

How to notice if your worker is struggling

Employer resource



Watch the video



Mental health with a physical injury

As an employer, you see your worker regularly so you're well-placed to know if they're not quite themselves.

When your worker is recovering from a physical injury, it can affect their mental health, too.

Mental injuries can happen after or in connection to a physical injury at work. This can happen over time and is sometimes called a secondary mental injury.

Watch our video, **Did you know a physical injury or illness can become a mental injury as well?** for more.



Signs to look out for with a physical injury:

While mental ill health affects everyone differently, there are some changes and signs to look out for during recovery from an injury or illness, such as:

- Becoming unusually emotional, easily frustrated or withdrawn
- Seeming sad, down or 'flat'
- Being very pain-focused or reluctant to come back to work
- Mentioning sleeplessness, flashbacks or nightmares
- Trouble concentrating, making decisions, or managing tasks
- Avoiding workplace activities, like meetings
- Changes to their appearance, such as looking tired and seeming stressed
- Anxiety around returning to work or getting injured again



Checking in with your worker

You might think it's not your place to talk to a worker about how they are feeling, or it might feel daunting.

But by checking in, you're showing your worker you care and giving them a chance to talk it out.

If you think something's not right, it's always good to ask and have the conversation with your worker.

Best practice is to check in with your worker regularly while they're off work and keep the conversation going after they're back at work.

They might not be ready to talk or seek help, but offering your support might make all the difference.



Tips for having a mental health conversation:

- Make sure there's a private place to talk where they'll feel comfortable.
- Let them know you'd like to check in on how they are doing.
- Be supportive, listen closely and ask open questions.
- If work is affecting their mental health and wellbeing, ask what might help and talk about how you could help reduce stressors or psychosocial hazards.
- Afterwards, make sure you respect your worker's privacy around what you've talked about, especially when talking to the team.
- Make a plan to follow up and see how they're doing in a week or two.
- Let them know they can access support, even if their injury or claim isn't directly related to mental health. Find more details over the page.

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Mental health support for your worker

If your worker does develop a mental injury in connection to their physical injury, remember that many people can and do recover fully. Getting the right support early can really help.

If you notice your worker's not coping, they can access support:

For workers with a physical injury or illness

Workers with an accepted physical injury claim can access sessions with a counsellor or psychologist to support their mental health.

Find out more: **Adjustment to Injury Counselling**

For workers with a mental injury

Workers can receive treatment before their mental injury claim is accepted so recovery can start sooner.

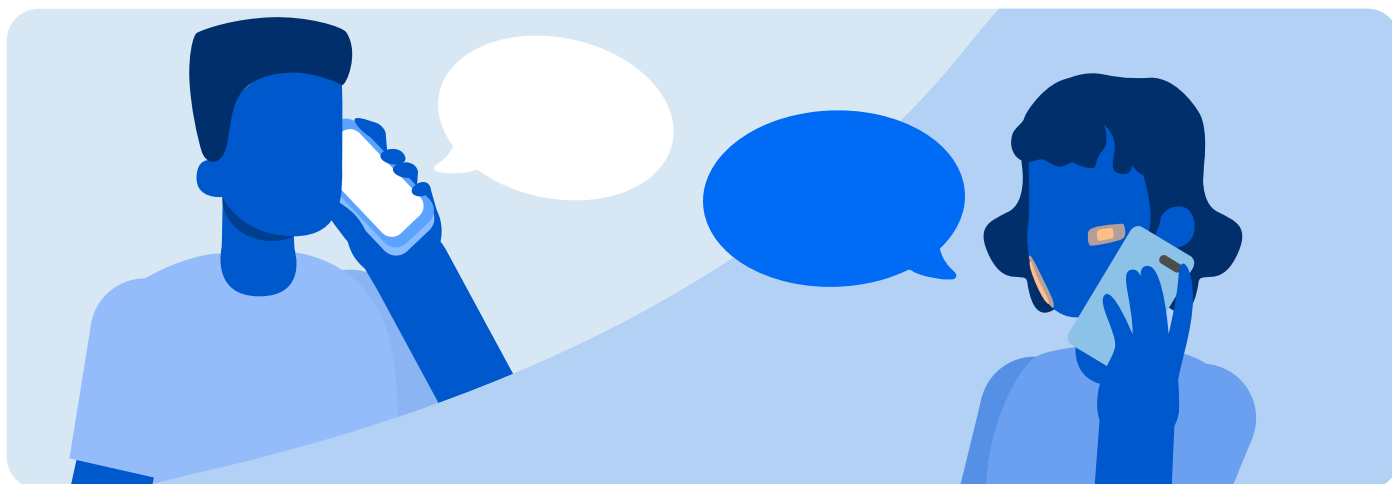
Find out more: **Early mental health support**

Workers' Psychological Support Service

This is a free, confidential and independent callback service where workers can access support from a social worker. Find out more: Call 1800 370 732 (during business hours) or visit **wpss.org.au**

Find a list of more mental health services on our website: **workcoverqld.com.au/mentalhealth**

Remember, if your worker is experiencing a mental health crisis, call Lifeline on **13 11 14**. If life is in immediate danger, call **000**.



WorkCover is here to help

If you have any questions, you can find your claim contact on WorkCover Connect and reach them directly. Or you can call one of our team on **1300 927 928**.

workcoverqld.com.au

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