REINTEGRATION TO WORK

You are on long-term sick leave, about to come back to work from long-term sick leave or back in the Office.

Based on our consultations with colleagues in similar situations we have put together some recommendations and guidelines that will hopefully make your return to work more easy.

We hope you'll find them useful and wish you all the best!

Tanja Schmidt, Ann Diependaele, Maria-Rosa Morello – Psychosocial sector - Medical service in Brussels

DURING THE SICKLEAVE

Start preparing for your return to work while you are still on sick leave.

Staying in contact with your unit while being on sick leave can make your return smoother.

Inform your Head of Unit if your sickleave is extended.

Discuss with your doctor if starting with medical part time could be helpful for you.

Contact the PSI team to benefit from their reintegration to work programme in order to best prepare your return to work.

PREPARING THE RETURN TO WORK

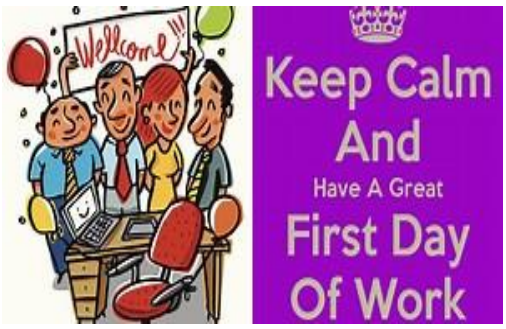
Inform your Head of Unit about the **scheduled return date** and if a part time is foreseen.

Some days before your official return, **pass by** for a coffee or have a **phone conversation** with one of your colleagues.

If not yet done, contact the PSI team to ask guidance on how to best **prepare for the first days** of your return to work.

Think about **how much information** about your sickness **you want to share** with your colleagues. You are not obliged to share your medical details with your colleagues, but what you say or not say will anyhow have an impact, e.g. if you have concentration problems this could be important information for your colleagues.

FIRST DAYS BACK IN THE OFFICE



Have a **return to work talk** with your superior on your first day at work and discuss potential working accomodations you would need. Consider having a colleague as your mentor for your first weeks back at work.

Agree on **follow-up meetings** with the hierarchy to monitor your re-integration.

Address any problems as soon as they occur.

Get updated about new developments/ projects/rules/ changes in your unit and get introduced to new colleagues.

If you start with medical part time, **stick to the medical part time working hours** and use the out-of-office function for the hours you're not at work. Even when working medical part time, allow yourself some breaks.

Expect to get tired more easily, experience some memory and concentration problems and to taking longer to do your tasks.

There is no need to apologize for your absence but you might want to **acknowledge your colleagues efforts in covering for you**.

FOLLOW UP

Be patient with yourself. You might need some 'adaptation time', this is normal.

Participate in the follow up meetings, take this opportunity to **share how you are doing** and if you have specific needs or concerns.

Consult your doctor **if you still experience difficulties** such as extreme fatigue, lack of concentration, memory and/or multitasking difficulties, higher sensitivity to noise and disruptions etc.

Do not feel guilty because you've been on long term sick leave and **don't feel you have to 'compensate' for your absence** by working extra hard.

Your local HR correspondents and the Psychosocial teams in the Medical services are there to help. You may contact them at any time. **Brussels:** 02/2988000- HR-BXL-EMPLOYEE-ASSISTANCE@ec.europa.eu; **Luxembourg**: HR-LUX-ASSISTANTS-SOCIAUX@ec.europa.eu; **Ispra:** +39 0332789965