



Transitional work can help employees resume work earlier

Absences from work are costly to both employees and employers. The longer an absence lasts, the less likely an employee may return to work. One way to stop this trend is to offer modified duties, or transitional work, to help the employee return to the workplace.

Having a return-to-work (RTW) focus from the start (and throughout the absence) may help lower the impact of illness and injury (e.g., stress, finances, etc.). Transitional work can be an important part of a recovery plan. Working together, we'll find ways to support your employees and get them back to work as early as possible.

What is transitional work?

- Gradually increased hours
- Modified duties or temporary arrangements
- Work in a different position
- Project work

You can help the employee by removing the barriers in your workplace. This may help employees return to work during recovery. To do this, you may try changing:

- Hours, shifts, days, break schedule
- Equipment and environment
- Location or department
- Projects and tasks
- Supervision (e.g., written versus spoken communication, checklists, reminders, planning, job aids, buddy system)

Your Canada Life case manager and rehabilitation consultant will contact you early in the process. They'll keep in touch during your employee's absence to discuss these options.

Benefits

There are many benefits to supporting your employees with transitional work opportunities:

- Builds a stay-at-work culture
- Helps find earlier RTW solutions for employees
- Supports your employees' needs to help them with a successful recovery
- Keeps your employees' skills current
- Keeps them connected with their coworkers
- Saves costs through fewer absences and shorter disability periods

What it means for you

Connection

- Stay in touch with your employee throughout their absence and during the RTW process
- Figure out and explore the possibility of different work opportunities
- Take part in discussions and planning meetings with your employee and Canada Life

Communication

- You'll receive information about your employee's duties, current functional abilities and accommodation needs
- You'll receive RTW goals, expected outcomes and the expected duration of the transitional period
- You'll get answers to your questions and requests as you explore opportunities for accommodations and transitional work

Transitional work in action



- Marco's employer slowly increased his hours, gave him a headset and a supportive desk chair, which helped him return to work.



- Although Kathleen couldn't bend, push, or lift heavy boxes, her employer gave her temporary data entry work rather than her usual work in the warehouse.



- Carl needed extra time to respond when working on the IT support desk call line. His employer moved him to email requests instead. This helped him work with a 24-hour turnaround instead of having to respond right away.

Resources

[Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#)

[Supporting Employee Success planning booklet](#)

[Canadian Human Rights Commission*
Duty to Accommodate](#)

*Specific resources for each province. Refer to your provincial resources for more information.

Transitional work can cut costs and increase productivity, giving your business an edge. To get started on offering transitional work to your employees, or to learn more about how it works, contact your group representative.

One more component in Canada Life's suite of DisabilitySolutions.



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