

# New insights: helping ensure a successful return to work after a disability leave



Returning to work after a disability leave can be a challenging process for both employees and employers. Despite best intentions, there is no guarantee of a successful reintegration.

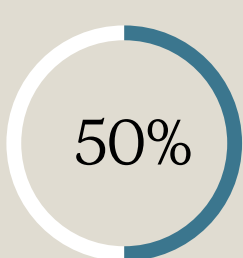
Even though this is a critical process, there is limited insight from either the employee or employer perspective.

That's why we partnered with Ipsos to survey Canadian employees and employers about their experiences. We wanted to identify the steps and actions that can increase the chances of a successful return.

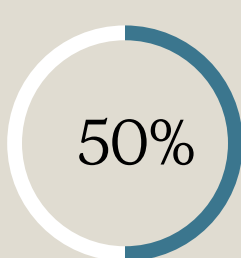
Our research uncovered many insights. Here are some key ones.

## — Manager and colleague support

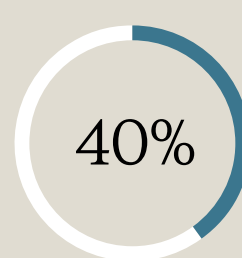
Employees returning from disability see the support of managers and colleagues as critical to a successful return to work. But many returning employees reported not getting the level of support they need.



Felt stigma at their workplace for having been on disability leave. They also felt isolated and alone during their return to work.



Had communications with their direct manager just once a month or less about how their return to work was going. And 25% had no communication at all.



Did not have anyone to speak with other than their direct manager if they were having challenges with the back-to-work transition.

## — Planning for the transition

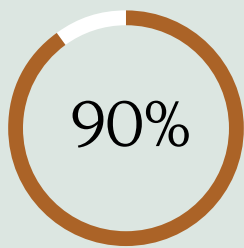
A return-to-work plan can help ensure that employers and employees are clear on roles, expectations, and timelines. Many returning employees reported that a clear plan was lacking.



Strongly agreed they and their direct manager had a clear plan for their transition back to work.

## — The value of training and education

People managers are not disability experts. And most are looking for guidance on how to better support their employees.



of people managers would value additional training on:

- How to approach and speak to employees sensitively about various disabilities
- Gaining a better understanding of employees' physical and cognitive limitation so they can identify suitable, modified work for them
- How to provide accommodations to employees returning to work
- Processes and guidelines when managing a returning employee

## — How Sun Life is helping



We're releasing a series of return-to-work videos for people managers and returning employees in the new year. These videos outline best practices that can help ensure a successful return.

And stay tuned for our full research report on the return-to-work process, coming in Spring 2024. These findings can help you identify actions your organization can take to support a successful and sustainable return to work after a disability leave.

## — About our research



In partnership with Ipsos, we conducted research from July 12 to 25, 2023. We surveyed more than 500 Canadian employers who have managed employees returning to work after a disability leave. We also surveyed more than 300 Canadian employees who have taken a disability leave.

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