



Australian Government

Injury and Illness Management Policy

HR Policy

This policy applies to all employees of Services Australia (the agency).

WORKPLACE RELATIONS BRANCH

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Principles

1. You and your manager must report and record work-related injuries and illnesses as early as possible.
2. You should speak to your manager as soon as possible about any injury or illness that may impact your performance.
3. Whether your injury or illness is work-related or not, there are support options available to you.
4. Wherever possible, the agency will support your return to the duties you were performing before your injury or illness.
5. The agency will aim to accommodate your access to suitable duties and modifications, as guided by medical advice.
6. You may need to provide suitable medical evidence when requesting support, including early support leave or workers' compensation.
7. The agency will only access and use your personal information in line with the *Privacy Act 1988* and **Australian Privacy Principles**.

Your health and safety are important to the agency. We aim to continually improve our health, safety, wellbeing and injury prevention programs. Effective management of injuries and illnesses can help you be at your best in your work and your life outside work.

We aim to prevent, identify and respond to early warning signs of injury and illness to:

- minimise their duration and impact on your capacity to work and on your quality of life
- reduce their severity, effects and risk of recurrence
- assist your recovery at work, maintaining purpose, productivity and social connections.

This may involve access to early support, workplace rehabilitation and return-to-work procedures.

You may require a combination of injury and illness management and workplace adjustments. This includes if you are a person with disability. This will depend on your individual needs. For more, refer to the **Workplace Adjustment Policy**.

Act quickly and early

Accurate and timely reporting of injuries and illnesses is critical to help manage risks, minimise impacts on your work capacity and meet our [health and safety obligations](#). This can include reporting both physical and mental health injuries, including in [Our Safety](#) when they are work-related.

Effective injury management starts as soon as possible after an injury or illness is reported. It takes into account your personal wellbeing, as well as your physical recovery. Early support processes, active case management and a focus on outcomes-based recovery can reduce absences, improve wellbeing and productivity, and support you to remain at or return to work.

If you have problems at work because of a health condition (whether work-related or not), talk to your manager about the support you need. You can have a [support person](#) during any discussions.

Where needed, your manager will contact [HR Support](#) to discuss support services. Through HR Support, you may be able to access:

- advice on how to manage your injury or illness at work
- workplace assessments and modifications, where recommended, and/or
- workplace rehabilitation.

If your injury or illness is found to be work-related, the agency may approve short-term reimbursement of relevant treatment services and appointments. You may also access [early support leave](#) to attend these. This is to support you to remain at or return to work, and may be subject to suitable medical evidence. You must seek prior approval for reimbursements and leave, where possible.

Early support leave

Early support leave allows you to access short-term treatment to address early signs of work-related injury or illness. This includes if you need to seek support or treatment following a work-related incident, including customer aggression.

You can request to access up to 3 full days of paid early support leave per occasion. You may take this leave in part days. In addition to recording this leave in [ESSentials](#), you can report when you access it in [Our Safety](#). Leave may be subject to medical evidence.

You should not access this leave for:

- planned or other health appointments not related to the injury or illness that early support is being provided for
- injuries or illnesses not related to work.

Other leave types, including [personal leave](#), may be more appropriate. Managers should seek advice from HR Support when considering this leave.

Injury management and rehabilitation

If you have an injury or illness that impacts your capacity to work, a Rehabilitation Case Manager (RCM) from HR Support can discuss injury management and rehabilitation with you. Workplace rehabilitation is a process guided by the RCM to support your recovery and return to work. Depending on the nature of your injury or illness, this may include access to treatment, providers, leave and return-to-work plans.

Injury management and rehabilitation will start as early as possible and take professional medical advice into account. HR Support will work with you and your manager to develop a rehabilitation plan. With your prior written consent, this may also include a medical professional, an RCM and/or an external rehabilitation provider. Services are provided based on assessed needs.

Suitable duties

Rehabilitation supports you to return to the duties and hours you were performing before your injury or illness, wherever possible.

If the injury or illness affects your ability to perform your usual duties, your manager will support recovery by helping you to:

- remain at work, where appropriate. Where your injury or illness is work-related, this may also include finding suitable alternative duties, or
- achieve a timely and safe return to work.

The agency will aim to support you during your recovery and rehabilitation.

You may need to temporarily perform alternative duties as part of your rehabilitation and return to work. Your manager will consider the following when considering suitable duties:

- any work restrictions you may have, as advised by a medical professional
- the length of time you may be required to perform alternate duties
- the inherent requirements of your role
- your skills, training and experience
- any workplace adjustments needed due to your health condition.

If needed, your manager may seek further advice from their own manager, while ensuring your privacy.

Fitness for duty

The agency may seek further or more current information on your medical condition and how to best support you. This is used to assess and inform you:

- fitness for duty, including to ensure we do not exacerbate your condition
- options for ongoing support
- possible return to work, as relevant.

This may include an assessment where an independent medical examiner assesses your fitness for duty. They will consider your ability to perform your role and if there are any risks to health and safety. This may involve providing your consent for the RCM to liaise with your treating health practitioners.

The agency will notify you in writing if it intends to obtain further medical information about you.

Workers' compensation

If your injury or illness is work-related, you may be eligible for compensation under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act). Your RCM can provide more information if needed.

When submitting a claim to [Comcare](#), you must not use the personal information of customers or other employees. Disclosing protected personal information may be a criminal offence. Once you lodge your claim with Comcare, your RCM and a claims manager will contact you with further advice.

While a Comcare delegate determines your claim:

- you will be responsible for meeting all treatment costs. You should keep a record of all costs and decisions
- if you are unfit to return to work, you may access your accrued personal, annual or long service leave. If you do not have paid leave available, talk to your manager in the first instance, followed by your RCM.

If the Comcare delegate accepts your claim:

- the agency will manage your rehabilitation under the SRC Act and will support your recovery and return to work

- you may seek reimbursement of appropriate treatment costs related to the accepted injury. Talk to your claims manager for further advice
- any accrued leave you have taken in relation to your accepted injury should be re-credited. Leave will be recoded as appropriate.

If the Comcare delegate denies your claim, you:

- will continue to be responsible for ongoing treatment costs
- may still access support services under this policy
- may access accrued personal leave, annual leave and long service leave.

Unpaid personal leave is limited and at the discretion of the agency. Refer to the [Personal and Carers Leave Policy](#) for more information.

Further support

The agency is committed to supporting you in the workplace. For further support, you can access the [Employment Assistance Program](#) (EAP) during work time and outside of your normal hours. You do not need to use leave to access the EAP.

In addition, you can refer to the following:

- [Mentally Healthy Learning Bites](#)
- [Customer aggression prevention](#)
- [Supporting workers after critical incidents](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Hub](#)
- [Family and Domestic Violence Support Policy](#).

About this policy

The General Manager, Wellbeing and HR Support endorsed this policy in October 2024.

The agency will review this policy in October 2026.

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Other Leave Policy

HR Policy

This policy applies to all employees covered by the:

- Services Australia Agreement 2024-2027 (the Agreement)
- Services Australia Medical Officers Agreement 2024-2027

except casual (irregular or intermittent) employees, unless otherwise stated.

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Principles

1. You should discuss leave requests with your manager as early as possible.
2. You must access the right type of leave for the purpose it is intended. You may need to provide evidence for some types of leave.
3. You and your manager must keep appropriate records when requesting, approving or declining leave. Refer to the [Staff Information Policy](#) for information on safe record-keeping.
4. Unless otherwise stated in the Agreement or in other legislation, paid leave counts as service and leave without pay does not count as service.
5. Refer to the [HR Delegations](#) when approving leave. You can request a review of a leave decision under the [Reviewing Decisions and Actions Policy](#).

Services Australia (the agency) provides a range of leave types that can help you balance your personal and working life. Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to access leave for a variety of reasons.

Leave in connection with culture and identity

Leave type	Clause	Eligibility category	Paid or unpaid?	Applies to casuals?
NAIDOC leave	G14	First Nations employees	Paid	No
First Nations Ceremonial leave	G15	First Nations employees	Both	No
Cultural leave	G16	Employees with a particular faith or culture	Both	No
Gender affirmation leave	None	Employees affirming their gender	Both	No

The agency recognises and supports the diversity of our staff. These leave types recognise the importance of your culture and identity, both within and outside of work.

Where eligible, cultural leave is in addition to NAIDOC and First Nations Ceremonial Leave.

NAIDOC and First Nations Ceremonial

NAIDOC and First Nations Ceremonial leave supports First Nations employees to balance cultural and ceremonial obligations with work. First Nations employees can access:

- 1 day of paid leave per calendar year to participate in NAIDOC week activities
- up to 6 days of paid leave over 2 calendar years to participate in significant cultural activities or fulfil ceremonial obligations, and
- where approved, additional paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave for cultural and ceremonial purposes. Up to 10 days of this unpaid leave will count as service.

You can access all leave in whole or part days. This leave is in addition to compassionate and bereavement leave.

Significant activities associated with First Nations cultures or ceremonial obligations may include, but are not limited to, attending:

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- the funeral/tombstone opening of family members (including extended family), an elder, or people with kinship or community ties
- cultural obligations as part of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Lore, including fulfilling Traditional Custodian responsibilities
- repatriation - the return of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander cultural materials from institutions to their communities
- events related to Native Title claims, court proceedings, or community events to commemorate the awarding of Native Title
- celebrations of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, including Reconciliation Week activities or Coming of the Light, or
- an event as a Traditional Custodian to deliver a Welcome to Country. If you receive payment for delivering a Welcome to Country, you should take unpaid leave for outside employment to attend the event.

If you are eligible your manager will approve your request for relevant leave where possible. If a manager is considering declining an application for First Nations Ceremonial leave, they should discuss the request with you and with Indigenous Employment Strategies prior to making a decision.

Additional paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave for cultural and ceremonial purposes is discretionary. In considering an application for additional paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave, your manager may consider:

- the reason for your leave request
- the business needs of the agency, and
- if access to accrued leave, such as annual, flex or long service leave, would be more appropriate.

Cultural

Cultural leave recognises the diversity of our agency. This leave enables you to attend significant obligations associated with your faith or culture when they occur during work time.

Significant obligations could potentially include, but are not limited to, cultural and religious dates. Cultural and religious leave will be requested and considered in good faith.

Where eligible, you can access:

- up to 3 days of paid leave per calendar year, taken in whole or part days
- discretionary additional leave where approved by your manager, with or without pay. Additional leave is coded as miscellaneous leave.

Paid leave and up to 10 days' discretionary unpaid leave will count as service for all purposes.

You should request cultural and religious leave with as much notice as possible. This will assist your manager and the agency to plan for the absence.

Your eligibility for cultural leave is based on your individual cultural or religious obligations. You may be asked to provide relevant information or evidence:

- about the significance of the religious or cultural obligation. This includes how it is celebrated across a whole cultural, ethnic or religious community. This information can come from you or a recognised religious or cultural body
- of your personal involvement with the religion or culture, such as traditional, geographic or family ties
- showing that the obligation occurs on a particular time or day, during work time, and/or
- confirming that the obligation is not recognised through an existing public holiday.

Your manager may seek to negotiate the duration of your leave if:

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- you have not provided reasonable notice
- alternative workplace arrangements cannot be made, and
- your leave would have a significant impact on essential business continuity.

Your manager will discuss your leave request with you before they make a decision to decline your application.

Cultural and religious leave does not apply to personal, family or community events that are not significant cultural and religious obligations. You can apply for accrued leave, such as annual, flex, or long service leave, where appropriate.

Public holidays

Where you and your manager agree, you may substitute existing public holidays for any reason, including for cultural or religious purposes. Public holiday substitution can occur in addition to cultural, NAIDOC or First Nations Ceremonial leave. It does not impact your access to any other type of leave.

Managers will consider your safety, security, support arrangements and work availability when substituting a public holiday.

You may also choose to access accrued annual or long service leave, or paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave, for cultural purposes.

Gender affirmation

If you intend to affirm your gender, you should inform your manager when you are comfortable to do so. You may choose to have a support person.

You and your manager will discuss how best to support your gender affirmation. Support may include accessing paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave. This leave, if granted, is in addition to your accrued leave entitlements. You can also apply for annual leave, personal leave or long service leave, where appropriate.

Paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave may support you to:

- arrange changes to your name
- adopt the presentation of your affirmed gender, or
- take any other relevant steps to affirm your gender.

You can apply to access discretionary miscellaneous leave, both with and without pay. As a guideline, for each person this could include:

- up to 5 days of paid miscellaneous leave, which counts as service, and
- up to 12 months of unpaid miscellaneous leave, which does not count as service.

You may apply to access this leave as part days, single days or a longer period, as needed. You are not required to provide evidence for the purpose of this leave.

The appropriate delegate may grant approval as set out in the [HR Delegations](#).

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Leave for loss, welfare and wellbeing

Leave type	Clause	Eligibility category	Paid or unpaid?	Applies to casuals?
Compassionate leave	G21	All employees	Paid	Yes, unpaid
Bereavement leave	G22	All employees	Paid	Yes, unpaid
Special leave	G31	All employees	Paid	No

The agency recognises the importance of supporting you and your family during unexpected emergencies. Leave may be taken in part, single or consecutive days. Leave applies per occasion, and is not limited in a given period.

You may be asked to provide evidence to support your leave. Requests for evidence will be sensitive, relevant and practical.

The definition of family for the purpose of compassionate, bereavement and special leave is provided in [clause A8 of the Agreement](#). A close personal relationship is a person you would consider to be of equal significance to you as those defined as family.

Compassionate

You can access 3 days of paid compassionate leave where a person contracts, develops or sustains a life-threatening illness or injury, and they are:

- a member of your family, or
- someone with whom you have a close personal relationship.

Your ability to access multiple instances of compassionate leave is not limited within any given period. However, you can only receive 3 days for each eligible incidence of illness or injury.

You can read [Support for Infant Loss](#) for leave, including compassionate leave, following a miscarriage.

Bereavement

You can access 3 days of paid bereavement leave where a person dies who is:

- a member of your family, or
- someone you had a close personal relationship with.

This includes where a child is stillborn. For more, see [Support for Infant Loss](#).

You can access additional bereavement leave for some deaths. In addition to the 3 days above, you can access an additional:

- 2 days, where your or your partner's parent, child, or sibling dies
- 2 days, where your partner dies, and
- 1 day, where your or your partner's grandparent or grandchild dies.

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Special

You may be granted up to 2 days of special leave per occasion for the purpose of attending to a personal emergency:

- that is unplanned, unforeseen, and unavoidable
- that requires your direct and immediate involvement, and
- where no alternative arrangements can be made.

Leave in connection with emergencies

Leave type	Clause	Eligibility category	Paid or unpaid?	Applies to casuals?
Emergency response leave	G24	Volunteers with eligible community services	Both	No
Leave for emergency management situations	G27	Employees who assist in emergency management activities for the agency	Paid	No
Disaster support	H11	All employees	Paid	No

In an emergency, there are various leave types to support you. An emergency is an actual or imminent event which:

- endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and
- requires a significant and coordinated response.

Emergency response

You can access up to 20 days of paid leave per year for volunteer emergency management duties, where you engage in an eligible community service activity with:

- a 'recognised emergency management body' such as the
 - State Emergency Service (SES)
 - Country Fire Authority (CFA)
 - RSPCA (in respect of animal rescue during emergencies or natural disasters), or
- an organisation which provides immediate support beyond frontline activities during an emergency.

This leave can be extended in exceptional circumstances. You may not be approved to access paid leave where your role is essential to the agency's response to the emergency.

You must provide evidence that the organisation has requested you to respond to the emergency. You can provide evidence before or as soon as practical after their emergency service activity.

Paid leave can extend to:

- the time engaged in the activity
- reasonable travelling time, and
- reasonable recovery time.

You may also be approved for reasonable paid or unpaid leave for ceremonial duties and training.

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Emergency management situations

If you are required to assist in the agency's emergency response, you may be granted paid leave for rest relief. Rest relief helps you to take a break from continuously providing emergency response.

Disaster support

The agency may approve paid miscellaneous leave if you

- cannot attend work due to an official disaster or emergency, and
- are not able to access flexible working or alternative arrangements.

In approving leave your manager will consider:

- the scale and nature of the emergency
- the safety of you and your family, and
- advice from Local, State and Commonwealth authorities.

This leave counts as service. It may be approved retrospectively.

Leave in connection with your duties

Leave type	Clause	Eligibility category	Paid or unpaid?	Applies to casuals?
Leave to attend proceedings	G28	Employees giving evidence in the course of or in relation to their duties	Paid time	Yes, unpaid
Temporary office closure	G30	All employees	Paid	Yes, unpaid

Leave to attend proceedings (witness leave)

Access to paid work time, paid leave or unpaid leave in order to attend proceedings will depend on the capacity in which you attend. Leave to attend proceedings only applies to a Court, Tribunal or Royal Commission.

Your requirement to give evidence	Applicable leave
In the course of your duties	Paid work time. You do not need to apply for leave
In relation to your duties	Paid work time. You do not need to apply for leave
Any other reason	Discretionary paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave

If you give evidence **in the course of your duties**, you are considered on duty. This applies if it is on behalf of the Commonwealth, or a Commonwealth party.

If you are required to give evidence, appear before or instruct a representative **in relation to your duties**, you will be released from duty without loss of pay. This includes any impact on planned paid leave.

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If you are required to give evidence for **any other reason**, you may be granted paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave. In granting paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave, your manager will consider:

- the nature of the proceedings
- if your attendance is necessary for the proceeding
- business requirements of the agency and of your team, and
- the efficient use of work time and Commonwealth resources.

If you are granted unpaid leave, you may access accrued annual, flex or long service leave, or approved time off in lieu instead.

If you attend proceedings for a personal matter, you can apply for annual, flex or long service leave, or time off in lieu, as appropriate. For proceedings relating to Family and Domestic Violence read [Family and Domestic Violence Support](#).

Temporary office closure

If your office is closed temporarily, your manager will advise of alternative arrangements. This could involve:

- working from another site
- working from home, or
- where no alternative arrangements can be made, paid leave.

In considering if working from another site is suitable, your manager will take into account:

- your ability to travel to and from work safely
- reasonable travel time, or where applicable, Excess Travel Time, and
- official emergency services advice.

If you are on paid leave due to an office closure, you must:

- be immediately contactable, wherever practical
- remain within the local area, where it is safe to do so.

Managers will also consider the impact of alternative arrangements on casual employees.

Your manager will discuss attendance and daily contact arrangements with you. This may include calling the [Staff Emergency Information Line](#). In a natural disaster where phone services are unavailable, where practical you may be required to listen to radio broadcasts.

Leave for outside priorities

Leave type	Clause	Eligibility category	Paid or unpaid?	Applies to casuals?
Leave to represent Australia	G29	Accredited officials or competitors in specified events	Paid	No
Campaign leave	G35	All employees	Unpaid	Yes
Leave to accompany Commonwealth postings	G33	Employees with a partner/spouse posted with the Commonwealth	Unpaid	No

You may have significant priorities outside of work. These leave types help you to plan for specific life events.

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You can also apply for accrued leave, such as annual, flex, or long service, before or after these leave types.

Leave to represent Australia

You may apply for paid leave if you represent Australia at the Olympic, Commonwealth or Paralympic Games:

- as a competitor, or
- where appointed by the games organising committee or federation as an accredited official.

An accredited official could include technical officials, referees, judges or participating team officials. This generally does not include volunteers. Leave does not extend to any other sporting events or roles.

You may be granted up to 1 calendar week per occasion, to account for your duties and reasonable travelling time. Your manager could approve other types of further paid or unpaid leave, depending on the circumstances. They will consider the responsible use of work time and Commonwealth resources when approving leave.

Campaign leave

You may be granted unpaid leave as required to assist in your personal capacity with an election campaign for Local, State or Federal Government. Any paid or unpaid work must be consistent with the [Outside Employment Policy](#).

If you have a significant role in a political campaign, this may present a [conflict of interest](#). You must consider the potential for a conflict of interest and discuss ways to mitigate this with your manager. You cannot use agency resources for any political activity.

If you intend to [run as a candidate](#) in an election campaign you should seek independent legal advice. If you resign, the agency will treat your re-engagement consistent with the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Leave to accompany a partner on Commonwealth postings

If your partner is required to relocate as part of their Commonwealth employment, you may be granted unpaid leave. You may be required to provide suitable evidence of your partner's posting requirements.

General miscellaneous leave

You may request discretionary paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave for a range of reasons. It may be available in circumstances where other forms of leave are not appropriate. General miscellaneous leave would not normally exceed 12 months.

If you are taking an extended break from work for personal reasons, you should exhaust your annual leave before you request unpaid miscellaneous leave.

Your manager must document their decision in line with the [Staff Information Policy](#).

Approval

The A/g General Manager, Wellbeing and HR Support Division endorsed this policy in May 2024.

The agency will review this policy in May 2026.

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Support person guide

You may ask to bring a support person to any individual meeting where you need moral or emotional support. The meeting does not need to be formal.

A support person can be anyone who the employee trusts, including a:

- friend
- family member
- colleague, or
- union representative.

If you choose to bring a support person, you should tell your manager as soon as possible. Likewise, if your manager chooses to bring a support person they should tell you as soon as possible.

Their role in the meeting

A support person is there to provide you with moral or emotional support.

They must maintain privacy and may:

- help you prepare for a meeting, including helping them formulate what you may wish to discuss
- ensure the meeting is respectful and fair
- monitor how you are coping as the meeting progresses
- ask for breaks during the meeting if needed
- supplement discussions between attendees, including asking attendees to repeat or explain information in a different way if you do not understand
- take notes during the meeting
- debrief with you after the meeting.

Attendees cannot deny the support person the chance to speak as a part of their role. However, if the support person displays unacceptable behaviour, attendees should warn them or end the meeting.

Selecting a support person

You must let attendees know at least one day in advance if you want to bring a support person. You must include who your selected support person is. Your manager cannot choose a support person for you.

In some cases, you may need to nominate someone else if your selected person is not available within a reasonable timeframe.

If you need a workplace adjustment, such as an interpreter, you can access these in addition to a support person.

Conflict of interest

Your manager will reasonably consider and accommodate your choice of support person. They should only refuse your choice of a support person if there is a conflict of interest. Your manager should document this in writing before the meeting, including the reasons.

Managers can contact [**HR Support**](#) for advice.

Other support arrangements

There are other options for support, including:

- the [**Employee Assistance Program**](#)
- [**Harassment Contact Officers**](#)
- [**Workplace Respect**](#).

Employee Assistance Program



Let us help.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides you with immediate and confidential help for any work, health or life concern. We're available anytime and anywhere. Let us help.



Understanding your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides you with immediate and confidential help for any work, health or life concern. We're available anytime and anywhere.

Your EAP is a confidential and voluntary support service that can help you take the first step toward change. Let us help you find solutions to the challenges you face at any age and stage of life.

You and your immediate family members (as defined in your employee benefit plan) can access immediate and confidential support in a way that is most suited to your preferences, comfort level and lifestyle.



No cost

There is no cost to you or your family to use your EAP. This benefit is provided to you by your employer. Your EAP can provide a series of sessions with a professional and if you need more specialised or longer-term support, our team of experts can suggest an appropriate specialist or service that is best suited to your needs. While fees for these additional services are your responsibility, they may be covered by your provincial or organizational health plan.



Confidentiality

Your EAP is completely confidential within the limits of the law. No one, including your employer, will ever know that you have used the program unless you choose to tell them.

Let us help.

Access your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 24/7 by phone, web or mobile app.

Call: 1800 953 564

Visit: one.telushealth.com
Username: servicesaustralia
Password: Wellbeing





Convenient access to online resources.

Download the TELUS Health

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Manage relationships and family

- Communication • Separation/divorce
- Parenting



Deal with workplace challenges

- Stress • Performance • Work-life balance



Tackle addictions

- Alcohol • Drugs • Smoking cessation
- Gambling



Find child and elder care resources

- Child care • Schooling
- Nursing/retirement homes



Get legal advice

- Family law • Separation/divorce
- Custody



Receive financial guidance

- Debt management • Bankruptcy
- Retirement