

When Someone in the Workplace Is Ill

We spend a lot of time at work and often form close bonds with our co-workers. When a co-worker falls seriously ill, we may wonder how we can best provide support. These tips can help:

- **Respect your co-worker's privacy.** Don't press for details about your co-worker's health. If your co-worker confides in you, do not share the information with others.
- **Be inclusive.** If your co-worker remains in the workplace, keep including him or her in team activities. Don't assume that your co-worker will be unable to join in. Let him or her decide.
- **Offer help.** With your manager's agreement, you may also be able to pitch in with your co-worker's work projects. Be careful to only take on as much as you can handle.
- **Be a good listener.** Sometimes, listening is the best gift we can give someone who is going through a hard time. Follow your co-worker's lead in talking about the illness and try not to judge.
- **Be sensitive.** Be cautious (especially if you are the manager) when asking an employee when he or she plans to come back to work. The employee may feel pressured to come back before truly being ready.
- **Be supportive.** Send cards or food packages to your co-worker. A warm note from management can also go a long way. When your co-worker returns to work, welcome him or her back with a card or other thoughtful token.

When a close co-worker is very ill, it's normal to feel worried or upset. You may also find it harder to focus on work. Remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to support you, day or night. By taking care of your own emotional needs, you will be in a much better place to support your co-worker.

Need help?

Call toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

1-866-EAP-4SOC | 1-866-327-4762

TTY users should call 1-800-327-0801.

Or visit us at: eap4soc.mhn.com and register with the company code: soc