

## Respectful Return to Work

### Instructions

Read the scenario out loud, then use the guiding questions and notes to have a conversation about being respectful of co-workers returning after an absence.

### After this huddle

Staff should be able to:

- Explain the importance of respecting their own and their coworkers' right to medical privacy.
- Demonstrate how to welcome a colleague back to work with kindness and respect.

### Scenario

Someone you work with has recently returned to work after an extended absence and you do not know why they were gone. Some of your co-workers have expressed frustration because they have been feeling short-staffed with them gone. You walk into the break room and overhear some of your co-workers guessing why this person has been absent.

### Notes to the huddle leader

- Discuss why it is important to not talk about the reasons co-workers may not be at work. Some examples are:
  - Everyone has the right to medical privacy and may not want to share their medical information with others.
  - Knowing that co-workers are likely gossiping can make it stressful to come back to work.
  - When gossip happens often in the workplace, staff may be less likely to call in sick and try to hide their symptoms. Staff who are sick at work put other staff and residents/clients at risk.
- If staff have questions about staffing, a co-worker's absence or ability to work, they should speak privately with their manager.
- Encourage staff to treat each other with kindness and empathy. Inappropriate behaviour can harm trust, communication, and psychological health and safety in the workplace which can lead to mistakes and accidents.

### Guiding questions

- In this scenario, do you have a right to know why your co-worker was absent?
- How could you approach their situation from a position of empathy?
- If you were returning from an unexpected long absence, how would you like to be welcomed back to work?

## Safety Huddle: Respectful Return to Work

[Learn more](#)

- Mental Health: Psychologically Healthy Workplaces
- Bullying and Harassment Resources
- [www.CareForCaregivers.ca](http://www.CareForCaregivers.ca)

Huddle leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attendance:

Name

Initial

[illegible]