



# Resource Package for Those Off Work or Returning to Work from a Health Leave

A Hamilton Family Health Team Resource

Last Updated October 1, 2023

Contact [HFHTCommunications@Hamiltonfht.ca](mailto:HFHTCommunications@Hamiltonfht.ca) with feedback on the resource package

## Introduction to this Resource Package

If you're reading this, you've likely made the decision to take some time off work to attend to your health. Maybe this is the first time you've needed a break from work to focus on this, maybe it isn't. Either way, it can be a difficult and sometimes confusing decision to make and is an attempt to prioritize yourself. This resource was made to answer common questions and provide you with information and resources to navigate the return-to-work process. This resource is for you; however, you may share sections of it with your health care provider or support people along the way.

## Topics covered in this package:

Introduction to this Resource Package .....	2
1. What is important for me to do right away? .....	3
2. What type of information is typically included in return-to-work forms? .....	4
3. Where do I learn more about my workplace benefits and coverage for mental health therapy?.....	7
4. How do I find a private therapist? .....	9
5. What might be included in my treatment while off work? .....	10
6. What should I consider when planning my return to work? .....	11
7. What if I feel anxious about returning to work?.....	13
8. How can I stay well once I return to work? .....	15
9. Where can I learn more about my rights or the legal aspects of my case?.....	16

*If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please go to your nearest hospital or contact 911. Hamilton crisis lines include COAST (905-927-8338) and Barrett Centre (905-529-7878). These are available 24/7.*

## 1. What is important for me to do right away?

Below are steps you might consider taking immediately after deciding to take time off work. It may be helpful to check off items and include information as you go.

- Identify which workplace contact **needs to be notified of your absence** (i.e., supervisor, HR rep). You do not need to disclose a diagnosis to your workplace.

Workplace Contact's Name + Role	Phone Number / Email:	Dates Contacted

- Find out what the **process** is for being off work. This information can usually be found in your orientation package or human resource documents. It may include information on:
  - How many paid sick days do you have? How do you use these (i.e., when is a doctor's note necessary)?
  - Do you have short-term disability coverage?
  - What forms need to be filled out? By whom? Where do they need to be sent?
  - Do you have benefits for mental health therapy? Or other services (i.e., physio)?
- Notify your family doctor** of your injury/illness and need to be off work. Share your workplace contact's info with them if a note is necessary and confirm what you **consent** to them sharing with your workplace. There may be a cost for the workplace note.

Family doctor	Date notified / Date of appointment(s)

- Consider involving your **union representative** if you have one.

Union representative	Contact Information

- Make the most of your time off work.** If you need rest – make sure you include time for rest. If you need treatment, discuss treatment options with your provider.

## 2. What type of information is typically included in return-to-work forms?

Forms vary by workplace and insurer, but some common sections are included in most forms. There may be parts of the forms that you need to fill out, and parts that need to be filled out by your treating health care provider, typically a family doctor or specialist in this area of illness/injury (i.e., a psychiatrist is a mental health specialist). An example form is included on the next 2 pages.

Information that is commonly included in return-to-work forms may include:

- Information about you (name, date of birth, phone number or email, job title)
- Information about your time off (date last worked, date first unable to work)
- Information about your injury/illness (date symptoms started, nature of the injury/illness and impact on function)
- Information about your health care involvement (date of health care visit(s) or medical assessments, treatment for injury/illness)
- Information about your return to work (Estimated date of return to work, functional limitations or restrictions or abilities, recommendations such as accommodations or modifications to work duties/hours)

### Common Terms Defined <sup>1,2</sup>

Term	Definition
<b>Accommodation</b>	Modifying the work, process, or environment to allow a worker with disability to meet their essential job requirements. Can be temporary or permanent. Should be individualized, specific to worker's medical needs, environment and work demands. Example: use of headphones within employee's workspace.
<b>Disability</b>	Restriction or lack of ability to perform normal work duties because of injury or illness. Can be temporary (worker is expected to recover to their pre-injury level) or permanent (worker is not expected to recover to their pre-injury level).
<b>Gradual Return to Work</b>	A gradual increase in work hours and/or duties, over the course of several weeks or months, with the goal of increasing tolerance and therapeutic skill use and improving return to work outcomes.
<b>Medical Restrictions</b>	Clear and specific limits identified by the worker's health care provider to protect the worker from further injury/illness. Can be physical, cognitive, and/or psychological. Can be temporary or permanent in nature.
<b>Modified Work</b>	Modifications of pre-injury work. May include changes to work environment, work hours or schedule, tools and equipment used, job design or work organization.

1. Chan, C., Cowls, J., Gewurtz, R., Gowan, N., Lefort, H., Moll, S., Pontello, K., Power Ahmad, B., Wakefield, C., Wisenthal, A., Zaffina, A. [2020]. Occupational Therapy in Mental Health and Return to Work – Reference Guide, Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists.
2. Ontario Human Rights Commission (2019). *Ontario Human Rights Code*, R.W.O. 1990, Chapter H. 19.

## Patient Return to Work Questionnaire Template

To assist you and your provider in filling out return to work forms, consider filling out the below sections ahead of your next visit with your health care provider.

<b>Patient Name</b>		<b>Date of Birth</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)	
<b>Current Employer</b>		<b>Position/Job Title</b>	
<b>Workplace Contact(s)</b>	Name, Title:  Phone Number or Email:		
<b>Insurance Provider and Contact(s)</b>	Name, Title:  Phone Number or email:		

Which of the following best describes your current position? Please check all that apply.

- |                                    |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Casual                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract  | <input type="checkbox"/> Commission             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salaried  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hourly    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

Which of the following best describes your current working status?

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At work               | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduated Return to Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Sick Leave             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Short Term Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Term Disability     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

### History

Symptoms began or accident happened on: \_\_\_\_\_.  
dd/mm/yyyy

Illness or injury forced cessation of work on \_\_\_\_\_ (When did I stop working due to illness?)  
dd/mm/yyyy

### Work Information

In the space below, please briefly outline your most recent **work schedule/hours**.

In the space below, please list your most recent **work duties/role(s)**.

In the space below, please list any **symptoms** that currently interfere with your ability to work.

Due to the symptoms listed above, **what parts of your job are difficult to do** (i.e., managing emotional situations with clients, talking on the phone, following a schedule)?

Are you currently receiving any **treatment** for this? If so, please list below.

In the space below, please list the primary **issues making your return-to-work difficult**.

What kind of **support** do you believe would help you return to work successfully (e.g., temporarily reduced hours, retraining)?

Question	Rating (0-10)
Please rate your <b>confidence</b> in your ability to return to work on a scale from 1-10 (where 1 indicates not at all confident, 10 indicates completely confident)	
Please rate your <b>readiness</b> to return to work on a scale from 1-10 (where 1 indicates not at all ready and 10 indicates completely ready)	
Please rate your current perceived <b>ability</b> to complete your previous work duties on a scale from 1-10 (where 1 indicates not at all able and 10 indicates completely able)	

Is there anything else that is important for your provider to know related to your return-to-work?

### 3. Where do I learn more about my workplace benefits and coverage for mental health therapy?

You may have been asked by your doctor to see whether you have workplace benefits that cover mental health counselling or therapy. To watch short videos describing some of the information on the following pages [click here](#) or ask your provider to send you the link.

Here are a few types of coverage options that may be available through your workplace:

#### **Employer based programs:** Employee Assistance Programs

- Many large workplaces in Ontario offer Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Employee and Family Assistance Plans (EFAP) or extended health care plans that offer coverage for things like mental health therapy or prescription medications.

#### **Insurance Funded Programs:** Return to Work Co-ordination, Work Hardening Programs

- Some workplaces offer employees coverage through an insurance company, such as [Canada Life](#), [Sunlife Financial](#), [Manulife](#) or other. You will likely need to go to their website and use your login information in order to see your account or submit a claim.

#### **Provincially Funded Programs:** Worker's Compensation, Employment Insurance, Social Assistance, Disability Support Programs

- If the injury/illness was caused by work or occurred at work, you may be covered through the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). If this is the case, talk to your doctor and go to [www.wsib.ca](http://www.wsib.ca) for more information about forms, return to work plans, benefits and more.
- If you are off work, but you don't have disability coverage (i.e., LTD) through your workplace, you may be eligible for Employment Insurance through the government. Check out their website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/insurance/disability.html>
- If you receive financial assistance, benefits or employment assistance through Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), or are interested in looking at their eligibility criteria, see their website [www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-works](http://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-works) for more information.

Here are a few places you can look to find more information about your workplace benefits plan and whether mental health therapy is covered:

- **Company Website:** Often includes information about employee wellness services or benefits.
- **Enrollment or Orientation Guide:** Includes information about employee resources and benefits.
- **Human Resources Department:** You can contact HR to ask questions about benefits. If you do not have an HR department, your manager or direct supervisor may be responsible for this.
- **Union Representative, or Trusted Colleague:** Since benefits cover a variety of things, you could ask a trusted person from your team such as a union representative or colleague whether they know how to access workplace benefits if you feel more comfortable starting there.

<b>Do I have workplace benefits? What do they cover? Include any helpful information below.</b>

## What do my Benefits cover in terms of Mental Health Therapy?

Coverage varies based on the workplace, insurance provider and benefits package. In general, most benefit packages cover short-term psychotherapy (3-8 sessions) with a regulated mental health professional. There may also be career, financial or legal counselling supports available. To watch a short video describing some of the information on this page [click here](#).

Some items that may be important to find out about your workplace benefits may include:

- **Amount of coverage provided:** Some workplaces cover a lump sum of funding to be used towards mental health therapy, while others will cover a fixed number of sessions.
- **Type of providers covered:** Benefit plans often list the regulated mental health professional that you can use your mental health therapy coverage to work with. These often include registered psychotherapists, psychologists and/or social workers, for example.
- **Where to find a provider:** Some workplaces have what's called a preferred provider network so you can connect directly to a therapist through that service by completing an intake form. Whereas others require you to find your own private therapist and then submit a claim or have them undergo direct billing to have it covered.

## Understanding the Different Types of Therapists

In Ontario, there are 6 different regulatory colleges whose registrants can practice psychotherapy. These are listed below. If someone is not registered with one of these colleges, they are likely not practicing regulated psychotherapy and hold different training and qualifications.

Title	Education	Psychotherapy?	Diagnose?	Prescribe Medications?
<b>Psychiatrist</b> (MD, FRCPC) <a href="https://www.cpso.on.ca/">https://www.cpso.on.ca/</a>	Medical School + Specialty Program	√ *Private only	√	√
<b>Physician or Doctor</b> (MD) <a href="https://www.cfpc.ca/en/home">https://www.cfpc.ca/en/home</a>	Medical School + Specialty Program	√ *Depends on setting	√	√
<b>Psychologist</b> (CPsych) <a href="https://cpo.on.ca/">https://cpo.on.ca/</a>	Doctorate Degree (PhD)	√	√	
<b>Registered Psychotherapist</b> (RP) <a href="https://www.crpo.ca/">https://www.crpo.ca/</a>	Master's degree + CRPO qualifications (training, supervision)	√		
<b>Registered Social Worker</b> (MSW, RSW, BSW) <a href="https://www.ocswsw.org/">https://www.ocswsw.org/</a>	Bachelor's or master's degree in social work + OCSWWSSW requirements	√		
<b>Registered Occupational Therapist</b> (OT Reg. (Ont.)) <a href="https://www.coto.org/">https://www.coto.org/</a>	OT master's degree + COTO psychotherapy requirements	√		
<b>Registered Nurse</b> (RN, RPN) <a href="https://www.cno.org/">https://www.cno.org/</a>	Nursing degree or diploma and CNO requirements	√		



## 4. How do I find a private therapist?

### Where to get started

Some insurance companies may have preferred providers or pre-approved therapists through an Employee Assistance Program, whereas others may require you to find your own private therapist.

When seeking a potential therapist, it can be helpful to understand their training or areas of expertise, insurance coverage they accept, as well as things like languages spoken and location (if sessions are in-person). Many therapists offer a free “initial consultation” before committing to paying for a full session and it can be helpful to use this to ensure there is a good fit. Below are questions you may consider asking during the initial consultation or ahead of the first session with a therapist.

<p><b>Clinical Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What training, education, and certifications do you have?</li> <li>• Do you have experience working with clients with concerns like mine?</li> <li>• What type of treatment styles will you use?</li> <li>• How do I prepare for my first session?</li> <li>• What is your availability if I am in crisis? What are my options if I am in crisis?</li> <li>• Can we begin with a consultation to see if we are a “good fit”? Is there a fee for this?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Logistical Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often would you anticipate seeing me? For how long?</li> <li>• What is a typical session like? How long are sessions, usually?</li> <li>• Will the sessions be in person? Virtual?</li> <li>• Do you have a waitlist, or could we get started right away?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much do you charge? Do you have sliding-scale options?</li> <li>• Can you direct bill to my insurance or will I have to send them the receipts?</li> <li>• What’s your policy on canceling sessions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p>

### Where can I find a therapist?

There are many places where you can find a list of therapists available near you. For a short video describing how to find a therapist, [click here](#). A few common websites where you can find a list of therapists, a description of their services, and their contact information include:

- **Psychology Today:** <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca>
- **Affordable Therapy Network:** [www.affordabletherapynetwork.com](http://www.affordabletherapynetwork.com)
- **Inkblot Therapy:** [www.inkblottherapy.com](http://www.inkblottherapy.com)
- **Ontario Psychological Association Ask for help today** <https://askforhelptoday.ca/>

## 5. What might be included in my treatment while off work?

Some people require more than just some time off and rest to address health concerns. Furthermore, to access coverage for things like short-term disability, employers and insurance companies usually expect you to be involved in some type of **active treatment** while you are off, to support your health and recovery. Active treatment could include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Medications
- Mental health counselling or psychotherapy (i.e., individual and or group)
- Assessment and/or treatment with a specialist (i.e., psychiatrist)
- Specialized treatment program (i.e., outpatient services through a hospital)
- Support groups (i.e., Alcoholics Anonymous etc.)
- Clinician-guided self-management programs (i.e., Bounce Back Ontario etc.)
- Rehabilitation of specific injuries (i.e., working with a physiotherapist etc.)
- Other

**What are my current treatment goals? Include any helpful information below.**

Consider creating long-term and short-term goals using SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Based). Examples: I will wake up at the time I would for work 5 days this week. I will use alarms to take my new medications as prescribed daily.

**What treatment(s) have I tried or am I currently trying while off work? Include any helpful information below.**

## 6. What should I consider when planning my return to work?

Why is talking about my return to work (sooner rather than later) important?

A 2012 study by WSIB Ontario titled “Better at Work” found that: **work is important to overall well-being**. This makes sense as there are many benefits associated with having a job, receiving an income, working towards goals and following a meaningful daily routine, for example.

The study also showed that **early intervention is key**. This means that getting started with the rehabilitation process and talking about a return-to-work plan sooner rather than later often leads to a quicker, and in many cases more effective return to work. Many people find that the longer they are off work the harder it becomes to return as anxiety increases, one’s routine becomes disrupted, and the job may actually change over time.

Further, the study found that **return to work enhances recovery and is part of the rehabilitation process**. This means that one does not have to be completely recovered prior to going back to work, instead going back to work (or creating a plan for this) may actually be an essential part of the recovery process and support recovery by getting you back to a meaningful routine and activity.

Considering the pros and cons of returning

Creating a pros and cons list for returning to work can help you make an informed decision. Remember to consider both the potential short-term and long-term effects of each option.

Example:

Returning to Work (modified or full)	Staying off work
<p><b>Potential Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular income, ongoing access to benefits.</li> <li>Productivity. Gives my days meaning.</li> <li>Gives me routine, structure. A distraction.</li> <li>I enjoy certain parts of my job.</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facing workplace stressors.</li> <li>People may ask why I was away.</li> <li>May have to catch up on changes since away.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Potential Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don’t have to see certain people / face certain workplace stressors.</li> <li>Time to rest and focus on treatment or adjust to medications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mood likely to worsen with lack of routine.</li> <li>The longer I am off work the harder it will be to return (anxiety increases, work changes).</li> <li>Financial stress / less income.</li> </ul>

Your list:

Returning to Work (modified or full)	Staying off work
<p><b>Potential Pros</b></p>           <p><b>Potential Cons</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Pros</b></p>           <p><b>Potential Cons</b></p>

Any reflections on your lists? When can you revisit this?

## What options might I explore with my healthcare provider and/or workplace support?

Workplaces have a duty to accommodate employees, and to consider making changes that are reasonable and justified in order to support the employee, as long as they don't cause undue hardship to the employer/company.




Consider exploring the following with your health care provider and/or workplace support:

Gradual return to work	Starting with partial hours or duties and gradually increasing those to full time hours or duties can help to increase comfort and tolerance and allow you to balance work with time for recovery tasks outside of work (i.e., therapy appointments, rest, meal planning etc.).
Modified workplan or accommodations	Beyond a gradual return, certain modifications (usually temporary to start) to your schedule, workspace, duties or breaks may be necessary to address any functional limitations you may have due to your health condition(s).
Regular meetings with your support people	A good return to work plan involves opportunity for check-ins along the way. Consider scheduling check-ins with your workplace supports, and follow-up appointments with your health care provider, so you can monitor progress and make any adjustments to your work and/or treatment plan as needed.
Continuing treatment once you return to work	It is rare that people achieve 100% recovery before going back to work. For some, returning to work may be a part of the treatment (i.e., returning to a routine, meaning etc.), whereas others may be living with an episodic or chronic health condition that requires long-term support (i.e., medications, ongoing appointments). Consider what treatment is necessary to keep up with when returning to work.
Relapse prevention planning	For many health issues, relapses or flare-ups may be a part of recovery. It may be helpful to identify how to prevent a relapse or flare-up, what your triggers/activators are, signs that you are having a relapse or flare-up, and what to do to take care of yourself in those moments. Being prepared and coming up with a plan may help to reduce the intensity or severity of the flare-up or relapse, or help you feel more confident if/when it comes.
Creating a disclosure plan	It can be helpful to plan for conversations with your coworkers about being off work and returning. You may anticipate comments like "we missed you, is everything ok?" Consider the following when thinking about disclosure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work culture and environment (stigma)</li> <li>• Comfort level (yours and theirs)</li> <li>• Purpose of disclosure (why).</li> </ul> Also consider the types of disclosures that exist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No disclosure: "I was away for personal reasons"</li> <li>• Partial disclosure: "I was off to take care of my health"</li> <li>• Full disclosure: "I am back from a mental health leave for my depression"</li> </ul> Consider the pros/cons of the different types of disclosure. This may be helpful to discuss with a counsellor.

## 7. What if I feel anxious about returning to work?

It is not uncommon to feel anxious about returning to work after some time away. Below are some suggestions to support you in managing return to work anxiety including 1) Identify work stressors and strategies to address them, 2) Create a gradual return plan.

1) Identify common work-related stressors and strategies and address them ahead of time. It can be helpful to identify work stressors and create a plan of how you can cope with them ahead of time. Complete the examples below and feel free to add any of your own.

Stressor	→	Strategies
Nervous about <b>talking with your coworkers</b> about why you were off?		Plan ahead for what you might say, or role play this with someone in your life. See more on disclosure on the previous page.
<b>My script for talking to coworkers:</b>  <i>Example, "I was off work for health reasons. Happy to be back but I'd rather not talk about it."</i>		
Trouble saying <b>no</b> at work and end up taking on too much?		Identify your boundaries or limits ahead of time. Communicate those to others and do your best to stick to them. Also, take your breaks!
<b>Boundaries or limits I want to set with/around work:</b>  <i>Examples: No emails outside of work hours; one special project at a time</i>		
Difficulty managing stress or <b>emotions</b> at work?		Review helpful coping strategies or relaxation techniques and see which ones you could use at work.
<b>Coping strategies to try at work:</b>  <i>Example: Add mindfulness breaks to schedule, put happy pictures at desk, grounding object in pocket</i>		

2) Create a gradual return to work plan and start the transition back to work as soon as possible. This may include:

- Create a return-to-work exposure hierarchy (e.g., from least difficult or anxiety-inducing activities to highest) and consider tackling items one at a time.
- Get back into a work-like routine (i.e., go to sleep and wake up when you would for a workday, eat meals at your break times, practice work-like tasks if safe)
- Create a gradual return to work plan with your healthcare provider and employer. This may include starting with a modified schedule (i.e., half-days only) or reduced duties (i.e., smaller caseload), if appropriate.

\*Although *this might feel like the opposite of what you want to do*, there is evidence that avoiding a feared situation only increases our anxiety. If you have determined that there are no immediate safety risks for returning to work, coming up with a supportive gradual return plan can help to reduce anxiety long-term and build your confidence and competence at work again.

**Return-to-work exposure hierarchy:**

Exposure activity	Anxiety rating from 1-10 (10 being severe anxiety)
<b>Example:</b> Call co-worker and have coffee with them.	4

**Exposure Examples:**

- Drive by or take public transit to your workplace
- Get re-connected to the email system
- Read newsletters or policy updates before you go into work
- Engage in activities that remind you of work
- Watch a professional development session online
- Put on your work uniform

## 8. How can I stay well once I return to work?

### Use your breaks and vacation time.

Many people avoid or delay using their breaks or vacation time. This may be to get more work done or not let people down. However, I encourage you to consider the following quote by Joyce Sunada, “If you do not make time for wellness, you will be forced to make time for illness.” Consider also how to make your breaks more effective or restorative.

### Discuss accommodations or modified work with your workplace and/or healthcare provider.

If you often find yourself struggling to stay well at work or live with an episodic illness (comes and goes in “episodes” rather than completely recovers), then it might be worth exploring accommodations or modified work to allow you to stay at work and take care of your health when needed. For example, if you need to attend regular appointments, you may discuss the possibility of having flexibility to attend those during workdays (i.e., one afternoon per week). Accommodations need to be reasonable and necessary and may look different depending on your workplace.

### Alter your workspace and home environment to be more conducive to wellness.

This may include things like having an ergonomic assessment, and changing your seating, or monitor height to support productivity or reduce pain. Or adding coping objects (i.e., fidget toy, cue card with skills) or calming items (i.e., picture of loved ones, white noise) to your workspace or home environment. Visualize your ideal work and rest environments and see what is possible.

### Keep doing what keeps you well.

Sometimes people try something for a short period of time (i.e., meal planning, medications) and then stop doing it once they feel better or return to their routine. It is often those things that helped get you well and can play an important role in helping you stay well. Consider, what things are important for you to stay well, or to consider reimplementing if you start to feel unwell again.

### Prioritize your time and practice assertiveness.

Prioritization of tasks can be hard to do especially when EVERYTHING seems important. Establishing a priority list can help us re-focus on the important tasks when emotions are high. Identifying what is high, medium and low priority, and with what urgency these tasks need to be completed may help you map out how you will spend your time weekly and even daily. Consider using the matrix below for work and home tasks. Also, consider what you can delegate, ask for help with, or say no to (it is likely that YOU don’t have to do everything alone).

### The Eisenhower Decision Matrix



#### Examples

**Urgent and important** (i.e., send email regarding safety issue at work, take medications)

**Important but not urgent** (i.e., therapy homework for session in 2 weeks, edit report due next month)

**Urgent but not important** (i.e., pick up bake sale item for tomorrow, check mail)

**Neither urgent, nor important** (i.e., fix bookshelf)

## 9. Where can I learn more about my rights or the legal aspects of my case?

You may be feeling overwhelmed and unsure of your legal rights when it comes to things like work, duty to accommodate, discrimination in the workplace or fear of being fired. You may have spoken to your union representative (if you have one) and want to explore your concerns further. If you would like to contact a lawyer but are concerned about payment options, some lawyers offer free consultations to start. Looking for a lawyer or law firm with experience dealing with **employment law, and disability and insurance law** may be most helpful depending on your case. Some legal firms also make blog posts about frequently asked questions related to this topic. Examples of where you can learn more about your rights or access legal support and advice are listed below.

### Hamilton

<b>Hamilton Community Legal Clinic</b> <a href="https://hamiltonjustice.ca">https://hamiltonjustice.ca</a>	Offers information on rights and responsibilities, resources, and when financially eligible, possibly provide representation to try to resolve the legal issue.
---	---

### Ontario

<b>Steps to Justice</b> <a href="https://stepstojustice.ca">https://stepstojustice.ca</a>	Offers information about your rights as a worker in Ontario, and relevant legal topics.
<b>Ministry of Labor</b> <a href="http://www.ontario.ca">www.ontario.ca</a>	The Ontario Ministry of Labor has a <a href="#">website</a> , <a href="#">education resources</a> and phone line that offer information about your rights and obligations under the Employment Standards Act.
<b>Legal Aid Ontario</b> <a href="http://www.legalaid.on.ca/">http://www.legalaid.on.ca/</a>	Available to low-income individuals and issues legal aid certificates to eligible people.
<b>ARCH Disability Law Centre</b> <a href="http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/">http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/</a>	ARCH Disability Law Centre is a specialty legal aid clinic that is dedicated to defending and advancing the equality rights of persons with disabilities in Ontario.
<b>Community Legal Education Ontario</b> <a href="https://www.cleo.on.ca/en">https://www.cleo.on.ca/en</a>	A community legal clinic that specializes in public legal education. It mainly serves people with low income.
<b>Human Rights Legal Support Centre of Ontario</b> <a href="https://hrlsc.on.ca">https://hrlsc.on.ca</a>	Offers legal help, advice or assistance with a matter covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code.
<b>211 Ontario</b> <a href="https://211ontario.ca">https://211ontario.ca</a>	For a list of service agencies for legal advice and representation.

### Canada

<b>Legal Line</b> <a href="https://www.legalline.ca">https://www.legalline.ca</a>	Provides free legal information to Canadians through its website, telephone and systems.
--	--