



Employee Assistance Program

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Return to Work Meeting

After an employee has been on leave from the workplace, there is a need to help the employee and the workplace make the reintegration transition. An important element in facilitating this transition is the Return to Work (RTW) conference. Coordinated through the Employee Assistance Office, the RTW conference brings together the employee, the employee's supervisor, and the Employee Assistance staff person. On some occasions, other employees directly affected by the absence are involved. The purpose of the RTW conference is to discuss "work-related issues" related to the employee's resumption of work responsibilities.

Before the RTW conference, the EAP staff person typically meets individually with the returning employee to explain the objectives of the RTW conference. At the RTW conference, the EAP staff person will emphasize that the participants will focus on work-related issues only and that the employee has the right to share only those treatment details that seem appropriate. After the RTW conference, the EAP staff person will check in with the employee and supervisor to ensure that the transition is going smoothly.

The RTW conference is a good time to discuss where things stand now. It is an opportunity to review work performance problems that may have existed prior to or during leave and develop a plan to resolve those problems. Then, identify conditions for return to employment so that everyone is on the same page.

This is also a chance to identify any special needs that the employee anticipates upon returning to work and develop a plan to address these needs, such as clarification and/or modification of job responsibilities, reduction of hours, schedule changes, etc. Encourage the employee to identify concerns about returning to work and to use support systems to address with those concerns.

The employee should clarify what information may be shared with co-workers about their return, such as reason for absence, special needs upon return, changes to schedule, etc. This is optional based on the comfort level of the employee.

Another objective of the RTW conference is to update the employee on events that have occurred during their absence. This may include changes in staffing and procedure and news related to the organization as a whole.

The conference should be presented as an option available to all employees and as a way to help everyone clarify past, present and future work issues. For assistance in scheduling and preparing for the Return to Work conference, contact the Employee Assistance Office at 266-6561.