

Mental Health

Greg owns a small printing company.



His staff are responsible for the sales work, as well as printing the products ordered by his clients. They only have a small number of staff in the business and the shop has been busy with people ordering COVID-19 posters and other materials for their workplaces. One of his employees, Manuel, has been away with a confirmed case of COVID-19 contracted from a family member returning from overseas.

Manuel has recovered from COVID-19 and has been looking forward to returning to work. Manuel has provided medical certification from his general practitioner that he is fit for work but would benefit from reduced hours for the first two weeks so he can build his strength back up. Greg has checked the latest advice by contacting his State's health helpline to ensure it is safe for Manuel to return to work.

Greg knows clear, timely and consistent communication is important in helping staff return to work. In the week before Manuel's first day back, he called Manuel to discuss the changes to his working hours for the first two weeks, what is expected of him back at work and the new measures at the workplace for managing the risk of COVID-19 which all workers must follow. This puts Manuel at ease as he prepares to settle back in.

Greg is also conscious that there could be stigma because Manuel had COVID-19.

As Manuel is happy for people at work to know he had COVID-19, Greg calls a staff meeting to let them know that Manuel is returning to work and it is safe for him to do so. Greg also invites workers to discuss, in private, any concerns they may have.

After many warm greetings from all the staff on Monday morning to welcome Manuel back to the shop, Greg checks in with Manuel to see if he has any questions or concerns. Greg provides material to Manuel outlining the workplace policies and procedures that have been updated in response to COVID-19, including new cleaning and hygiene measures and physical distancing requirements. The material also includes contact details for the Employee Assistance Program and other support services to help Manuel transition back into the workplace.

This information helps Manuel adapt to the many changes in the shop and feel confident in returning to his daily tasks. They agree to check in again on Wednesday to see how Manuel is settling back in and whether any further adjustments to his working arrangements are needed.

Note: If a worker with a workers' compensation claim for COVID-19 is returning to work, the employer should contact their relevant workers' compensation authority for advice on their particular circumstances. Details of the relevant workers' compensation authority are available on our website.

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