



Helping small business supervisors support ill and injured workers to return to the workplace

BETA worked with Safe Work Australia to develop return to work guidance materials for use by supervisors in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

We undertook a literature review, stakeholder consultation, data analysis and user-testing to ensure the materials addressed key challenges for SMEs.



What we found

Relationships matter, especially in SMEs. A positive relationship between the supervisor and worker can reduce the risk of a failed return to work.



Timely, specific, information is key. Supervisors in SMEs are often time poor.



Suitable duties are a challenge for SMEs. It is harder in SMEs than in big businesses to find alternative work for the injured or ill worker.



Mental health is on everyone's mind. Psychological injuries often result in longer periods of time off.



What we did

Included 'Conversation Starters' to support the supervisor-worker relationship and the team.

Streamlined and shortened the materials, including a succinct overview and timeline.

Included interactive sections in the 'Suitable Duties Guide' to prompt supervisors to think about changes that could be made to the work or workplace.

Designed 'call-outs' with mental health tips at key points in the return to work process.



Guidance materials which support supervisors to maintain a positive relationship with their injured or ill workers may facilitate workers' safe, timely, and durable return to work