

# Following Mental Ill-Health Sickness Absence

Dr Jo Yarker, Affinity Health at Work | Professor Karina Nielsen, University of Sheffield

This project filled an urgent research gap by examining the employee return to work journey over time, and moved beyond a focus on individual factors to consider the resources at the group, management and organisational level, both in and outside of work.

<p><b>12 BILLION WORK DAYS GLOBALLY</b></p>  <p>lost every year due to poor mental health</p>	<p><b>\$16 TRILLION US DOLLARS</b></p>  <p>estimated in lost productivity</p>	<p>Despite initial successful return to work, many workers relapse and workers with common mental health disorders are</p>  <p><b>6-7x</b></p> <p><b>MORE LIKELY TO BECOME UNEMPLOYED</b></p>
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Examples of the resources across four of the five IGLOO levels found through interviews with workers and managers included:

 <b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	 <b>GROUP</b>	 <b>LEADER</b>	 <b>ORGANISATIONAL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating structure within their working day to help maintain focus and concentration</li><li>• Boundary management</li><li>• Prioritising self care</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gaining feedback on tasks from colleagues</li><li>• Help with challenging tasks</li><li>• Being treated without stigma</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agreement of communication to colleagues</li><li>• Continued support and access to work adjustments</li><li>• Signalling availability without being intrusive</li><li>• Be a consistent point of contact</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flexible working practices and leave policies</li><li>• Accommodating absenteeism policies</li><li>• Work-focused counselling</li><li>• Demonstrating care through support</li></ul>

This research highlights the need to consider resources at all IGLOO levels.

- ➕ Train returned workers to structure their day and protect their boundaries
- ➕ Support co-workers to develop skills to enhance feedback and practical support
- ➕ Train and support line managers to have open and constructive conversations
- ➕ Implement work adjustments and respond flexibility in an individualised way
- ➕ Ensure that flexible work policies are embedded throughout the organisation
- ➕ Work-focused counselling is made available.

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