



MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTIONS, & RETURN TO WORK

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

April 22-25, 2024 | Canmore, AB

Land Acknowledgement

United Nurses of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that the land on which we are privileged to gather is the traditional territory of diverse Indigenous peoples and encompasses Treaties 6, 7 and 8, parts of Treaties 4 and 10, and the homes, travelling routes, and meeting grounds of many whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our service and advocacy as members of the nursing profession. These include Cree, Dene, Inuit, Iroquois, Metis, and many other Indigenous peoples. Our recognition of this land is a small but important part of our responsibility in reconciliation and an expression of our gratitude to those on whose territory we reside or are visiting.

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ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Learning Objectives

At the end of this workshop, participants should be able to:

- > Identify and incorporate abilities, restrictions, limitations, and accommodations related to mental health and addictions in return to work planning.
- > Apply strategies in developing and implementing individualized accommodations.
- > Understand return to work planning from a labour relations perspective and the steps involved in the accommodation process.
- > Identify roles and responsibilities throughout the return to work process.

Workshop Offerings

Each participant will attend 3 workshops over the course of the Labour School.

- > Truth & Reconciliation: The Blanket Exercise
- > Inclusive Workplaces / Inclusive Communities
- > Mental Health, Addictions, & Return to Work
- > Giving Meaning to the Squiggles on a Piece of Paper, AKA Scheduling
- > Does It Really Say That?: Contract Interpretation
- > Communicating with Management

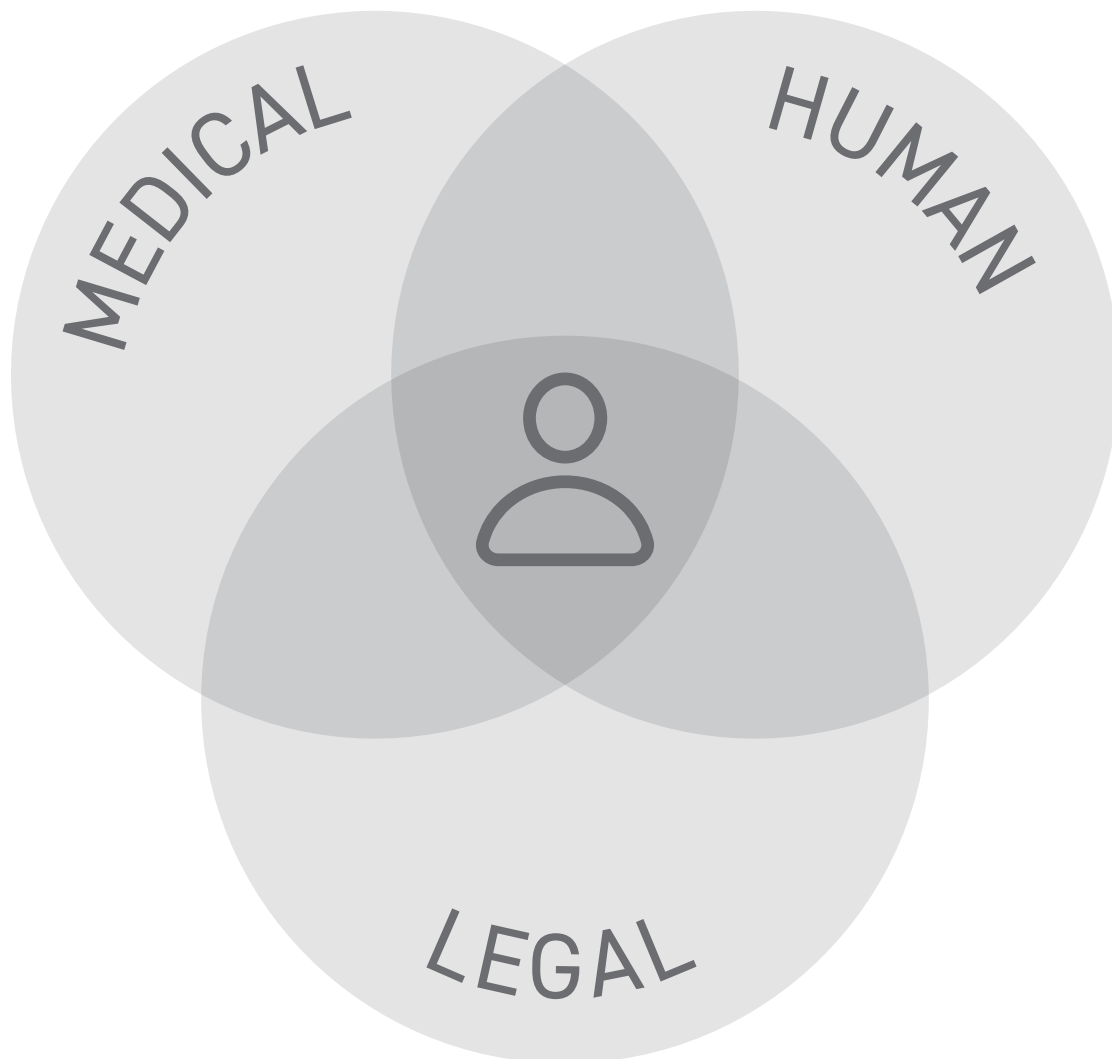
**** TRIGGER WARNING ****

WE MAY TALK ABOUT TOPICS TODAY THAT ARE SENSITIVE, DIFFICULT, OR TRIGGERING. IF AT ANY POINT YOU NEED TO STEP AWAY OR NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT, PLEASE LET A FACILITATOR KNOW, OR JUST STEP AWAY AND TAKE THE TIME YOU NEED. INFORMATION REGARDING RESOURCES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE DURING THE WORKSHOP.

CONFIDENTIALITY

PERSONAL INFORMATION SHARED TODAY SHALL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL WITHIN THE GROUP, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ANY POTENTIAL HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS.

BACKGROUND ON RETURN TO WORK & ACCOMMODATION FROM A MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS PERSPECTIVE



THREE PERSPECTIVES INTERSECT WHEN SUPPORTING A PERSON WHO IS RETURNING TO WORK.

- > **Medical Perspective:** This perspective focuses on restrictions (what people cannot medically do)
- > **Legal Perspective:** This perspective focuses on the rights and obligations of the Employer, the Union and the Individual
- > **Human Perspective:** This perspective focuses on the individual and what they can do

GUIDING LEGAL PRINCIPLES

Tripartite Process

Three parties are involved in the accommodation process: the Employer, the Union and the Individual.

Individual Analysis

Every person and situation is unique and so the circumstances for each accommodation need to be considered individually.

Reasonable, Not Ideal

The employer has a legal duty to provide a *reasonable* accommodation; an employee is not entitled to their preferred or ideal accommodation.

Undue Hardship

The legal duty to accommodate does not apply if the only way to resolve a problem will cause the employer undue hardship. Undue hardship is a high standard; it is quite rare for an employer to say it will cause undue hardship to accommodate an employee in any position within the organization.

PROCESSES & BEST PRACTICES

1. Initial Engagement with the Duespayer
2. Meeting with the Employer
3. Working Together to Identify Opportunities
4. Follow Up

Step One – Initial Engagement

- > Gather information for the file including:
 - Individual name and member number
 - Worksite
 - Unit
 - Position/FTE
 - Work status
 - Medical restrictions
 - License conditions
 - Clearance to return to work?
 - Employer advised? When?
 - Return to work date
 - Contacts
- > Build trust and relationship with the duespayer
- > Provide education:
 - Show the accommodation roadmap
 - Provide resources
 - Employer policies
 - Accommodation request form
- > Amplify their agency by:
 - Asking how they want to be supported
 - Asking how often they/you should touch base
 - Asking what language to use (Example: Pronouns)
 - Encouraging them to make their own decisions
 - Sharing steps they can take in the process

ACTIVITY – CHALLENGES IN GATHERING INFORMATION & BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MENTAL HEALTH/ ADDICTIONS CONTEXT

COMMON CHALLENGES	STRATEGY

Step Two – Meeting with the Employer

Before the Meeting:

- > Set up a meeting with Employer. Make sure the necessary people are included, such as:
 - Duespayer
 - Human Resources
 - Abilities
 - Manager
 - Union
 - LRO
- > Confirm medical information has been provided to the Employer in advance (and to the appropriate persons; medical must be protected)
- > Manage duespayer expectations prior to the meeting.
 - The process can take time
 - Duespayers are entitled to a reasonable accommodation, not a perfect one

At the Meeting:

- > Take notes at the meeting (sign and date them)
- > Confirm:
 - Medical
 - Dates (when notice was provided)
 - Timeline
 - Process
 - Pay and benefits status
 - Whether the accommodation will happen on the home unit or elsewhere

Tips for Improving Meetings:

- > Use a preamble
- > Listen to the employer's concerns and acknowledge them
- > Ask questions to help uncover the employer's underlying concerns
- > Think creatively about how to address the underlying concerns

Tips for Handling Disagreement

- > Gather information
- > Reach out to the Employer to obtain their rationale
- > Request a follow-up meeting
- > Focus on process, not outcome
- > Call your LRO

ACTIVITY – CHALLENGES DURING A MENTAL HEALTH OR ADDICTIONS RTW MEETING

COMMON CHALLENGES	STRATEGY

Step Three – Working Together to Identify Opportunities

When we are looking at a duespayer's home position or other positions during this process, we don't just look at the position as it is now. Instead, we need to think creatively about both modifying work as well as bundling work differently.

Modified work includes changes to job duties, hours of work and/or shift schedules. Modified work could also include providing modified tools, equipment or aids, modifying the physical layout of the workspace and providing training.

Bundling work involves removing tasks from an accommodated worker that do not meet their medical restrictions and replacing them with tasks from the worker's assignment and those of their coworkers that do meet the accommodated worker's restrictions. Bundling aims to find appropriate and meaningful tasks and to consolidate them with an accommodated worker. For example, scheduled and PRN medication tasks on a busy medical unit are typically the responsibility of each nurse, but they could instead be combined ("bundled") to create a position for a nurse seeking accommodation.

How to Get There:

- > Determine the scope of the search for an accommodation
- > Look for opportunities in their own position
 - Consider the duespayer's needs
 - Consider how rules or practices can be modified
 - Can tasks be distributed among the employees in a different manner?
 - Are there changes that can be made to the physical environment?
- > Consider whether there are tools or equipment that could help the duespayer
For example:
 - One-handed syringes for an employee with a hand injury
 - Checklists for an employee with anxiety or memory issues
 - Sit-stand desks for an employee with a back injury
- > Consider the needs of the job
- > Consider the duration of the accommodation
- > Consider potential employer constraints

Remember:

- > Local executives are often best placed to think creatively about solutions
- > Advocate for your duespayer by encouraging all parties to focus on the process, gather information, and trial different options before deciding a position isn't a good fit
- > Engage with your LRO about filing a grievance if an accommodation isn't timely

Support Throughout the Process

- > Maintain contact with the duespayer
- > Communicate with other locals where necessary
- > Touch base with LRO
- > Waive provisions of the CA where necessary (ex. posting provisions)
- > Encourage shadow shifts

ACTIVITY – MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS ACCOMMODATIONS INVENTORY

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for students to complete the 'Accommodations Inventory' activity.

Step Four: Follow Up

- > Check in with the duespayer to see how the accommodation is going
- > Be a resource for the duespayer and liaise with your LRO to troubleshoot any potential issues
- > Before you close your file, obtain written confirmation from the Employer that the accommodation is successful

SCENARIO 1 – KAREN

Information Gathering

DUESPAYER INFORMATION	CONTACTS
Name	Labour Relations Officer:
Contact information	
Pronouns	
Worksite	Human Resources:
Unit	
Position	
FTE	Abilities Management:
Work status	
Clearance to return to work?	
Employer advised of readiness to RTW? Yes/No Date:	Other contacts:
Medical restrictions:	
Employer advised of restrictions? Yes/No	
License conditions	
Employer advised of conditions? Yes/No	
What types of accommodations have been explored/discussed?	

SCENARIO 1 – KAREN

Empathy Map

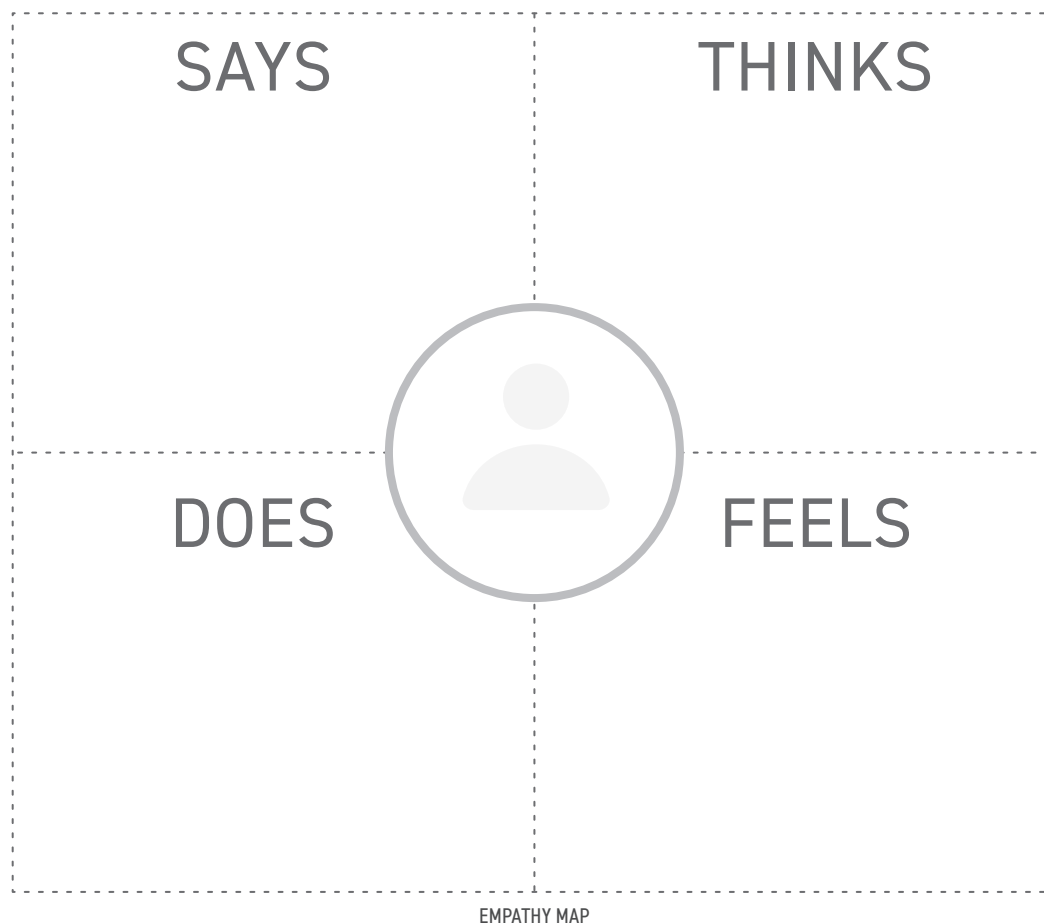
Creating an empathy map helps us understand our duespayers' needs. It helps us develop a deeper understanding of the individuals we are representing and advocating for.

The **Says** quadrant contains what the duespayer says in the interview.

The **Thinks** quadrant captures what the duespayer might be thinking throughout the accommodation process.

The **Does** quadrant considers the actions the duespayer has taken.

The **Feels** quadrant contemplates the duespayer's emotional state (often represented as an adjective plus a short sentence for context). **Ask yourself:** What is troubling the them? How might they feel about the experience?



Other questions to consider: What are this individual's fears? Their frustrations? What obstacles do they face? What are their needs? Their desires?

SCENARIO 1 – KAREN

Medical

Please be advised that my patient, Karen has a back condition that requires accommodation. It is my recommendation that Karen avoid lifting heavy items. In addition, Karen should not stand for extended periods.

Additionally, to mitigate the impact of another health condition, Karen must avoid stressful situations. I also recommend a reduction in total hours of work. For clarity, this means Karen should avoid working multiple shifts in a row.

QUESTIONS ARISING FROM MEDICAL

SCENARIO 1 – KAREN

Brainstorming Accommodation Options

MODIFIED WORK	RE-BUNDLING
OTHER OPTIONS	POTENTIAL BARRIERS

SCENARIO 2 – DARREN

Information Gathering

DUESPAYER INFORMATION	CONTACTS
Name	Labour Relations Officer:
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Worksite	Human Resources:
Unit	
Position	
FTE	Abilities Management:
Work status	
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SCENARIO 2 – DARREN

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SCENARIO 2 – DARREN

Medical

Darren Cleary is clear to return to work with no conditions except that he cannot work in acute settings.

QUESTIONS ARISING FROM MEDICAL

SCENARIO 2 – DARREN

Brainstorming Accommodation Options

MODIFIED WORK	RE-BUNDLING
OTHER OPTIONS	POTENTIAL BARRIERS

SCENARIO 3 – LAURA

Information Gathering

DUESPAYER INFORMATION	CONTACTS
Name	Labour Relations Officer:
Contact information	
Pronouns	
Worksite	Human Resources:
Unit	
Position	
FTE	Abilities Management:
Work status	
Clearance to return to work?	
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SCENARIO 3 – LAURA

Empathy Map

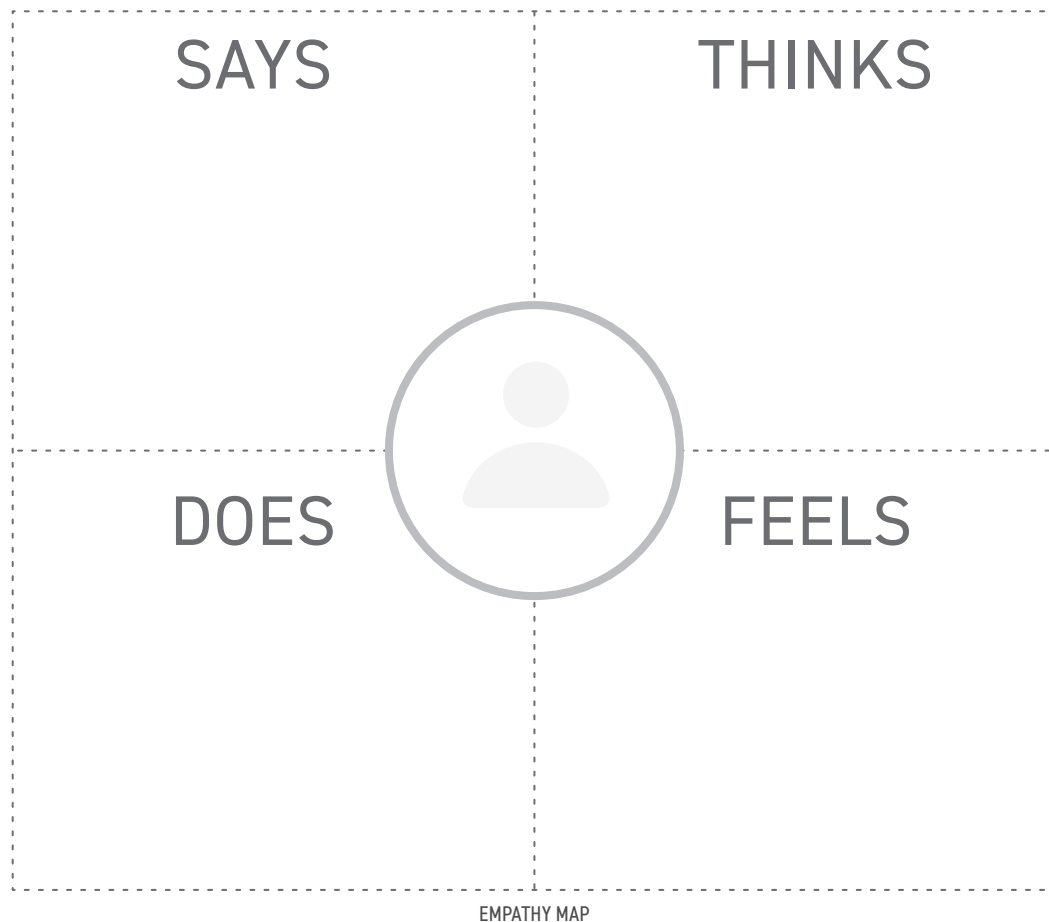
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SCENARIO 3 – LAURA

Medical

A gradual return to work is needed for Laura Fenway. Laura cannot:

- > Work alone;
- > Work full-time hours; or
- > Work at night

QUESTIONS ARISING FROM MEDICAL

SCENARIO 3 – LAURA

Brainstorming Accommodation Options

MODIFIED WORK	RE-BUNDLING
OTHER OPTIONS	POTENTIAL BARRIERS

RESOURCES

Mental Health & Addictions Support

Suicide Crisis Helpline

 **988**

Mental Health Helpline

 **1-877-303-2642**

Provincial (referrals for community, government,
and social services)

 **211**

Addictions Helpline

 **1-866-332-2322**

Health Link

 **811**




AHS Addiction & Mental Health
www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/



AHS - Suicide Prevention,
Risk Assessment & Management
www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page14579.aspx



Hope for Wellness
 **1-855-242-3310** or www.hopeforwellness.ca

Return to Work



CCOHS Mental Health & Return to Work
www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mh/return_to_work.html



Mood Disorders Canada
mdsc.ca/workplace/



Workplace Strategies for Mental Health
www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com



Job Accommodation Network
askjan.org

Notes

Lined area for taking notes.

Notes

Lined area for notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines with a dotted midline for handwriting.



CONTACTS

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