



PATIENT GUIDE TO PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITY AND WORK LEAVE

- Many people find it hard to work when feeling stressed. You may feel the situation is intolerable, or that it is impacting your personal life or effectiveness at work. Research has shown that most patients benefit from continuing to work. Being off of work tends to intensify, not diminish, psychiatric symptoms.
- Interpersonal conflicts at work do not in themselves warrant time off. Unless you are diagnosed with a serious mental illness, a disagreement with a supervisor or co-workers does not constitute psychiatric illness or warrant psychiatric disability.
- If time off from work is indicated due to serious mental illness, your therapist or psychiatrist will recommend an appropriate amount of time – usually a period of days to weeks. Please consult with the Human Resources Department at your job site regarding any possible impact your psychiatric disability could have on your present or future employment.
- Your provider in the Psychiatry Department will work with you to determine which treatment is indicated in your case. You may be referred for various treatment options such as group treatment, individual therapy and medication management. Our Department provides a group-based model of treatment, and you will most likely be referred to at least one group. Data strongly indicates that group therapy is the most effective treatment for most disorders.
- A request for disability extension can only be determined after a follow-up evaluation by the therapist or psychiatrist who initially recommended disability. Crisis workers and/or reception staff cannot grant extensions. A psychiatric disability or work leave in excess of two weeks will only be recommended if medically necessary. During time off for disability, you are expected to participate in ongoing treatment.
- All disability applications should be taken to the Business Office at Kaiser Permanente Hayward/Union City located at 3555 Whipple Road. Long term disability, such as provided by SSI, is determined by providers at the Department of Social Services based on copies of your records. This type of functional assessment is not covered under your health plan. Please do not bring this type of application to your clinician.
- Fitness for duty evaluations, pre-employment examinations, commercial driver clearance, and other non-medically necessary examinations or clinical assessments are not a covered benefit. These evaluations can be arranged with medical providers in the community who have a clinical expertise in that specialty on a fee-for-service basis, or with your employer.
- If you feel your psychiatric illness is the result of a work-related experience (an “industrial injury”), you may be entitled to the Worker’s Compensation benefits. Please contact the Occupational Medicine Department in Hayward/Union City at (510) 675-4807 or Fremont (510) 248-3015 for more information.