

Support Person

This factsheet has been designed to provide information about the role of a support person.

The role of a support person

A support person provides emotional and moral support to an employee who is attending a difficult meeting or interview in relation to their employment. This may include matters relating to rehabilitation case management, performance feedback, or conduct related matters.

A support person may assist employees to resolve workplace issues by:

- Providing emotional support and reassurance;
- Taking notes or quietly prompting the employee;
- Explaining or clarifying questions asked and/or processes;
- Assisting in clarifying a response if the employee has difficulty communicating a response to the interviewer; or
- Seeking a short break to assist the employee, if required.

If a PWSS case coordinator is acting as a support person, they will also assist the employee to return to normal functioning after meeting/s.

The support person must not provide the employee with advice, attempt to answer questions on the employee's behalf or otherwise interrupt the meeting or interview.

The support person is not an advocate.

Who a support person can be

A support person can be a colleague, family member, professional, friend, union representative, PWSS case coordinator, or any other person of your choice.

Depending on the particular circumstances, it may not be appropriate for the employee's manager to be a support person. A person who is also involved in the same matter (i.e. a witness or complainant) cannot be a support person. If required, advice can be sought from the [HR Advice Team](#) as to the appropriateness of a support person.

Should a PWSS case coordinator be asked to attend a meeting as a support person, consideration will be given to any potential or perceived conflict of interest. If a conflict of interest is identified, the PWSS case coordinator will discuss this with the client and assist them to identify an alternative support person.

The obligations of a support person

A support person may become aware of sensitive personal information about the employee, other employees and other people by participating in such meetings.

Privacy restrictions require that sensitive personal information is conveyed to others on a strict need to know basis. For this reason, all matters disclosed to a support person are confidential and must not be disclosed to anyone that is not the person who is being supported.

Support

The PWSS provides independent and confidential support to all Commonwealth parliamentary workplace participants who have experienced, witnessed, or are managing staff who have experienced escalated or challenging workplace interactions. PWSS Case Coordinators are readily available 24/7, and can provide information and workshops specific to the needs of your office.



www.PWSS.gov.au



24/7 Support: 1800 747 977



SMS: 0487 112 755