

What employers can do to support workers during **modified duties**.

Injury Example: A janitor cut their finger when unpacking cleaning supplies. The worker was assessed by the on-site first aid attendant. It was determined that they needed stitches at the hospital. The physician noted for the worker to not work with chemicals and keep their hand dry until their cut heals. The worker will need modified duties to eliminate working with chemicals or having wet hands until the cut heals.

Potential Impacts	How to Support
<p>Personal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feelings of shame for having incurred the injury Uncertainty over physical abilities to fulfill duties, fear of re-injury Re-integration concerns with the team (feeling of being the “odd one out”, diminished acceptable and belonging) Uncertainty about how they can perform work or what work they will do/hours of work, responsibilities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathize with feelings of vulnerability and consider sharing a personal injury story to normalize the experience Thoroughly explain the work accommodation and reaffirm your willingness to accommodate Provide meaningful alternative duties and where possible, involve the worker in these discussions and decisions Understand injury limitations/abilities by comparing limitations and abilities to physical job demands Conduct job reorientation and explore training/shadowing opportunities Identify a contact person and encourage regular check-ins between them and the injured worker
<p>Team Dynamics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible unfair treatment from colleagues (teasing, hazing, judgment) Unclear expectations and/or instructions for modified duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly communicate instructions and expectations for all involved (worker, co-workers, supervisor, first aid attendant) Maintain the privacy of personal medical information Emphasize important messages such as supporting recovery and maintaining a welcoming and respectful environment
<p>Potential Setbacks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of re-injury and the additional stress of needing more time to recover Feeling of letting the team down Longer-term uncertainty/anxiety related to the ability to return to full duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain open communication and support for all involved (worker, co-worker, supervisor, first aid attendant) Conduct check-in discussions with the worker as healing progresses (at least once a week) Adjust modified duties as time goes on – regression and progression are common

Additional Resources

Crisis Lines: 1-800-784-2433 or 9-8-8

Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789

Drug and Alcohol Info and Referral: 1-800-663-1441

Mental Health Services: helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca

Mental Health Information: heretohelp.bc.ca

Free Wellness Program: bouncebackbc.ca