WORKSHEET 104 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Going back to work after sick leave

Preparing a gradual return

AIM

Help the person prepare their return to work after sick leave for exhaustion: signs of readiness, conditions for returning, adjustments to request, warning signs to watch.

WHO IT IS FOR

End of sick leave for burnout, anxiety or depression.

DURATION

20-30 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Assess readiness: sleep, energy, concentration, ability to think about work without becoming overwhelmed.
2. List the conditions that led to exhaustion and what needs to change.
3. Prepare the adjustments to discuss (phased return, workload, hours) with the GP and the occupational health service.
4. Set up a monitoring plan (worksheet 97) and a support plan for the first few weeks.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Decisions about sick leave, return and adjustments are for the doctor and the occupational health service; the psychologist supports the psychological preparation.

REFERENCES

Maslach, C. & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. World Psychiatry, 15(2), 103-111.

World Health Organization (2019). Burn-out an « occupational phenomenon »: International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). WHO.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 104 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Going back to work after sick leave

Returning after exhaustion needs preparing. Going back too soon, or to the same conditions, increases the risk of relapse. This plan helps you prepare your return with your doctor and your employer.

1. How I am: sleep, energy, concentration, emotions when I think about work.
2. What exhausted me, and what needs to change.
3. The adjustments to ask for (phased return, workload, hours), to discuss with my doctor and the occupational health service.
4. My warning signs, and whom to contact if it starts again.

Area	How I am /10	What would help me

What absolutely has to be different this time?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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