

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF WORKERS IN THE WSIB claims and appeals processes in NW Ontario

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Individuals encounter a cascade of negative physical, social and psychological ramifications when they are hurt or become ill in the workplace.



Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) process can be challenging.



Overall, the risk of exacerbated psychological illness as a result of WSIB process, particularly when appeals are made, is high.

The purpose of this project was to assess and describe the mental health needs of workers in the WSIB claims and appeals processes in Northwestern Ontario.



Themes covered mental health, social service, and legal system needs while involved in the WSIB claims and appeals processes.

40

Northwestern Ontario injured, and ill workers completed an on-line survey

16

Northwestern Ontario injured, and ill workers completed semi-structured interviews

8

Local WSIB-experienced community service providers also completed semi-structured interviews

TOP CHALLENGES

Communication with WSIB

72.5% **77.8%**

Paperwork

55% **50%**

Medical expert assessment/consultation

47.5% **38.9%**

Going through the application process while still injured/ill

45% **72.2%**

Finances while off work **55%**

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WSIB:

- Improved information/access to regional support services
- More flexible timelines for workers.
- Addition of a local systems navigator familiar with services in the region

“Participants described regional issues such as limited employment opportunities, ‘small town’ privacy concerns, and the costs and burden of care-related travel, especially during COVID-19”

IMPLICATIONS WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

- Use the findings to improve supports for Northwestern Ontario injured workers, and to promote equity in their timely recovery and sustained return-to-work.