

July 2024



PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION & RETURN TO WORK MANAGEMENT OF WORKPLACE PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY

A Guide for employers, Return to
Work Coordinators and managers



Government
of South Australia



CONTENTS

4 Introduction

5 Roles within the workplace

8 Prevention

8 Creating a mentally healthy workplace

8 Managing psychosocial hazards and risks

10 Supporting workers' mental health

13 Resources

14 When a psychological work injury occurs

18 Importance of early intervention

19 Services

20 Recovery and Return to Work

22 Resources

23 Community mental health services

24 Services: When it's an emergency

25 ReturnToWorkSA Supports and Services

26 Glossary of common terms

For a digital copy of this Guide scan the QR code



INTRODUCTION

Did you know that workplace injuries aren't always visible?
Neither are their causes.

This guide is a resource for employers, managers and Return to Work Coordinators (RTWCs) to assist in the prevention, early intervention and recovery and return to work management of work-related psychological injuries.

Work-related psychological injuries¹ can stem from various psychosocial hazards such as excessive workloads or exposure to harmful behaviours including bullying and harassment or occupational violence. These workplace hazards, if not identified and appropriately managed, can lead to injuries, which can lead to work injury claims.

In some cases, individuals with physical work injuries may also develop psychological injuries. This can be as a consequence of symptoms related to the physical injury such as a pain disorder or head trauma. However, psychological work injury claims can also arise from mismanaged physical injuries or where workers have been isolated or mistreated as a result of their physical injury claim, leading to conditions like anxiety and depression.

Psychological injuries can require longer recovery times, higher claims costs and sometimes more time away from work when compared to physical injuries. Preventing psychological harm and facilitating the recovery and return to work of workers with psychological injuries is not just a legal obligation but has many benefits to the worker and the business.



Mental illness affects one in five Australians every year and imposes significant costs on employers and the community due to productivity loss, reduced work performance and absenteeism.

1. other terms for psychological injury include, psychiatric injury, a mental injury or mental disorder.

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE IN PREVENTING AND MANAGING PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Focusing on psychological health and safety is equally as important as focusing on physical health and safety.



Preventing and managing psychological injuries in the workplace is everybody's responsibility. Similarly, when an injury does occur everyone has a role to play in creating a supportive and understanding work environment, which is crucial for an injured worker's successful recovery and return to work.

Various workplace roles play a part in preventing and managing psychological injuries within the workplace. From leaders and Return to Work Coordinators to work colleagues, everyone is responsible for creating a supportive, resilient and mentally healthy work culture.

Roles within the workplace



Return to Work Coordinator (RTWC)

The RTWC supports the workplace in the establishment of early intervention strategies and return to work opportunities for workers with a psychological injury. This includes:

- creating a relationship with the worker and their treating team to best support recovery;
- working with the claims agent, particularly in the development and implementation of recovery and return to work plans and delivery of services;
- monitoring progress and barriers to prevent the recurrence of further psychological injury;
- guiding managers and leaders to be a positive support for workers.



Manager / leader

Managers and leaders set the direction and vision for the organisation and create a culture of care that promotes psychological well-being. They do this by:

- consulting with workers and addressing psychosocial hazards in the workplace;
- demonstrating care, compassion and empathy for workers;
- having supportive conversations and connecting workers to mental health supports and services;
- supporting the RTWC in delivering their functions;
- continuing to check-in with and support injured workers throughout their recovery and return to work;
- contributing to policy and procedure development and implementation.



Work colleagues

Work colleagues can help identify when a colleague may be stressed or struggling and encourage them to get help.

They also play a role in supporting recovery and return to work of their injured work colleague by:

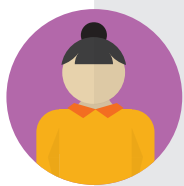
- demonstrating respectful, empathetic and understanding behaviours;
- staying in contact with them.



Health & Safety Representatives (HSRs)

HSRs represent workers on work health and safety issues and have certain powers and functions to carry out their role in order to promote a safe working environment.

They are likely to have valuable insights into how to address psychosocial hazards and risks with their work areas. They can also be a support for injured workers and may be involved in recovery and return to work matters.



Human Resources Officer (HR Officer)

The HR Officer's role is to:

- support the management of people within the business;
- help to create a fair and consistent environment;
- help provide clarity around work roles and responsibilities;
- support employees so they can perform at their best.

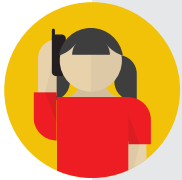


Work Health and Safety Officer (WHS Officer)

The role of the WHS Officer is to help the workplace develop, implement and monitor WHS policies and procedures with the goal of maintaining a safe work environment and preventing harm. They can provide WHS advice and assistance regarding:

- legislative requirements and obligations;
- setting up incident/injury reporting systems;
- investigating incidents and injuries with the aim of identifying underlying causal factors and providing recommendations about remedial actions;
- conducting audits;
- overseeing training programs about roles, responsibilities and safe work practices.

Roles outside the organisation



Mobile Claims Manager

Mobile Claims Managers are the primary claims agent contact and support and coordinate recovery and return to work by:

- meeting with the worker and employer, and facilitating the development of the recovery and return to work plan in consultation with the worker, RTWC and employer;
- communicating claims decisions and providing assistance to educate the employer and worker on their rights and responsibilities during a claim;
- engaging with the worker's treatment team to identify work capacity, developing return to work and treatment plans and helping to coordinate and refer for return to work services including engagement of a Return to work consultant to help.



Treating team (e.g. GP, psychologist, counsellors, psychiatrist)

The treating team may include general practitioners (GPs), counsellors, psychologists, and in some cases psychiatrists. The health and medical team helps to diagnose, treat and monitor the worker's psychological injury.

The GP is often the first medical professional engaged following a work injury and will help facilitate or refer for additional treatment services, assess and diagnose injury and issue a Work Capacity Certificate, if considered work-related. They monitor progress, certify capacity and coordinate treatment. GPs can be valuable in providing guidance and advice to RTWCs and employers to enable a safe and sustainable return to work following a psychological injury.

Psychologists and counsellors provide specialised psychological interventions to support a worker's recovery and ability to return to work and life. By connecting and establishing a positive relationship with the psychologist or counsellor, the employer and RTWC are better equipped to monitor and support the worker, identify and overcome recovery barriers and encourage communication with the GP.

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders. They may work in collaboration with the GP to assist with managing treatment and recovery.

PREVENTION

Prevention is better than cure. A proactive approach is the best way to prevent psychological harm.

A mentally healthy workplace is a workplace that protects, responds to, and promotes positive mental health for everyone.

Creating a mentally healthy workplace

Employers can create a mentally healthy workplace by focusing on the following three pillars:



Protect

Identifying and managing hazards and risks that have the potential to cause both psychological and physical harm.



Respond

Reducing mental health related stigma and supporting people who may be experiencing poor mental health.



Promote

Creating a positive work environment that enhances employee mental health such as having strong workplace relationships and sense of purpose at work.

Managing psychosocial hazards and risks

Workplace health and safety (WHS) laws mandate that workplaces must provide a safe work environment, including effectively managing risks to both physical and psychological health so far as is reasonably practicable.

A psychosocial hazard is anything that could cause psychological harm in the workplace (e.g. harm someone's mental health). Employers are obligated to protect workers from harm caused by psychosocial hazards, such as high job demands, low job control, poor support and traumatic events.

Primary responsibility for managing health and safety risks is placed on the employer. This includes providing workers with reasonable opportunities to raise psychosocial health and safety issues, express their views and contribute to the decision-making process. If the workplace has appointed Health and Safety Representatives, they must be involved in this consultation process.

The risk management process should be used to manage psychosocial hazards and risks in the workplace, which involves four steps:

1. Identifying psychosocial hazards
2. Assessing risks
3. Controlling risks
4. Reviewing control measures.





Supporting workers' mental health

Setting up an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can be a valuable resource for workers seeking assistance with mental health concerns, stress management, work-life balance, and other personal or professional challenges. This service is established and funded by the employer and offers confidential counselling and support services to workers and may extend to family members.

It's important that all workers are aware of their EAP Provider and the services offered. This can be done through various channels such as induction, staff meetings, newsletters, and intranet announcements.

[Click here](#) for more information on Employee Assistance Programs or scan the QR code



Mental health first aid

Mental health first aid provides early intervention support and equips staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise, understand and respond to a co-worker experiencing mental health struggles. In addition to peer support, many organisations elect to have their leadership trained in mental health first aid to better communicate and support staff who are facing mental health challenges.

Contact Officers

Contact officers can play a key role in workplaces, acting as a 'go-to' to assist workers experiencing discrimination, bullying and harassment. They provide a safe and confidential space for workers to discuss their concerns and explore solutions. Contact officers guide workers through the process of addressing workplace concerns and ensuring that organisational policies related to equal employment opportunity and anti-bullying are upheld. Through their efforts, Contact officers can contribute to a supportive and inclusive workplace environment where all workers feel valued and respected.

Community mental health services

There are many free community mental health services available locally and nationally which can provide early, and much needed, support for workers who may be experiencing mental health challenges. Community support services should be promoted in the workplace, in addition to any EAP. A list is available at the back of this guide.

Medical support

If a worker is struggling with their mental health and requires more extensive support, they should be encouraged to connect with their GP. A GP can provide a diagnosis, talk about treatment options and establish a Mental Health Care plan to enable easier access to health professionals, such as a psychologist through the Medicare scheme.



Workplace policies and systems

Effective HR systems can assist in preventing psychological injuries. HR systems can help to create environments where employees are treated fairly, respectfully and where employee wellbeing matters. Employers should ensure appropriate HR policies and procedures for recruitment, the development of clear job descriptions, flexible work arrangements, meaningful consultative arrangements and an effective performance management system. It is also beneficial to have frameworks in place for dealing with unfair treatment, preventing violence, harassment and discrimination as well as grievance and dispute resolution. Improved HR systems not only reduce the likelihood of psychological injuries but also contribute to higher morale, productivity, and overall organisational success.

Performance management

Having clear and fair processes around performance management prevents feelings of organisational injustice. By establishing transparent procedures for performance evaluation and feedback, organisations can ensure that workers perceive their treatment as fair, equitable and unbiased. Effective record-keeping plays a crucial role in supporting evidence, which not only facilitates fair decision-making but may also prevent the acceptance of psychological injury claims based on perceived unfair treatment. It is imperative that managers and leaders are educated on appropriate behaviors related to performance management to maintain a psychologically safe work culture.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to access Fair Work Ombudsman's Managing performance and warnings page



Grievance and disputes resolution

When workers feel wronged or experience unfair treatment, having a formal grievance and dispute resolution procedure provides them with a structured way to voice their concerns. This ensures consistency across different situations and allows workers to address issues in a timely and transparent manner, contributing to a positive work environment.

Employers are required to demonstrate that they have taken reasonable precautions and exercised due diligence to prevent discrimination or harassment. Having effective grievance and dispute resolution procedures is an important aspect of meeting this requirement. These procedures will cover a wide range of issues including bullying, discrimination, mental health concerns, and workplace safety, ensuring that all grievances are addressed comprehensively and fairly.

Key elements of an effective grievance and dispute resolution procedure include timely responses, sensitivity to all parties' feelings, fairness, impartiality, confidentiality, provisions for appeals and a strict stance against victimisation. By incorporating these elements into their grievance and dispute resolution processes employers can create a supportive and inclusive work environment where workers feel valued, respected, and confident in raising concerns.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to visit SafeworkSA's Grievance and Complaint Resolutions page





Prevention resources



Mentally Healthy Workplaces

Resources to help you understand and create a mentally healthy workplace.

Scan QR code or [click here](#)



Centre for Transformative Work Design

Resources to help employers improve job design, which can result in the elimination or minimisation of psychosocial hazards.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#)



Preventing psychological harm

A summary of the psychosocial legislation and steps to prevent psychological harm.

Scan QR code or [click here](#)



People at Work

A free and validated Australian psychosocial risk assessment survey to identify and manage psychosocial hazards in workplaces. Suitable for businesses with more than 20 workers.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#)



SafeWork SA

Information relating to the psychosocial risk management process to help organisations address psychosocial hazards and risks from the South Australian WHS Regulator.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#)



Comcare

Comcare has resources to reduce mental health stigma in the workplace.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#)



Safe Work Australia

As the WHS National policy body, Safe Work Australia provides guidance materials to assist workplaces manage the risk of psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#)



Mentally Healthy Workplaces online module

This free online interactive module is a great way to upskill your leaders to create and sustain a mentally healthy workplace.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#)



Managing Psychosocial Hazards and Risks in the Workplace - online module

This free 1hr online interactive module helps to upskill participants in how to effectively identify and manage psychosocial hazards and risks in the workplace.
To enrol - scan the QR code or [click here](#)

WHEN A PSYCHOLOGICAL WORK INJURY OCCURS

Following notification of a psychological injury, every action taken by the workplace sets the trajectory for the recovery and return to work outcome.

Access to medical treatment

If a worker has cited work as a factor in their injury, they will need to see a doctor to obtain a Work Capacity Certificate. Employers can recommend and suggest GPs, but the worker has the ultimate right to choose their provider. Employers can support access to treatment by identifying GPs and clinics that have a special interest in mental health, understand work injury claims and can offer longer consultations with workers for the purpose of psychological injury.

The GP may refer the worker to see a mental health professional for treatment and support. ReturnToWorkSA enables workers to have access to a wide variety of mental health services such as psychologists, mental health occupational therapists, accredited mental health social workers and counsellors.

To learn more about the different mental health service providers and how they support a worker recover from psychological injury, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Making a claim

When a worker indicates that they believe their psychological injury is related to work, it's crucial to

address their concerns promptly and supportively. If the worker wishes to lodge a claim the employer should maintain a supportive role throughout this process. The employer, generally through the RTWC, should maintain positive connections with the worker.

It is the worker's decision whether or not to make a claim in relation to a work injury. Having a conversation with the worker to reduce any stigma or address any perceived concerns around claim lodgment is an important step to showing transparency and care, and helps the worker to make an informed decision as to whether they wish to proceed with a claim.

If the worker wishes to lodge a claim, the employer has an obligation to assist the worker to do this within five business days from the date the worker has notified the employer of their intention to claim.

If the worker chooses not to lodge a claim, it is still important to ensure they have access to supports and services to assist their recovery, including access to any workplace supports such as an EAP or referral to their GP.

Regardless of whether a claim is lodged, employers have industrial obligations to accommodate the worker reasonably and ensure their safety at work. There are many health benefits of good work.



To make a claim, contact your claims agent or lodge online. To find out which agent is allocated to your company, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



EML

Phone: 08 8127 1100

Toll free: 1800 688 825

Email: customercareSA@eml.com.au

Gallagher Bassett

Phone: 08 8177 8450

Email: GBAUSouthAustraliaReception@gbtpa.com.au



The claim determination process

Work-related psychological injury claims can take a little longer to determine than physical injury claims. When the claims agent receives a claim, they will gather relevant information from all parties to enable an informed decision to be reached. Employers will have the opportunity to raise any concerns regarding the claim, which may include outcomes of internal investigations and pre-existing mental health conditions documented in pre-employment medicals.

Psychological injuries (called psychiatric injuries under the Act) have a higher compensability threshold than non-psychological injuries. For a psychological injury claim to be accepted, the injury must:

- be diagnosable;
- have arisen out of or in the course of employment; and
- employment must be the significant contributing cause.

Psychological injuries will not be accepted if the evidence gathered demonstrates that the injury arose from reasonable management or administrative action.

Determining reasonableness in such situations is often complex and requires thorough investigation. The reasons behind a worker's claim may not always be immediately clear to employers, highlighting the need for claims agents to gather information from various parties.

Evidence to support claim determination

The decision-making process for psychological injury claims is multifaceted and can require a range of evidence to be gathered from:

- the worker;
- the workers treating team;
- the employer;
- other witnesses;
- an independent medical examination conducted by a psychiatrist.

These examinations help assess injury, cause and whether work was the significant contributing factor.

Employers can provide additional information to support the claims review and determination process. This includes incident reports and clear documentation of management activities, including performance appraisals, meetings addressing underperformance, and disciplinary actions. As an employer, maintaining accurate and detailed records of activities and meetings and demonstrating that actions undertaken are within internal policies and procedures could assist the claims manager in determining reasonableness.

Making a claims decision

The claims manager will make a decision based on the medical and other evidence gathered throughout the investigation. If a decision cannot be made within 10 days, the claims manager will offer interim payments to the worker. The purpose of these payments is to allow the worker to access income support and reasonable medical expenses throughout the claim determination period.

The claims manager will contact the worker and employer regarding the outcome of their investigations and whether the claim has been accepted. If the claim is not accepted, the claims agent may seek to recover the interim payments made to the worker.

Both workers and employers have the right to apply for a review if they do not agree with the claim decision. This can be discussed with the claims manager.

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention following notification of a work injury typically results in better outcomes for both the worker and the employer.

The likelihood of a successful recovery and return to work is highest when high-quality intervention support is provided promptly after an injury occurs.

RTWCs and leaders particularly, play a crucial role in offering early intervention assistance, practical support, and improving the well-being of injured individuals.

Supportive and effective communication

Establishing rapport, trust and a good working relationship between the injured worker and the employer is crucial. RTWCs and the worker's manager or leader are best placed to support this.

There may be tensions in the workplace surrounding the worker's psychological injury so it's important to maintain connection with the worker even when that might be challenging. Asking the worker about their preferred method of communication (phone, face to face, email or text) helps maintain or establish a relationship.

In the early stages of a psychological injury, a worker may struggle to return to the place of the incident or injury, so considering other locations to meet which may be more neutral, such as a local café or park, is a great way to show support and compassion for their circumstances. This can lead to a more open conversation.

If engaging with the worker's treating team or attending medical reviews and case conferences, employers and RTWCs should be respectful and approach all conversations regarding the workers recovery and return to work from a place of concern for their wellbeing. Return to work is an important and beneficial stage in recovery, but ensuring the worker feels safe is paramount.

To learn more about the important role that Return to Work Coordinators play in supporting early intervention and recovery and return to work, scan the QR code to see the Return to Work Coordinators: Guidelines for employers or [click here](#)





Early intervention services

ReturnToWorkSA provides access to a range of early intervention services, even whilst a claim decision is pending. These services are intended to support the workers recovery and help facilitate an early return to work. Whilst some of these services do require claims manager approval, an employer or RTWC can accelerate access by promoting these services with their worker from the onset of an injury.

Low intensity mental health service*

The service is a voluntary low-intensity service available to injured workers. It provides access to a mental health coach and support to assist an injured worker to respond as best as possible to the circumstances surrounding their work injury, which may be impacting their mental wellbeing. Services can be delivered in person, over the phone or a blend of both. The service provides fast access support for regional and metropolitan based workers.

This service also extends to family members aged 16 years and over who are supporting the injured worker in their recovery and return to work.

Facilitated Conversations*

Conflict is a significant barrier to recovery and return to work and can exacerbate psychological injuries. Identifying and attempting to resolve conflict early is important. The Facilitated Conversation service is voluntary and led by a skilled coach, to help facilitate conversations between a worker and employer. The coach helps the worker and employer reach a mutual agreement in a supportive setting to enable a return to work.

ReCONNECT (all workers, including self-insured)

When supporting a worker with a psychological injury, there may be factors outside of the workplace that may impact their recovery. ReturnToWorkSA provides a free service called ReCONNECT, which offers support to injured workers connecting them with services such as financial counselling, mental health services, and housing support.

To learn more about these services, and how they can be accessed, scan the QR code or [click here](#) to watch the short video



*Workers within the registered Scheme only.

RECOVERY AND RETURN TO WORK

A worker's likelihood of returning to employment significantly diminishes the longer they are absent from the workplace. Ensuring workers are supported to return to work is beneficial to the workers recovery and their overall mental and physical wellbeing.

Supporting a return to work

Employers have an obligation to provide suitable employment following a work-related injury. This includes providing alternate or modified duties and employment when a worker is unable to return to their pre-injury role. As an employer, helping to determine what might be suitable is dependent on the worker's capacity as stipulated in the Work Capacity Certificate. Making reasonable work adjustments may be required in the short term to support an effective return to work.

The RTWC can help workers to feel more comfortable about returning to work by listening to concerns and addressing them sensitively. RTWCs should also guide managers to consider reasonable accommodations such as flexible working options, task variety, quieter working environments and shared responsibilities or tasks.

Managers play a key role in establishing a positive work environment for the worker to return to and should ensure teammates are respectful and supportive. It's important that teammates are aware of a worker's return and how they can support the worker, without disclosing too many personal details about their injury or condition. Speaking with the worker about what information they are comfortable to share or encouraging them to share their journey can empower them in their return.

Supporting recovery – medical treatment

Treatment is often a necessary part of psychological injury recovery. Employers should reasonably support workers to access treatment throughout their return to work program. Whilst workers should maximise their work capacity, some flexibility is required to enable treatment and achieve a sustainable recovery and return to work.

Employers should encourage workers to be open with their treating team about concerns. Employers should engage the worker's treating team when there are workplace or return to work changes that may impact the worker. The treating team can provide timely support to the worker and help them to navigate change without it impacting detrimentally on their recovery.

RTWCs may need to engage with the worker's treating team to obtain a Work Capacity Certificate and support the workers treatment plan, so establishing clear communication channels with the team will be important. RTWCs can also provide necessary information to the treating team regarding the worker's duties, workplace adjustments, and progress in the return to work process. Regular updates and collaboration with the treating team can help ensure that Recovery and Return to Work Plans are tailored to the worker's needs and facilitate a smooth transition back to work.

It's important to recognise that recovery from psychological injury can be extended with many ups and downs. It is very common for workers to feel they have not made progress, so celebrating goals and milestones can help to reiterate how far they have come.

Consider the appropriateness of ReturnToWorkSA's early intervention services such as Low Intensity Mental Health, Facilitated Conversations and ReCONNECT.

Impact of psychological injury on behaviour and work

While psychological injuries are often considered 'invisible' injuries, workers with a psychological injury can experience physical symptoms and reduced functionality. Workers can experience difficulties with thinking processes, organisation and planning, social interactions and emotions.

Being mindful of these potential behaviours can assist employers and RTWCs to better support a worker throughout their recovery and ensure appropriate consideration is given when planning and monitoring the workers return to work.

Accommodating a return to work

When accommodating a return to work, employers should consider suitable adjustments to work allocation, managing work and the worker's physical and social environment. Workers can be supported through:

- flexible working options;
- arranging any aids or assistive equipment;
- allocating additional workplace support such as a buddy.

Costs for reasonable aids and services to support a worker's return to work can be provided by the Return to Work scheme and should be discussed with mobile claims manager or claims agent representative.

A graduated return to work schedule can be a useful tool in identifying and stipulating suitable duties at various stages of the worker's recovery and return to work. The mobile claims manager, GP and other members of the treatment team can help establish, implement and monitor the graduated return to work schedule.

Employers and RTWCs can also speak to the mobile claims manager about the appropriateness of a workplace assessment to help with planning and accommodating a return to work. This includes the identification of alternate return to work opportunities within the workplace and any upskilling or formal training that may be required.

It is important that employers raise any concerns they may have about being able to accommodate a worker's return to work with their claims manager. Whilst we understand that it is not always possible for a worker to return to their pre-injury employment following injury, employers have a responsibility to support this process where reasonably practicable to do so. Discussing return to work options and seeking guidance from your claims manager can help identify the best path forward for the worker. This could include exploring supports and services to get things back on track or new employment where necessary and appropriate.

To learn more about reasonable adjustments and support to facilitate return to work for a psychological injury, scan the QR code or [click here](#).





Recovery and return to work resources

ReturnToWorkSA

A set of resources for employers and Return to Work Coordinators to help prepare the workplace for managing injury and return to work.

Scan QR code or [click here](#).



Safe Work Australia

Fact Sheet – Taking Action to reduce workers' compensation stigma.

Scan QR code or [click here](#).



Return to Work Matters

This website provides RTWCs access to practical injury management tools and instructive articles including self-paced e-learning modules.

Scan QR code or [click here](#).



Safe Work Australia

Return to work in psychological injury claims explores factors that influence return to work in psychological injuries.

Scan QR code or [click here](#)



Work Injury Guide for Medical Practitioners

This guide provides insight into the role of the doctor and can help inform how a Return to Work Coordinator engages with the workers treating team to achieve good outcomes.

Scan QR code or [click here](#)



It Pays to Care *short video series*

Provides a series of six short videos, each addressing a different employer strategy to improve RTW experiences for workers, and reduce impact of psychosocial factors.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#)



COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Beyond Blue

24/7 support for mental health and wellbeing via phone, web chat and online forum.

Call 1300 224 636

www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

NewAccess for Small Business Owners

A guided self-help mental health coaching program available by phone or video for small business owners (with 20 or less employees) or sole traders.

Call 1300 945 301

www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess-mental-health-coaching/small-business-owners

1800RESPECT

Available 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

Call 1800 737 732

www.1800respect.org.au

Headspace

Headspace centres and services operate across Australia, in metro and regional locations, supporting young Australians (12–25 years old) mental health and wellbeing.

www.headspace.org.au

Lived Experience Telephone Support Service (LETSS) – metro Adelaide

LETSS is a phone and online service available from 5.00pm – 11:30pm every night, with trained mental health workers with lived experience on the other end to assist.

Call 1800 013 755

www.letss.org.au

Regional Access – regional SA

Free professional telephone and online counselling 24/7 for people 15 years and older living or working in regional South Australia.

Call 1300 032 186

www.saregionalaccess.org.au

Medicare Mental Health

Funded by the Australian government and free to access, this service helps you access the mental health and wellbeing resources and services that are right for you.

Call 1800 595 212

<https://www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au/>

WellMob

Social, emotional and cultural wellbeing online resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

www.wellmob.org.au

SERVICES: WHEN IT'S AN EMERGENCY

Suicide and Crisis Support

If there is a risk of harm to yourself or someone else, call 000.

Lifeline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Call 13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

13YARN

National crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.

Call 13 92 76

www.13yarn.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service

24/7 telephone crisis support for people at risk of suicide, carers and bereaved, as well as online resources and information.

Call 1300 659 467

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Mental Health Triage Service

This South Australian 24/7 service provides advice and information in a mental emergency or crisis situation. It is staffed by mental health clinicians that can assess and refer to acute response teams where appropriate.

Call 13 14 65



SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

ReturnToWorkSA provides free support and services to employers and Return to Work Coordinators to help them manage recovery and return to work and create mentally healthy workplaces.

Employer Education Service

For assistance in the management of psychological injury, including best practice.

(08) 8238 5958
coordinators@rtwsa.com



Mentally Healthy Workplaces Service

For assistance in the creation of a mentally healthy workplace, and preventing psychological harm.

(08) 8233 2310
mentallyhealthy@rtwsa.com



Employer Skill Building Workshops

Access to free, online, pre-recorded or in person workshops to build capability of employers and Return to Work Coordinators.



GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

Accommodation: Adaptation or change to a job to meet an injured worker's abilities.

Acute stress disorder: Symptoms similar to PTSD, beginning immediately after trauma, lasting at least 3 days to a month.

Adjustment disorders: Short-term response to stress, including anxiety or depression, triggered by a specific source such as loss or life change.

Anxiety disorders: Medical conditions causing severe and long-lasting anxiety, interfering with daily activities and work.

Claims Agent: EML and GB who manage claims on behalf of ReturntoWorkSA.

Claims Manager: A person at the claims agent who manages the work injury claim, and includes a Mobile Claims Manager.

Depression: Collection of symptoms lasting over two weeks, impacting thoughts, behaviour, and emotions, hindering daily activities and work.

Exacerbation: Temporary worsening of a pre-existing condition, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, or personality disorder.

FND/Conversion disorder: Altered voluntary motor or sensory function without neurological conditions, often triggered by psychological distress.

Health: Complete physical, social, and mental well-being, not just the absence of disease.

Mental illness: Range of diagnosed conditions affecting thoughts, behavior and interactions.

Pain disorders: Psychological diagnosis for significant pain problems, often related to physical injuries.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Set of symptoms following exposure to traumatic events, including hyper-vigilance and anxiety.

Psychiatric injury: Under the *Return to Work Act 2014* a psychiatric injury is defined as pure mental harm, that is, mental harm other than consequential mental harm. This definition excludes the mental harm caused because of a physical injury.

Psychological (mental) health: State of well-being, coping with stress, working productively and contributing to the community.

Psychological health and safety: Systems to protect workers' psychological health.

Psychological injury: Has been used in place of psychiatric injury.

Psychological safety: Belief that one will not be punished for speaking up.

Psychological (mental) stress: Response to life events causing distress or psychiatric disorders.

Psychosocial hazards: Anything in the workplace that has the potential to cause psychological harm.

Return to work: Process helping injured workers return to suitable employment.

Recovery and return to work plan: Formally documented plan regarding return to work, supports and actions to progress worker's recovery and return to work.

Somatic symptom disorder: Physical symptoms causing distress or disruption of daily life.

Stigma: Negative attitude or discrimination based on characteristics like mental health.

Suitable employment: Work that is safe and meaningful in accordance with the workers capacity and abilities



**Visit us**

400 King William Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Opening hours

8:30am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday

Contact us

Phone 13 18 55
Email info@rtwsa.com

Mail us

GPO Box 2668
Adelaide SA 5001 Australia DX660

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call ReturnToWorkSA on **13 18 55** through the National Relay Service (NRS) www.relayservice.gov.au.

For languages other than English, call the Interpreting and Translating Centre on **1800 280 203** and ask for an interpreter to call ReturnToWorkSA on **13 18 55**.

For braille, audio or e-text of the information in this publication call **13 18 55**.

The information in this publication is compiled by ReturnToWorkSA. It is general information only. The data and facts referred to are correct at the time of publishing and provided as general information only. It is not intended that any opinion as to the meaning of legislation referred to is to be relied upon by readers. You should seek independent or legal advice as to any specific issues that are relevant to you, your workplace or organisation.

© ReturnToWorkSA 2025

v.2 - September 2025