



Company practices to promote a healthy workplace

Company practices encompass all the policies and procedures. These practices can set the framework for the rest of your workplace health strategy.

Key Elements:



Create policies and systems for an inclusive workplace

A health and wellness strategy should include policies and procedures that describe and encourage an inclusive workplace. Companies of all sizes can take steps to ensure an inclusive workplace. Here are some ideas:

- Create a vision that highlights the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I). This allows all employees to understand the company's core values
- Acknowledge all cultural days
- Make sure your policies and practices promote pay fairness
- Provide DE&I training so that everyone is aware of their own biases. This will help when interacting with other employees, clients, or customers.



Employee recognition programs

Start an employee appreciation program to foster a positive workplace. This will allow employees to feel valued for their contributions.

[The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety](#) (often referred to as "The Standard") is a voluntary set of guidelines, tools, and resources. It guides companies in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work. It states that recognition and rewards affect psychological safety and well-being. Watch this [video](#) to learn more.

Some ways to show recognition and reward:

- Have a team gathering for recognitions and rewards to celebrate a job well done
- Start a peer recognition board where anyone can provide feedback
- Provide gift certificates or financial rewards
- Share positive client comments through company-wide emails



Create an absence management strategy

You can't prevent all absences. However, you can support your employees during an absence and help them through their return to work. A strong absence management strategy can help make your employees feel valued and facilitate a timely return to work.

Here are some things to consider when reviewing your absence management strategy:

1. Formalize your program

- Document your absence management program. Make sure it's clear who is responsible for the program, and the roles and responsibilities of all individuals.
- Outline who employees need to communicate with when they are absent, and what you need from them (for example, when is a sick note required vs more detailed forms).

Note: Ensure your policies and practices meet all applicable employment and privacy standards.

2. Communication

- Ensure all relevant information and forms are readily accessible, and employees know where to find these. (for example, intranet or in a common area).
- Have a clear process for communicating a return-to-work plan when an employee has been off work for an extended period. This ensures all parties are on the same page and know what to expect.
- Provide all leaders with mental health training and information. This should include how to recognize the signs of an employee experiencing mental health issues and how to support those employees.

Sun Life has created a suite of [five online manager training videos](#). Through these video modules, people leaders will learn to:

- Find potential mental health issues within their workplace
- Communicate effectively
- Help build a healthy environment
- Find and address the stigma related to mental health

3. Supporting employees on a leave

Your program should detail how you support employees while they're on a leave of absence, and throughout their return to work.

Some things to consider:

- Review your practices for accommodation. Having accommodations available can help to prevent and/or reduce disability claim durations. Check out these tipsheets for some ideas on how you might accommodate some common [physical](#) and [cognitive](#) restrictions. For long-term accommodation requests, check in with your disability insurance provider as the employee may be able to apply for disability and case management support.
- Take time with employees needing a leave of absence to review the supports available (employee assistance program access, benefits coverage, etc.), what they can expect while they're off, and who they can reach out to with any questions.
- Keep in touch. Reach out regularly while an employee is off work to see how they're doing (but don't ask for medical details). This helps to maintain a connection to the workplace which can make the transition back to work easier.
- Create a clear return-to-work plan when an employee is ready to return. If the employee is returning from an approved disability claim, their Disability Case Manager will be involved. Review this [tipsheet](#) for additional information about how you can support your employee in their return to work.

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