

## **An Employee's Guide to Managing a Short Term Disability Leave**

The information in this guide will be of interest to those that are currently away or are planning to take time away from work due to illness. While on a leave of absence, it will be essential for you to focus on your health and well-being and to follow the advice of your healthcare practitioner(s).

The following are some tips that you may find to be of benefit for the *before*, *during* and *after* you are on Short Term Disability leave. You are encouraged to reach out to your Health and Disability Management Specialist if you should wish to discuss any of the following further:

### **Prior to your leave of absence:**

- Meet with your manager and discuss what work will need to be covered off while you are away.
- Confirm who will be covering your duties so that you can prepare to update your out-of-office reply as well as your voice mail message.
- Check with your Health and Disability Management Specialist to ensure that you have the correct Sun Life forms.
- Develop a plan with your Manager to stay in touch while you are away.

### **While away from work:**

- Keep your Disability Case Manager at Sun Life up to date on any changes to your health.
- Provide your Disability Case Manager with any new/updated medical documentation that is provided by your healthcare practitioner(s).
- Access a wealth of valuable resources and supports through the university's [Employee Family Assistance Program](#)

### **Prior to your return to work:**

- Your Health and Disability Management Specialist will work with you and your Manager in developing a return to work plan. This plan will incorporate the advice provided by Sun Life regarding any limitations and/restrictions that you may have and accommodations that may need to be put in place on your behalf.
- Consider where and when will you meet with your manager as well as ideas about how would you like to get reacquainted with your team. For example, should your Manager organize a coffee break or would you prefer to approach team members on your own?
- Inform your Manager of any medical appointments that you have scheduled in the coming weeks if you are not able to schedule after normal working hours.

### **Once you have returned to work:**

- Arrange to meet with colleagues, committees etc in order to be reacquainted and updated on developments and changes since your departure.
- Check in with your Manager on your first day back and let them know you have arrived.
- Remember that if you have been away from work for a few months, it may feel like your first day in a new job. Don't worry - you will soon feel reconnected!
- Remember to pace yourself and try to engage in an activity after work such as a hobby. This will give you something to look forward to and to help maintain a work/life balance.
- Although your Health and Disability Management Specialist will check-in with you once your return to work, remember to inform them of any questions or concerns you may have about your return to work plan.
- Don't hesitate to contact your Disability Case Manager if you have any specific questions or concerns about your health.
- Take the time to reacquaint yourself with your surroundings. If you are unsure about something, ask your Manager or another colleague that you see as a positive support person.
- Remember to continue with any recommended treatments as part of your overall recovery and wellness.

### **Additional Resources:**

[Employee Family Assistance Program](#)

[Ontario Tech University Mental Health Awareness](#)

[A Guide for Managing the Return to Work, Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)