



Reintegration Individual and team support

Everyone has a role to play in reintegrating an employee after an absence from the workplace. There may have been issues prior to the absence that impacted the employee, the team and/or the leader. Often things are brought up during the absence by team members that a leader may not have been aware of. Many behaviours or dynamics may have been at play that could affect the success of a returning employee for everyone. A leave of absence may be due primarily to a mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety, but could also include any other type of medical condition that has caused absence. Sometimes, anxiety or stress may be symptoms of workplace dynamics that may have contributed to the departure of the employee and to the apprehension of the team and/or leader regarding the return of an employee.

Our **Back to work – reintegration after an absence program** is designed to assist people leaders, the employee and the team in reestablishing relationships and creating a pathway to an improved environment including a successful return for the employee. The program takes a proactive approach to supporting the people leader, the employee and other team members as the return to work date approaches, and preparations are being made. At this point, the employee has been cleared to return to work therefore is deemed healthy to be reintegrated into the work environment. Often the cause of relapse is based on continued strained relationships and a failure to recognize the needs of all involved and affected. This will involve and is not limited to being aware and accountable of ones actions and understanding some situations that may require different perspectives and approaches.

Program options for organizations, include one-on-one coaching to support the leader and returning employee, as well as facilitated small group sessions that support the entire team in managing their concerns. Individual and group sessions are:

- Delivered by a skilled professional,
- Highly interactive in nature, and
- Use a combination of group debriefing and semi-structured activities to help the team and leader prepare for the employee's return.

The **Back to work – reintegration after an absence program** is designed to provide practical tips and tactics on how to support everyone with an employee returning to work, during the initial days of the return and as a continued support depending on the situation. The basis of this program is to re-establish support, trust and a forward way of thinking. Getting everyone on the same path during all stages of the reintegration is key in order to have a successful return - from the perspective of the individual returning and anyone else impacted by the reintegration.

Our interventions are highly customized and delivered by specialized consultants, many of whom have conflict resolution and or clinical backgrounds.

Key objectives

- Coach people leaders on effective communication strategies; ensure better management of communication and understanding of desires from all involved before, during and after a reintegration
- Manage the expectations of each other
- Remove relationship barriers
- Educate the various stakeholders through coaching, facilitated dialogues and training
- Facilitate conversations between various individuals
- Increase team members' understanding of their contribution in the return to work process.

Program structure

- Initial consultation with the key stakeholders (i.e. HR representative, the manager, the disability manager and/ or any other member of the organization identified as a stakeholder) to determine what steps are to be taken to ensure a smooth and successful return to work for the returning employee.
- Individual meetings with the employee to gain insight into any issues, fears, concerns they may have about returning
- Coach and train the manager on their role in ensuring a successful reintegration into the workplace for all.

Morneau Shepell recommends setting up a debrief and training session, if the returning employee permission.

Expected results

- Provide people leaders with communication strategies for the returning employee
- Give people leaders the necessary skills to coach and lead their team(s) and the employee before, during and or after reintegration
- Reestablish levels of trust and group norms
- Successful reintegration for the returning employee and all those involved

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