

Psychological impacts of workplace stress

Changes to our environment can often result in new stresses in our lives and work. This is particularly true for front-line workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it is important for you to recognize when you may be experiencing work-related stress and to reach out to your employer for support. It helps to be proactive and access your support resources early.

Common signs of stress at work

Mood	Work performance	Work engagement	Physical	Substances
Irritability/ impatience/ nervousness	Increased sick days	Decreased activity/ socializing	Change in sleeping habits	Increased use of alcohol/ drug use
Negative feelings	Distracted/ decreased productivity	Strained relationships with peers	Weight loss/gain	
Loss of enthusiasm/ joy	Trouble focusing	Procrastination	Tiredness or fatigue	
	Increased errors	Avoidance	Lack of energy	

Manage your stress. Don't wait for a psychological injury to happen before prioritizing your mental health.

After a stressful event or series of events, some or all of the above behaviours are perfectly normal; however, if they persist for longer than a couple of weeks, you may need some help to get back on track.

Where to seek help?

- Your employee assistance program (EAP)
- Your supervisor or HR specialist
- A counsellor or psychologist through your work benefits
- A family member or friend
- A peer (many first responders and front-line staff have a peer support system)
- Your doctor

Workplace stress, also referred to as “burnout,” can resolve quickly if you get early and appropriate intervention. The key is knowing when you are experiencing symptoms and seeking help right away.

When should you reach out to WCB?

Before submitting a claim to WCB, you should ask yourself:

- Have I exhausted all options with my employer?
- Does my doctor recommend time away from work or a workplace modification?
- Is there a specific work-related event or series of events that impacted my mental health?
- Have my duties, hours or work environment recently changed in a significant way? If so, what specific work changes were most difficult for me to handle?

Please refer to our [psychological injury webpage](#) and [Policy 03-01](#) for additional details regarding psychological injuries.