

OPC Supports for Health and Wellness



If you are at work, and feeling overwhelmed, stressed or anxious:

- Reach out to a colleague, your local OPC Councillor or your mentor. The job can be isolating but you are not alone.
- Call the OPC and speak to an Intake Consultant, who can assist with any professional issues contributing to these feelings and/or connect you with other Protective Services Team (PST) staff for ongoing support.
- Contact your doctor and/or your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider for counselling and support.
- Enroll in the “Starling Minds” program, a cognitive behaviour therapy-based online program to help manage stress, identify triggers and develop coping skills. Your family can also access the program for support. [More about Starling Minds](#)

If your mental or physical health prevent you from performing your responsibilities as a principal or vice-principal, you do have options:

- Consult your doctor to get the care you need and, if you need to be off work, ask for a note to provide to the board.
- Annually, all administrators are entitled to 11 sick days paid at 100% of salary and 120 short term disability (STD) days that are paid at 90% of regular salary. If you have not used all 11 sick days during the previous school year, you may carry any remaining days over into the following year to top-up your short-term sick leave days from 90% to 100% salary. Each top-up day enables 10 short-term sick leave days to be paid at 100%, rather than 90%, of your regular salary.
- If away on an extended leave, you will need to provide regular updates to the board’s disability management officer, who will maintain your information in confidence. When you are ready to return to work, the OPC can help you advocate for any accommodations you may require.
- Continue to use the [Starling Minds](#) program, which the OPC has made available to all Members.

Long Term Disability (LTD)

If your health continues to impact your ability to perform the duties of your employment, you may be eligible for long term disability insurance (LTD)

- LTD insurance pays you a monthly benefit if you are totally disabled and unable to work due to accident, illness or disability. This will come into effect after you have used all of your short-term leave credits and/or the qualifying period has expired.
- The OPC sponsors a LTD plan for Members and more than 2/3rds of Members participate in the plan. If you are in our plan, contact our Benefits Manager to initiate your LTD claim and for answers to any questions you may have. The claims process is time sensitive; be sure to make contact as soon as you determine the need to apply for LTD benefits.
- For Members not enrolled in our LTD plan, your board will sponsor its own LTD plan. Enrollment is often a condition of employment. You will need to contact your board to initiate a claim, but we may still be able to assist in the process.
- Be sure to work with your medical professionals to ensure you are getting the care you need. The LTD application process and your ongoing eligibility will depend on the diagnosis and treatment specified by your doctor. The insurer will ask for medical documentation related to your injury or illness.
- Being off work can be a challenging period. Make use of the **Starling Minds** program to help you with the mental health challenges that are often associated with a lengthy absence from work.
- Do not go on vacation or engage in paid work while you are in receipt of LTD, unless it has been approved by your doctor AND the LTD insurer, as part of a plan to get you back to work.

Boards that allow the OPC LTD Plan

- Algoma
- Bluewater
- Durham
- Grand Erie
- Greater Essex
- Halton
- Hamilton-Wentworth
- Lambton Kent
- Near North
- Niagara
- Ottawa-Carleton
- Peel
- Rainy River
- Renfrew
- Simcoe
- Toronto
- Trillium Lakelands
- Upper Canada
- Upper Grand
- Waterloo Region
- York Region

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)

If you are injured or suffer an illness as a result of work, Ontario's WSIB program may be available to provide compensation, benefits and return-to-work services.

- If you suffer an injury or illness as a result of work, file a WSIB claim as soon as possible (forms available through your school board or **online**).
- Call the OPC for PST support if you have any questions or concerns with the WSIB process, especially if your board is not supporting your claim or if your claim has been denied by WSIB.
- WSIB may allow claims for mental health illnesses/injuries in certain circumstances, provide support for counselling and pay other related costs.
- The success of your WSIB claim will depend to a large extent on the medical evidence. Expect to provide WSIB with medical documentation to support your claim.

If you are returning to work after illness, injury or disability:

- If you are on LTD or WSIB, you will be assigned a return-to-work specialist. You may be eligible for a gradual return-to-work, supported by the LTD provider or WSIB.
- If you have restrictions or limitations that impact your ability to perform your duties, you are entitled to accommodation to the point of undue hardship.

More about the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and the Duty to Accommodate

- As you prepare to return to work, the **Starling Minds** program can be helpful to support your mental health.
- Call the OPC to discuss your return to work with a PST Consultant. Upon request, the Consultant will attend any return-to-work meeting to support you.

