

# Psychological injuries—chronic onset (occurring over time)

Experiencing excessive and unusual stressors occurring over time or one stressor that lasts for a long time at work, can result in a psychological injury or stress that can be personally devastating. A claim for a psychological injury can be accepted when the condition develops as a result of an emotional reaction to these stressors.

Because we understand the impact of such events, the following provides information on how we can help through the workers' compensation system.

## How does WCB make a decision to accept a claim?

We accept a claim for a psychological injury when you have a confirmed psychological injury as a result of exposure to excessive and unusual stressors over time or a single stressor that lasted a long time. There must be evidence that the work stressors were beyond the normal pressures and tensions of maintaining employment.

A confirmed psychological or psychiatric injury is one that has been diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or psychologist as defined in the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental disorders (DSM).

## What type of work events could result in a psychological injury?

WCB accepts psychological injuries arising out of a variety of work-related incidents such as:

- Verbal aggression or threats of harm
- Calling someone derogatory names
- Harmful hazing or initiation practices
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Clear instances of discrimination based on one of the protected grounds within human rights legislation
- Sexual harassment
- A repeated incident of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group.

## What are normal pressures and tensions of maintaining employment?

Normal pressures and tension at work includes, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hiring employees
- Performance evaluations and/or performance corrective actions
- Staff assignments, transfers or restructuring
- Promotions, demotions, lay-offs, and terminations
- Workload fluctuations and management and/or assignment changes
- Timeline/deadline pressures
- Work environment, including health and safety concerns, and union issues.

## What you can expect when your claim is submitted

When we receive information indicating you may have experienced stressors at work over time and you have a psychological injury, we may help you start treatment immediately (as needed).

In the meantime, we will confirm both the nature and source of the stressors and the psychological diagnosis. This is confirmed by your treatment provider using the criteria established in the most current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

To confirm coverage, we may need to gather additional information like medical assessments, interviews with other stakeholders, witness statements, and/or any additional relevant information to support work relatedness and clarify the diagnosis. This includes gathering information from your employer.

We care about your wellbeing and will work with you to obtain this information as quickly as possible so we may begin supporting your recovery.

## What happens if my claim is not approved?

We may be able to offer help in other ways.

We will help you understand how you may qualify for help and what support is available to help you access treatment and achieve recovery.

## Have questions?

Please contact us toll-free at 1-866-922-9221.

## More information for you

You can find information about psychological injuries [here](#).

Information about modified work is found [here](#).

