

Accommodation and Return to Work Policy and Procedure Enhancement

Includes:

Final Report, Statistical graphs, Accommodation Process Diagram, Digital Assistive Technologies, Table of Benefits, Survey Questionnaire Sample

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Clarington

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**TITLE: ACCOMMODATION AND RETURN TO WORK POLICY AND PROCEDURE
ENHANCEMENT**

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT1

INTRODUCTION1

 THIS STUDY INTENDS TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS1

 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY2

 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY2

Main objective.....2

Specific objectives2

LITERATURE REVIEW2

METHODOLOGY4

KEY FINDINGS4

RECOMMENDATIONS8

CONCLUSION11

APPENDIX.....13

BIBLIOGRAPHY22

ACCOMMODATION AND RETURN TO WORK POLICY AND PROCEDURE ENHANCEMENT

ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the best accommodations and return to work methods and procedures that the Municipality of Clarington can use during its employment cycle. The primary method of study is a review of the literature, which includes the Trent Library archive, online data, survey, report, and journal articles. Moreover, multiple interviews with the Municipality of Clarington and consulting with other municipalities whenever possible to help achieve the objectives. The primary finding regarding accommodations and return to work has been established after studying the literature. After that, data was examined to determine the best recommendations in accordance with Clarington's objectives. The recommendations are based primarily on the suggested Accommodation Flowchart. Later, the best practices are recommended to implement and oversee the organization's entire accommodation process efficiently and effectively. Finally, the study encourages the use of contemporary technology, a work environment that prioritizes its employees, and diversity inclusion to strengthen organizational reputation in the local community.

Introduction

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees several rights and liberties in Canadian society. This includes the ability to demand an accommodation requirement, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered or prevented by discriminatory practices. Employers must modify their hiring procedures to ensure that no employee is subjected to discrimination based on a protected class. As this is a requirement of law,

any time new grounds for discrimination are introduced to Canadian law, it automatically qualifies for accommodation. When an employee requests accommodations, the employer must thoroughly investigate and consider ways to address the employee's unique needs (such as family status, gender expression, or disability) in the workplace, including whether the specific tasks can be structured to address the need (Peacock, 2020). The exception can occur until or unless it causes the employer "undue hardship," accommodations are anticipated. Financial constraints or health and safety concerns frequently cause unreasonable hardship. Even with this, most medium-sized to large-sized businesses would find it difficult to claim that a request for accommodations would result in excessive hardship (Peacock, 2020).

This research will discover the best practices regarding accommodation and return to work and recommends a compatible policy and procedure for implementation to the Municipality of Clarington.

This study intends to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the best practices for establishing an enhanced 'Accommodation and Return to Work Policy'?
- 2) Does the current return to work form in line with best practices?

Limitations of the Study:

Given the complexity of the accommodation and return to work policies and procedures, the time allotted for this research is limited. Moreover, depending on each person's accommodation needs the requests may differ. Hence, determining the best option for everyone may be difficult and complex. Also, the study is based on secondary data, which implies that all the information was acquired from primary sources, such as books, journal articles, and library archives. Most of the information is found online. As a result, there is a shortage of information, and it is challenging to locate relevant evidence. The research is therefore restricted to three months of data collection. The goal of this research is to resolve the objective of the Municipality of Clarington.

Objectives of the Study:

Main objective: The primary purpose of the research is to find out the best accommodation and return to work policy and suggest the suitable policy and procedures that are most applicable to the Municipality of Clarington so that the human resource managers can implement that policy in their organization to ensure appropriate accommodations for every employee throughout the employment cycle.

Specific objectives:

1. Utilizing work done by previous students and current return to work forms, complete a review of current accommodations related to disability, mental health, parental leave, family work-life balance, etc.
2. Audit return to works forms and processes through the lens of accessibility, inclusion, and lived experience instead of focusing on medical, physical, & functional assessments.
3. Develop a survey tool for the host.
4. Present findings to the host organization in a written report

Literature Review

Accommodation and return to work programs have become increasingly crucial in the workplace. Some programs aim to support employees who experience injuries, illnesses, or disabilities to continue working or return to work while managing their conditions (Franche et al., 2005). This literature review examines current research on accommodation and return to work programs in the workplace, including their effectiveness, challenges, and best practices. Research has shown that accommodation and return to work programs effectively promote employee health and well-being, reduce absenteeism, and increase productivity. According to a systematic review by the Institute for Work and Health in Canada, early and successful return to work interventions can positively impact an employee's psychological and physical recovery, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life (Franche et al., 2005). The review found that return to work interventions reduced the duration of work disability by an average of 19 days. Another study conducted by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) in the United States found that accommodations effectively retain employees with disabilities workplace (Ruck et al., 2018). The study found that 90% of employers reported that accommodations were practical or somewhat effective in helping employees with disabilities stay on the job. One study conducted by the Institute for Work and Health in Canada found that employees who received early and successful return to work interventions had a 50% reduction in the duration of their work disability compared to those who did not receive return to work support. Additionally, the study found the return to work interventions can help prevent the onset of chronic health conditions and reduce healthcare costs. The literature on accommodation and return to the workplace emphasizes accommodating employees with disabilities and providing a supportive and inclusive work environment. Proactive and individualized accommodations can facilitate a successful return to work process and improve job satisfaction, productivity, and

retention. Flexible work arrangements, such as telework and modified work schedules, are also essential accommodations for employees with disabilities and caregiving responsibilities. One article outlines that accommodations were positively associated with job retention, job satisfaction, and productivity (Migliore et al., 2012). Another review of the literature on employer practices and policies related to accommodations for employees returning to work after an injury or illness found that proactive and flexible accommodations and open communication between employers and employees can facilitate a successful return to work process (Pransky et al., 2014). Effective collaboration and communication are crucial to ensuring successful accommodation and return to work policies and procedures. A study by Martens et al. (2016) revealed that collaboration among employees, employers, and healthcare providers was critical to achieving positive return to work outcomes. The study emphasized the need for open communication channels between all parties involved. Therefore, fostering a collaborative and communicative approach among stakeholders can significantly improve the success of accommodation and return to work policies and procedures. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need for accommodations for remote work and workplace safety measures. A study on remote work during the pandemic found that remote work increased productivity for many employees but also emphasized the need for accommodations for employees with disabilities and caregiving responsibilities (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). Another article guided employers on accommodating employees with disabilities in the post-pandemic workplace, emphasizing the importance of flexible work arrangements and individualized accommodations (Berdahl et al., 2021). In some circumstances, employers must provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities unless doing so would cause undue hardship to the employer. The interactive process helps ensure that the accommodations provided are tailored to the employee's needs and that both parties are fully engaged to reach a mutually agreeable solution. It is important to note that the interactive process is not a one-time

event but rather an ongoing process that may need to be revisited if the employee's needs change or new barriers arise (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016). By engaging in an interactive process, employers can create a more inclusive and supportive work environment while promoting their employees' productivity and well-being. Despite the benefits of accommodation and return to work programs, there are several challenges that employers and employees face when implementing these programs. Firstly, because of a lack of knowledge and resources employers may not have the necessary knowledge or resources to provide adequate accommodations and support for employees with disabilities or health conditions (Bruyère, S. M., & Erickson, W. A. 2007). Secondly, employees may also experience stigma and discrimination from their employers or co-workers due to their health conditions or disabilities, making accessing accommodations or returning to work challenging (Corbière, M., 2014). Thirdly, communication barriers between employees, employers, and healthcare providers can hinder the effectiveness of accommodation and return to work programs (Lamontagne, M.-E., & Keegel, T. 2016). Lastly, organizational culture can impact the success of accommodation and return to work programs. A culture that values employee well-being and supports the return to work interventions can improve the success of these programs (Dewa, C. S. 2010).

Methodology

The methodology for this research paper on return to work and accommodation in the workplace involves a thorough review of related research literature, journals, and surveys. This review will provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of research on this topic and help identify gaps in knowledge that must be addressed. In addition, frequent online interviews have been conducted with the host organization, the Municipality of Clarington, to determine their main requirements and the solutions required for an influential return to work and accommodation policy. The findings and updates will be shared with the organization to receive feedback on the research progress and ensure it meets their needs. Expert opinions and suggestions have been gathered through an interview with Meagan Whitehorn, the return to work coordinator for York Region. This will provide valuable insights into best practices and policies implemented in other municipalities. Furthermore, articles and books related to return to work and accommodation from Trent Archive were reviewed to supplement the literature review findings and gain additional insights into the topic. By using a combination of these research methods, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of return to work and accommodation policies in the workplace and identify best practices that can be implemented to promote a safe and inclusive workplace environment. By providing the host organization with survey questions, the research aims to ensure that the findings can be effectively implemented to meet the organization's specific needs.

Key Findings

Providing return to work and accommodation facilities has many advantages, including helping the organization meet the requirements of the human rights act, retaining skilled, experienced workers, cutting training and hiring costs, fostering a culture of health and safety, and improving the organization's reputation in the community. Moreover, some best practices for accommodations and return to work include gradual early and safe return to work, modified duties, alternate duties, decreased work hours, training, and temporary assignments (Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, 2020). According to the severity of their disabilities, the top workplace adjustments needed for employees with disabilities aged 25 to 64 are shortened work hours, alternative workdays, modified or substituted duties, modified or ergonomic workspace, and being employed from home (see appendix A.1 for details). Despite being essential workplace accommodations, many standards still needed to be met. For instance, flexible work arrangements were the most frequently requested workplace accommodation, but 23.2% of those requests were never met. In addition, 37% of those who requested workstation alterations still needed to address their needs. Finally, 44% of workplace accommodation participants had no access to the necessary technological or human services (see appendix A.2 for details). According to the survey results, employees do not request workplace modifications because of discomfort in asking, fear of unfavourable outcomes, and lack of time. Not seriously serious enough to refuse to admit they needed workplace accommodation (see appendix A.3 for details) (Morris, 2019). There are some well-known methods for assisting with the return to work and individual employee accommodations. For instance, the first step in discovering adjustments that can enhance job performance and job satisfaction is to understand the demands of the work environment and the strengths and limits of the employee with a disability. Secondly, there should be a structured procedure for identifying accommodation needs, creating an

accommodation plan with the employee with an impairment, and tracking the accommodation's efficacy over time. Thirdly, prepare persons to request accommodations by educating them about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the variety of available accommodations, processing their choices, and sharing information on how to identify disabilities and make requests for adjustments. Finally, include the supervisor and the workgroup members in the accommodation process because employees are more likely to request and receive accommodations when they see their workgroup and supervisor are supportive (Wilson, 2008). According to a study, employers may be required to provide accommodations for their employees' usage of medical marijuana and hidden disorders like drug and alcohol addiction. Employees may occasionally need to use marijuana to treat or relieve the signs and symptoms of impairment (see appendix B for details). Consequently, employers must be ready to cope with workers whose performance is impacted by cannabis usage in the workplace. Hence, depending on available information regarding this accommodation, an organization can update other health and wellness programs for the time being. First off, a marijuana prescription does not grant the employee the right to smoke at work. Secondly, employers should implement a clear drug policy that specifies when and where medicinal marijuana use is permitted and finally defines "impairment" in a proper manner (The Human Resources Professionals Association, 2017).

Even if the organization has an appropriate accommodation policy, this won't be enough if they fail to detect the disability job gap. When seeking a career, people with disabilities encounter various obstacles that others do not. For instance, stigma-related employment barriers include the perception that people with disabilities will be less present at work, that their accommodations will be prohibitively expensive, and that they will be inaccessible during the recruiting process. To improve the situation, employers should be willing to make accommodations and listen to employees with disabilities rather than letting them resign. The ideal technique could consist of

one way to lower barriers for persons with disabilities is to educate the workplace about being inclusive. It is not only the hiring manager's or the human resource person's responsibility to promote workplace diversity and inclusivity but also their colleagues required to treat them inclusively (Osezua, 2020). Meanwhile as of spring 2023, Canada's unemployment rate is at 5%, while Clarington has an unemployment rate of 11% (Statistics Canada, 2023). Hence, considering hiring disabled people may decrease the unemployment rate in the community. Research also suggests that training managers and supervisors on handling accommodation requests can help ensure consistent and appropriate decision-making (Society for Human Resource Management, n.d.). Employers should prioritize creating a supportive culture and environment for employees with disabilities, including open communication, reasonable accommodations, and ongoing education and training (Journal of Business and Psychology, 2018). Providing ongoing support and communication with employees during the accommodation process, including regular check-ins and a plan for necessary accommodations can positively impact employee retention, productivity, and overall job satisfaction (National Rehabilitation Information Center, n.d.). Return to work policies and procedures should include a transparent process for employees to report work-related injuries or illnesses and a plan for modified duty or alternative work arrangements during recovery (Occupational Safety and Health Administration, n.d.). Employers should consider implementing a phased return to work program that allows employees to gradually increase their hours and responsibilities as they recover from an injury or illness (American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 2018). Workplace accommodations can positively impact productivity, job satisfaction, and other outcomes. Specifically, the author of "Accommodation as a Productivity Strategy: A Review of the Evidence" found that accommodations were associated with increased job performance, improved attendance and punctuality, and reduced turnover rates among employees with disabilities.

Moreover, the review found that the benefits of productivity gains often offset the cost of accommodations. Employers who provide accommodations are more likely to retain their employees and avoid the costs associated with turnover and absenteeism (Morris, 2019).

Conducting job analysis and accommodation assessments is essential for identifying the functional requirements of a job and determining suitable accommodations for employees with disabilities. According to a study by Franche et al. (2005), comprehensive job analysis and accommodation assessments were associated with positive outcomes for returning employees to work. Therefore, these assessments are crucial tools in facilitating successful return to work outcomes. Using incentives, such as financial rewards or recognition programs, can be an effective strategy to encourage compliance with accommodation and return to work policies and procedures. A review by Habeck and Hunt (2017) showed that incentives were positively associated with increased compliance with accommodation policies and procedures. Thus, incentives can be helpful in promoting adherence to policies and procedures related to accommodation and return to work.

According to the job accommodation network, accommodations for employees with disabilities can bring multiple benefits to employers. Employers who accommodate employees with disabilities report experiencing multiple direct and indirect benefits. The direct benefits most frequently mentioned are retention of qualified employees, increased worker productivity, and elimination of costs associated with training new employees. The most reported indirect benefits are improved co-worker interactions, company morale, and productivity (See appendix E for details). According to Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, conducting individualized assessments is a best practice for accommodating employees with disabilities and facilitating their return to work. Individualized assessments ensure that the accommodation is tailored to the employee's needs, considering their disability, job duties, and workplace environment. An individualized assessment thoroughly reviews the employee's job duties, work

environment, disability, and any limitations it may impose. This assessment can involve input from the employee, their healthcare provider, and other relevant parties. Employers can identify employees' most effective accommodation options by conducting individualized assessments. This can help ensure that the accommodation successfully facilitates the employee's return to work and does not create an undue hardship for the employer. Employers must communicate with the employee throughout the assessment process, keeping them informed of the progress and involving them in decision-making. This can help build trust and confidence and ensure the accommodation meets the employee's needs and expectations. In Canada, several accommodations and return to work policies are in place to help employees with disabilities or health conditions to remain in or return to the workforce. Here are some of the critical policies and legislation:

1. Canadian Human Rights Act: This federal legislation prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability in employment, accommodation, goods and services, and other areas. Employers are required to accommodate employees to the point of undue hardship (Canadian Human Rights Act).
2. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA): This provincial legislation requires employers with 50 or more employees to develop and implement accessibility plans to remove barriers for employees with disabilities (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005).
3. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB): This agency provides compensation and benefits to workers who have suffered a workplace injury or illness. It also offers return to work programs to help workers with disabilities or health conditions return to work (Workplace Safety and Insurance Act).
4. Canada Labor Code: This federal legislation requires employers to accommodate employees with disabilities or health conditions to the point of undue hardship. It also includes provisions for return to work programs and medical leaves of absence (Canada Labour Code, 2007).

5. Duty to Accommodate: The duty to accommodate is a legal principle that requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities or health conditions. This could include modifying work hours, duties, or equipment to enable employees to perform their duties (Canadian Human Rights Commission).

6. Employment Insurance (EI): EI provides financial support to workers who cannot work due to illness, injury, or quarantine. It also offers a Compassionate Care Benefit for employees who need to take time off work to care for a family member who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death (Employment Insurance Act).

These policies and legislation aim to support employees with disabilities or health conditions to remain in or return to the workforce while ensuring employers fulfill their legal obligations to accommodate their employees.

Recommendations

The main objective of the research was to find the best practices, but throughout the research, finding out the leading cause of the problem is also essential. Therefore, the first step in this process is determining the accommodations requirement. For this reason, a survey tool was developed, which consisted of several questionnaires. The survey has two objectives; first, it will find out the accommodation and return to work requirements of existing employees and second, find out the effectiveness of the provided solution afterwards, after the identification of the problem with the survey, a recommended flowchart is proposed, which will breakdown every process of the implementation of accommodation and return to work throughout the employment circle. The accommodation process flowchart allows the organization to implement and enhance the best accommodation practices and return to work procedures. (See Appendix C for the Graphical Flowchart model). In the following section, the proposed accommodation process has been discussed and explained.

Recognize the need for accommodation: Municipality of Clarington can use two techniques to identify the situation. Initially, an employee can voluntarily (or a job applicant) seek accommodations; otherwise, the organization will survey every employee to identify and investigate the need for accommodations (see appendix F.1 for the proposed survey sample questionnaire). When an employer is aware that a worker could have a need that has not been expressed, they should start a conversation about accommodations (Government of Canada, 2011).

Gather information and assess needs: There are numerous options to obtain all the relevant information. The managers/supervisor/ return to work coordinator should first speak with the employee about the problem. After explicitly discussing the employee's potential accommodation choices, the manager, human resource coordinator, and return to work coordinator may agree to

an accommodation request if it is simple. By contrast, if the accommodation requested is complicated, an internal review of the assessment and consideration of a third-party judgment must be approved when applicable (Government of Canada, 2011). In case every assessment on the previous stage is complete and approved by the management, this is followed by:

Offer of accommodation: Based on the information, provide an appropriate accommodation to the employee.

Accommodation provided: Upon the management's acceptance and approval of the accommodation request. The necessary arrangement needs to be reached to begin implementing the appropriate accommodation.

Monitoring and reviewing the accommodation: A system of monitoring and review is necessary for an employer's responsibilities to accommodate employees' (and job seekers') needs, including physical access, adapted facilities, etc. Unsatisfactory accommodations required revisions and modifications depending on the demands of the assessment's recommendations. Other experts or stakeholders may need to be consulted, and the assessment may need to be redone (Government of Canada, 2011). Meanwhile, to help the monitoring and review process, the organization can run a survey to get feedback from the employee who received accommodations. It will assist the human resource managers in determining the effectiveness of employee accommodation (see appendix F. 2 for the post-survey sample).

In some circumstances, the accommodation request might be revoked due to undue hardship.

Accommodation denied: To establish undue hardship, the type of evidence needed must be objective, accurate, direct, and, in the case of costs, quantitative. According to the organization in

charge of making accommodations, an allegation that facts, statistics, and scientific evidence must support the proposed accommodation results in an undue hardship. It will not be adequate to declare that the cost or danger is "too high" based on assumptions or generalizations without supporting data (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2023). There needs to be more than just an organized procedure to provide accommodations. Therefore, some best practices are recommended to implement the accommodation efficiently and effectively and safely return to work in an organization.

Form an Accommodations and Return to Work Committee:

The return to work committee oversees the development and implementation of the policy for managing disabilities. The committee will comprise representatives from management, the union, human resources, the return to work coordinator or other designated individuals, and an employee health unit or workplace safety and health committee member (Workers Compensation Board , 2023). The responsibilities of the return to work committee may include the following:

- Supervising the development and revision of the disability management program policy, which includes the objectives of the institution, how disputes are resolved, and how the program is evaluated.
- Every two years review and evaluate the disability management policy and program to ensure its goals are accomplished.
- Create a communication strategy for the disability management program's execution.
- Examine the suggested program improvements and get management and union executive approval.
- Openly encourage all employees to participate in the disability management program.

Enable job crafting and inclusion of coaching and expert suggestions: Communicating with employees is essential because accommodation and return to work requirements may vary from person to person. Hence, personalization is becoming a critical factor in every accommodation and return to work process. As a result, job crafting, coaching, and expert consultation will help the organization select better accommodations for every employee based on their individual requirements.

- **Job Crafting:** If employees can personalize their job to accommodate their strengths, interests, and growth goals, they will perform at their best. For instance, a person's strengths are the qualities that enable them to perform well or at their highest level. Also, changing jobs to match their interests will motivate them to devote the time and effort necessary to perform better in the workplace. Lastly, finding opportunities for employees to use their new knowledge and abilities is called job crafting toward development. As employees may only take advantage of the learning opportunities in routine work practices if they are aware of their capacity for development, their perception of their development potential is a significant personal resource (Evy Kuijpers, 2020).

Coaching: The coach will be the person who will help the employee to find out the best solution regarding their accommodation requirements. Suppose an employee seeking accommodation or an injured employee seeking a safe return to work or returning to work after a long break can schedule an appointment with the responsible personnel, such as the return to work coordinator. In the coaching session, the coach will ask creative questions to the employee about how their problem will be resolved, which will allow the employee to rethink critically to understand their problems and eventually, with the help of the coach, the employee could figure out the potential solution by analyzing all the possibilities. Finally, out of all the possible solutions, the coach will ask more creative questions to guide an individual to pick the best solution to resolve the problem.

Therefore, at the end of the season, the employee would be able to find the best solution for themselves (Steven McShane, 2021). This will be a more practical solution because every employee will deeply understand their problems and limitations. Using their analytical and problem-solving skills, they will develop the best accommodation and return to work requirements.

Expert Consultation: The need for accommodation and return to work can be verified to avoid unwanted or unnecessary requests. Although accommodation is the right of every employee, some accommodations might not be necessary or will not generate any value for the work employee is currently doing. Therefore, to initiate this solution return to work committee, the employee health unit, and occupational therapists can verify the actual need of the employee. The request can be considered if the employee can provide the necessary evidence, such as doctors' and physiologist recommendations. Otherwise, it will not be necessary to proceed with every accommodation request.

Enhance the use of digital assistive technologies to accommodate people with disabilities:

Every disability has its unique characteristics. Consequently, it will create social, economic, and community participation barriers. Therefore, using accessible technology solutions, the problem can be reduced. For instance, individuals with speech impairments may experience communication challenges while interacting with others, such as peers and coworkers, clients, first responders, government personnel, and others. Thus, enabling accessible communication and technology solutions in the workplace such as SMS, text messaging, synthesized voice output, text-to-speech capabilities, and the use of virtual picture boards and communication solutions, can reduce the barrier of an employee and can provide the ability to perform their job in the workplace (Dr. Nicola T. Shaw, 2021) (see appendix D for more detailed examples and solutions).

Enable resource-sharing: Sharing resources with another municipal group, such as the municipal user group (MUG WSIB), will allow Clarington to network on disability management information

and processes. The research findings show that each employee might have different accommodation requirements, and some requirements can be unique. The organization might have yet to deal with the situation before. In that case, having a resource-sharing opportunity can mutually benefit each other. Therefore, subscription to municipal user group (MUG WSIB) or other related groups can be very effective. In unique circumstances, the organization can seek resources and suggestions from other municipalities. Therefore, the chances of having different opinions and solutions can be discovered. Moreover, other municipalities might have experience dealing with that accommodation from their previous experiences.

Education and Training: Training for managers, return to work coordinator and supervisors could effectively accommodate employees with disabilities and facilitate their return to work. Managers and supervisors play a critical role in the accommodation process and can significantly impact the success of an employee's return to work. Providing training on the importance of accommodations and how to facilitate them can help managers and supervisors identify and address accommodation needs more effectively. This training can include information on disability-related laws and regulations and best practices for accommodating employees with disabilities. In addition to understanding the accommodation process, managers and return to work supervisors must involve internal employees in the training and development process. The effectiveness of the whole process depends on the active participation of both management and employee. For instance, the training should educate employees on how to cooperate the disabled employee in the workplace or how to assist their co-worker who is returning to work after a long break from work. Effective participation of everyone in the organization can help build trust and confidence and ensure the accommodation meets the employee's needs and organizational objectives. Moreover, educating every employee regarding health and safety will also prevent and reduce potential workplace injuries.

Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation services can help employees who have suffered an injury or illness regain strength, mobility, and independence. Depending on the type of injury or illness, rehabilitation services may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, or vocational rehabilitation. Vocational rehabilitation focuses on helping employees to return to work and may include job training, career counselling, and other services to help employees re-enter the workforce. Employers may provide rehabilitation services to employees as part of their employee benefits program or as part of a workers' compensation claim. By providing rehabilitation services, employers can help their employees to recover more quickly and effectively and to return to work as soon as possible.

Regular Evaluation and Improvement: Organizations should regularly evaluate their return to work policies and procedures to identify improvement areas and remain current with best practices and legal requirements. This may involve collecting feedback from workers, managers, and healthcare providers, analyzing data related to return to work outcomes, and benchmarking against other organizations or municipalities in the province.

Conclusion

Accommodation and return to work policies and procedures play a crucial role in supporting employees in the workplace who may have experienced an injury, illness, or disability. These policies and procedures ensure that employees can access the necessary support and resources to help them return to work as quickly and safely as possible. This research on enhancing accommodation and return to work policies and procedures has highlighted the importance of taking a comprehensive and inclusive approach to support employees. The findings indicate that organizations that invest in proactive measures to prevent workplace injuries and implement

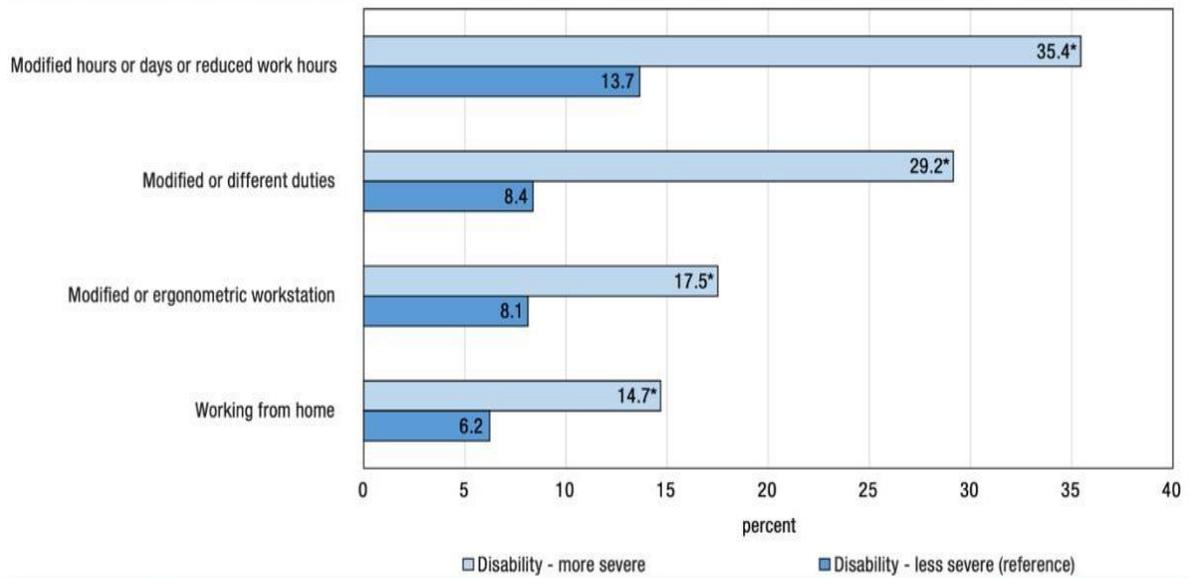
adequate accommodations and return to work programs can benefit from improved morale, reduced absenteeism, and increased productivity. In addition, the research has identified several key factors that are essential to the success of these policies and procedures. These include effective communication, collaboration between employers and employees, and a clear understanding of the needs and abilities of individual employees. By considering these factors, organizations can create policies and procedures tailored to their workforce's needs, supporting employees in achieving their full potential. The research has also highlighted the need for ongoing evaluation and enhancement of accommodation and return to work policies and procedures. This is particularly important considering the changing nature of work and the evolving needs of employees. By regularly reviewing and updating these policies and procedures, organizations can ensure that they remain practical and relevant in the face of new challenges and opportunities. Overall, the research has demonstrated the importance of accommodation and return to work policies and procedures in supporting employees in the workplace. By taking a proactive and inclusive approach, organizations can create a workplace culture prioritizing all employees' health, safety, and well-being, enabling them to thrive personally and professionally.

Appendix

Appendix A: A.1: Top required workplace accommodations for employees

Chart 1

Top required workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years, by severity of disability, 2017



* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017.

Appendix A.2

Requirements and level of needs met for workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years, by sex and severity of disability, 2017

Grouped workplace accommodations	Require	Level of needs met		
		All	Some	None
percent				
Flexible work arrangements				
Total - aged 25 to 64 years	27.1	68.8	7.7	23.2
Sex				
Men (reference)	22.7	69.9	5.0 ^E	24.6
Women	31.0*	68.2	9.5*	22.3
Severity of disability				
Less severe (reference)	20.1	71.8	3.9 ^E	24.0
More severe	48.5*	65.1	12.6*	22.2
Workstation modifications				
Total - aged 25 to 64 years	14.8	57.1	6.3^E	36.5
Sex				
Men (reference)	10.3	58.6	F	37.4
Women	18.7*	56.3	7.5 ^E	36.1
Severity of disability				
Less severe (reference)	11.4	60.9	5.7 ^E	33.4
More severe	25.3*	51.9	7.2 ^E	40.8
Human or technical supports				
Total - aged 25 to 64 years	6.1	49.9	5.6^E	43.8

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

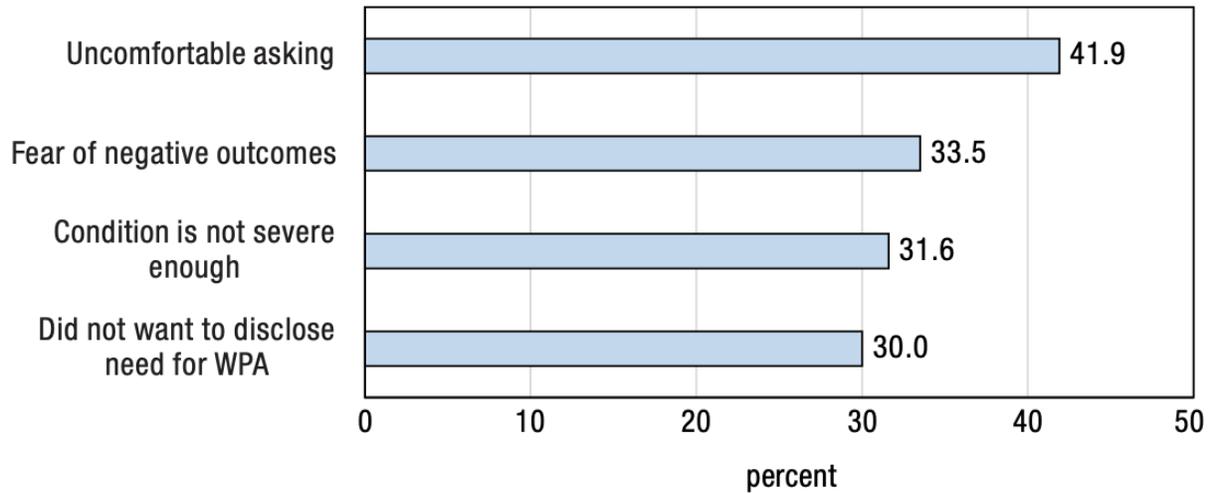
Notes: Level of needs met do not sum to 100% because it excluded those who required a workplace accommodation but did not state whether it was made available.

Flexible work arrangements includes: a) modified or different duties, b) working from home, and/or c) modified hours or days or reduced work hours. Workstation modifications includes: a) modified or ergonomic workstation and/or b) special chair or back support. Human or technical support includes: a) human support such as reader or sign language interpreter, b) technical aids such as infrared system or portable note-taker, c) computer, laptop or tablet with specialized software or other adaptations, and/or d) communication aids such as Braille or recording equipment.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017.

Appendix A.3

Top reasons why requests are not made for workplace accommodations required by employees with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years, 2017

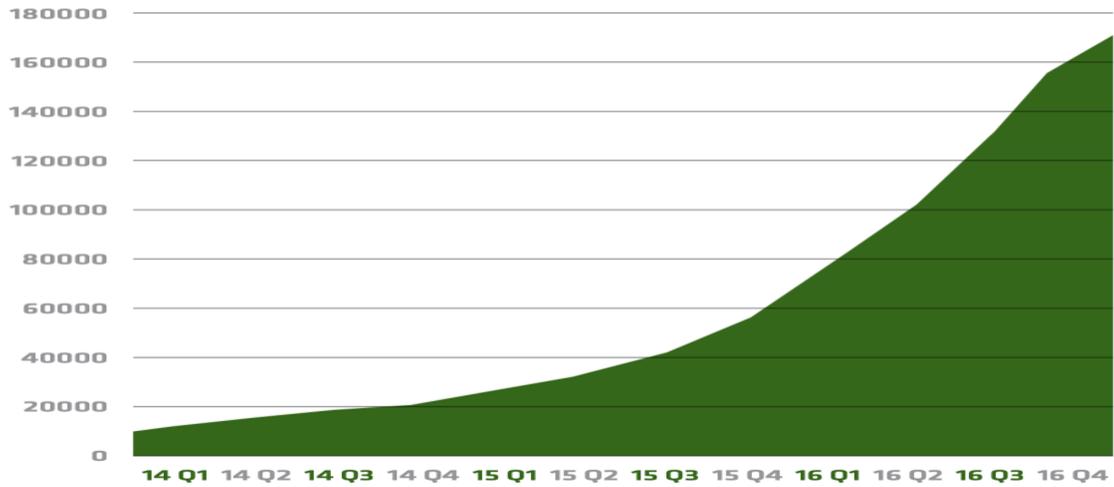


Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017.

URL: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2019001-eng.htm>

Appendix B

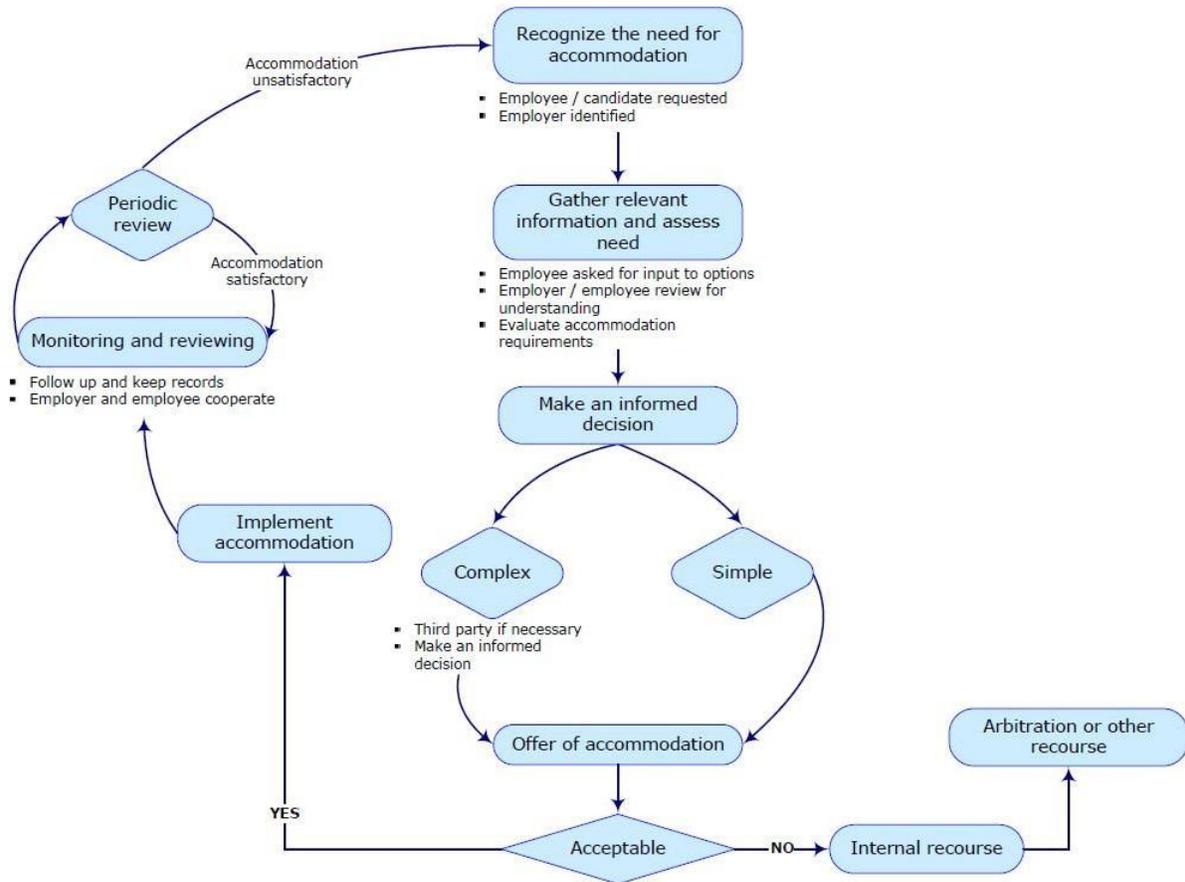
Total Number of Canadians Registered for Medical Marijuana Use



SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.CANADA.CA/EN/HEALTH-CANADA/SERVICES/DRUGS-HEALTH-PRODUCTS/MEDICAL-USE-MARIJUANA/LICENSED-PRODUCERS/MARKET-DATA.HTML](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-use-marijuana/licensed-producers/market-data.html)

Appendix C

Accommodation Process Diagram



Appendix D

Digital Assistive Technologies to support remote working by the disabled.

Barriers to participation by disability type and relevant ICT solutions

Disability Category	Examples of barriers in social, economic, and community participation	Examples of accessible technology solutions
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<p>Visual Disability</p> <p>Includes total blindness or low vision</p>	<p>Reading print (e.g., textbooks, instructions, documents) and writing (e.g., signing checks, legal documents)</p> <p>Accessing visual information in print or audiovisual media (for example, warnings and information in text scrolls on television).</p> <p>Navigating new surroundings when all signage is in text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text-to-speech rendition and speech/voice output • Braille displays. • Screen and text magnification • Voice recognition • Audio description of graphic and visual media • Electronic audio signage • GPS-facilitated navigation • Optical character or image recognition • Changing screen brightness, colour contrast
<p>Hearing Disability</p> <p>Total or partial hearing loss</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing lessons, warnings, and other auditory information in person or over audio media such as the radio or television. • Communicating with others including educators, peers and colleagues, clients, first responders, government personnel, and others. 	<p>Closed and open captioning, subtitles for videos, TV programming SMS, text messaging Text Telephone or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TTY/TDD) which allow text messaging over the phone line.</p> <p>Telecommunications Relay Services which allow text to speech conversions through an operator</p>

		Use of vibrations/text alerts instead of audio alerts
Speech Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating with others including educators, peers and colleagues, clients, firstresponders, government personnel, and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMS, text messaging Synthesized voice output, text to speech functionality Use of virtual picture board and communication solutions
Physical Disability Loss of mobility, dexterity, and control over somebody functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entering, navigating, and using buildings, classrooms, and other physical spaces. Using writing tools such as pens and pencils, keyboards, mouse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice recognition systems Adapted and virtual keyboards Joysticks and adapted mouse Use of eye-gaze and gestures to control devices Remote and online access to work,

		education, and other services
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<p>Cognitive Disability</p> <p>Includes a range of conditions which may impact a person's memory, thinking and problem solving, visual, math, reading and language.</p> <p>comprehension, ability to pay attention or follow instructions.</p> <p>Examples of underlying conditions are traumatic brain injury, learning disabilities, down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty understanding, remembering, or following instructions. • Difficult in comprehending textual information. • May occur together with other limitations such as speech impairments or trouble with hand grip and movements. • Difficulty in communicating or expressing thoughts and ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text-to-speech rendition and speech/voice output • Touch screen devices • Mobile apps and online resources that mimic Augmentative and Communication (AAC) devices, electronic picture boards for communication Organization and memory aid tools such as online calendars, note taking, alerts GPS-facilitated navigation. • Use of multimedia to aid comprehension e.g., videos, graphics
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<p>Psychosocial Disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need for flexible schedules ● Difficulty understanding, remembering, or following instructions. ● Inability to react and make appropriate decisions following information or instructions. ● Difficulty in communicating or expressing thoughts and ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of online communication, documentation, work tools to aid with flexible scheduling. ● Organization and memory aid tools such as online calendars, note taking, alerts
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Appendix E

Direct Benefits	%
Retained a valued employee	90%
Increased the employee's productivity	71%
Eliminated costs associated with training a new employee	60%
Increased the employee's attendance	53%
Increased diversity of the company	42%
Saved workers' compensation or other insurance costs	39%
Hired a qualified person with a disability	13%
Promoted an employee	10%
Indirect Benefits	%
Improved interactions with co-workers	66%
Increased overall company morale	61%
Increased overall company productivity	57%
Improved interactions with customers	45%
Increased workplace safety	45%
Increased overall company attendance	38%
Increased profitability	31%
Increased customer base	17%

Appendix F: Survey Questionnaire Sample

Appendix F.1: Survey for problem identification

Employee ID:

Name:

Department Name:

Supervisor Name:

Date:

Instructions: This survey will improve our accommodation and return to work practices. Please answer each question as accurately as possible. Your answers will be kept confidential and will not affect your status as an employee at our organization when you have completed this survey.

Accommodation:

1. Are you familiar with our company's accommodation and return to work policy?

- Yes, very familiar.
- b) Somewhat familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not at all familiar

2. Have you ever requested accommodations under our company's policy?

- Yes

- No
 - Prefer not to answer.
3. If you have requested accommodations, were they provided in a timely manner?
- Yes, they were provided in a timely manner.
 - No, they were not provided in a timely manner.
 - N/A, I have not requested accommodations.
4. Do you feel comfortable discussing your accommodation needs with your supervisor or HR representative?
- Very comfortable
 - Somewhat comfortable
 - Not very comfortable
 - Not at all comfortable
5. Do you feel that your accommodation needs were adequately met?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not Applicable
6. Do you feel the need for any accommodation needs that were not being discussed or addressed?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not Applicable

7. If you have taken accommodation, how satisfied are you with the accommodations provided to you by our organization, if applicable?

- Extremely satisfied.
- Moderately satisfied.
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

8. How could the current accommodation process improve? please provide your comments or suggestions below (optional): _____

Return to work:

1. Did you receive clear communication about the return to work process following your absence?

- Yes
- No

2. Did you feel your needs were considered when planning your return to work?

- Yes
- No

3. Were you provided with any support or resources to help you transition back to work?

- Yes
- No

4. Did you experience any deficiency in your return to work process?
- Yes
 - No
5. How satisfied are you with the return to work transition provided to you by our organization, if applicable?
- Extremely satisfied.
 - Moderately satisfied.
 - Somewhat dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied
6. How could the return to work process be improved? please provide your comments or suggestions below (optional): _____

Appendix F.2: Survey to determine the effectiveness of the accommodation and return to work process.

Employee ID:

Name:

Department Name:

Supervisor Name:

Date:

Instructions: This survey will improve our accommodation and return to work practices and help us determine the entire process's effectiveness. Please answer each question as accurately as

possible. Your answers will be kept confidential and will not affect your status as an employee at our organization when you have completed this survey.

1. Have you been provided with clear guidelines on the accommodation and safe return to work policy?

- Yes
- No

2. Have you discussed your specific accommodation needs with your supervisor/HR representative/ return to work committee/employee health unit?

- Yes
- No

3. Have you been informed of the measures being taken to ensure a safe return to the workplace?

- Yes
- No

4. Are there any concerns or suggestions about the accommodation and safe return to work policy?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "yes" to question 5, please provide any comments or suggestions below:

5. Could your employer resolve your accommodations problems regarding your return to work?

- All of them still need to be resolved.
- Partially resolved.
- All of them are successfully resolved.

6. How effective are our organization's return to work policies in supporting employees who have been absent due to illness or injury?

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not very effective
- Not at all effective

7. Do you feel your Employer provides the best solution considering your accommodation and return to work requirements?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8. Do you feel your employer and co-worker value your well-being and support your return to work?

- Yes, I feel very supported.

- Somewhat supported.
- Not very supported
- Not at all supported.

9. Rate your overall accommodation and return to work with your organization.

- Dissatisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

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