

# What do we mean by social support?

Social support has a positive influence on the climate and quality of life in the workplace. It creates a protective and comforting feeling that minimizes the harmful effects of stress.

Moreover, social support promotes work-life balance and produces a sense of belonging and solidarity. Social support can come from co-workers and immediate supervisors in the form of help or collaboration.



***Prevent  
and cure***



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**Lack of support from  
co-workers or  
supervisors**



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## What should social support at work look like?

### The role of co-workers

Provide both professional and emotional support.

### The role of immediate supervisors

Provide support on three fronts:

1. the task itself and assistance to perform it;
2. the role and responsibilities of each staff member;
3. the human aspect of the individual.

### Social support at work appears as:

- ✓ orientation and mentorship programs;
- ✓ a lending hand or advice in accomplishing tasks or resolving problems;
- ✓ active listening from a co-worker or immediate supervisor;
- ✓ regularly scheduled team meetings to discuss work methods and practices;
- ✓ the promotion of mutual respect and conflict resolution;
- ✓ the proximity, availability, and active participation of management;
- ✓ the capacity of immediate supervisors to fulfil the worker's operational needs (tools, resources, time, etc.);
- ✓ the manager's ability to promote teamwork (resolution of operational problems);
- ✓ clear information, and defined roles and responsibilities;
- ✓ a policy or practices regarding work-life balance.

## What does a lack of support from co-workers and supervisors look like?

Lack of support from an immediate supervisor often appears as:

- poor listening;
- absence;
- a lack of availability to provide employees with the tools, resources, advice and support they need, or to resolve conflicts and make decisions;
- an unclear work environment in which the roles and responsibilities of employees are poorly defined, thereby creating conflicts;
- disrespectful behavior towards workers or tolerance of such behaviour in the workplace.

Lack of support from co-workers appears as:

- competitiveness above all, deception, distrust, and the feeling of every person for themselves;
- rudeness, hostility, or harassment in a conflict environment.

## What are the risks of a lack of support?

Lack of social support can create an unhealthy work environment and affect one's health. It can also generate tensions and conflicts, leading to a variety of problems, such as:

- presenteeism;
- absenteeism;
- signs of depression related to work;
- psychological distress.

## How can the situation be improved?

Are you suffering from the effects of a lack of support at work? The problem is not in your head. The organization of work is at fault and it can make you sick.

**TALK TO YOUR UNION.**

Attempting to remedy on your own the issue of lack of support from co-workers or supervisors is not an easy task. By raising the subject with your union, you alert them to your situation. They may already be aware of other workers experiencing the same problem and be able to put you in touch with them. Together with you and other affected workers, your union can analyze the situation and devise a strategy to remedy the issues arising from the organization of work.

**Together, we have  
the power to act.**