

Five Tips for Helping Employees With Medical Conditions



Employees experiencing medical conditions may need assistance to stay at work or return to work after a disability leave. Recognizing the need for assistance, and supporting them through this process, is essential for success. And, as part of your organization's management team, you're in the best position to help. If your employees are working through medical issues, offer assistance in the following ways:

Identify an employee in need of assistance. Let your HR manager know if an employee is experiencing difficulties at work, such as:



- Struggling to perform job duties
- Complaining of pain
- Missing work often
- Showing up late



Inquire about the employee's situation. Be pragmatic and factual, focusing your outreach around his or her job performance. Consider broaching the subject by saying, "I've noticed you've been [late to work, working slowly, lacking focus], is everything OK? I'd like to help if I can."



Collaborate with HR and your disability carrier's consultant. Given your keen understanding of the employee and his or her job responsibilities, you're positioned well to determine the best approach to help the employee at work. Work with your HR manager and disability consultant to develop a stay-at-work or return-to-work plan that can help promote recovery and increase productivity.



Provide ongoing support. After an accommodation is in place, or an employee returns to work, your support can make a difference in achieving a successful outcome. Proactively communicate clear performance expectations to the employee, especially if there are new or temporary job duties involved. Also, support the employee by focusing on what he or she can do, rather than what they can't.



Follow up regularly. Keep in contact with your HR manager and disability consultant to report on the employee's progress or discuss any setbacks. Plans can always be revised to take into account new medical information, employee limitations or equipment accommodations.

For more information on best practices and tips, visit www.workplacepossibilities.com.

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