Short breaks when concentration declines (even standing up for 10 seconds can help)

They may also have difficulty with:

Organization and prioritization	Tasks requiring accuracy	Tasks requiring significant attention to detail	Memory or learning new material
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You can support them by providing:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A colour-coded system for files, projects, or activities, and to prioritize tasks • Weekly charts to identify daily work activities • Electronic organizers, mobile devices, and email reminders • A “cheat sheet” of high-priority activities, projects, people, etc. • An organized workspace with no clutter • Time at the end of each day to organize and set up for the next day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written instructions and checklists • A “cheat sheet” of steps to follow to complete and review accuracy of work • Extra time for learning new materials or routines • Peer support or a buddy system to review work, especially during training periods or when learning new job skills • A quieter work environment • Uninterrupted work time • More time to complete work where accuracy is important <p>Note: If the stakes of making a mistake or error are high (e.g., for safety-sensitive duties), consider making this a restriction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlining: Remove any non-essential functions of the job to focus the employee’s energy on the essential tasks • A breakdown of large tasks (into a series of smaller tasks) • More time for work requiring attention to detail • Short breaks when concentration declines • Instructions and assignments in writing • Extra time for learning new materials or routines • Encouragement to do the detailed work when they’re less tired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best modes of learning for the worker (e.g., written, verbal, or video instructions; checklists) • A recording device so the employee can play back information discussed at training and/or meetings • Minutes of meetings and training sessions • Training refreshers and opportunities to practise skills • A flow chart of steps in a task • A colour-coding scheme to prioritize tasks • Uninterrupted work time • Task separation: Prioritize tasks and assign a new task only once current task is completed • “Cheat sheets” of tasks in order of priority • Scheduled reminders of important tasks or deadlines • Job shadowing
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