

# Factsheet - Managing Relationships

We know that working long haul and long shift work, taking you away from your home, can be challenging. Being away from family and friends, as well as your usual leisure and social activities has been found to be something that many people find hard and can affect our overall health and wellbeing. Returning home from long runs and re-connecting with your home life and your relationships can also be tricky. It is important to take the time to reflect on things you can do to make it work best.

This factsheet is designed to give you some tips on what you can do.

## What do we know?

A significant proportion of workers within the industry work remotely and can be isolated in their roles. Shift work also leads to minimal contact with colleagues and families for extended periods (Source - HHTS "Guidelines for Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategies").

Loneliness and depression are among the most common concerns reported by drivers

Peak periods for the industries typically occur at times when others are taking holiday leave, which can create a further sense of disconnection from friendship groups and loved ones.

An evaluation of the New Zealand log transport industry notes the impacts that 14-hour workdays may have on the quality of family life. Approximately 37 per cent of 225 log truck drivers reported having challenges in fitting work and home life into their days, 'with failed relationships and isolation from family being common' (Source - OzHelp Foundation: Physical and Mental health and Wellbeing of Heavy Vehicle Drivers in the Road Transport Industry: Risks, Issues and Impacts. Canberra, November 2020.)

## Some useful tips - What can you do?

Plan activities for when you return home with family and friends – Having a set routine is a great way to reconnect

Planning events gives you something to look forward to when you return home and good opportunity to catch up with friends and family.



Having a regular activity that you do often, like a social activity or a hobby, that you enjoy when you come home, this can be something you enjoy with others.

If you have children, work out what activities they do that you can plan to attend when you are home.

Feeling detached from your children when you are working away from home is a common feeling. Find ways that you can keep in touch on the road, as well as when you are home. Maybe taking photos of what you see on the road is a fun way to do this. Or journal for children to share when you come home.

Share with your family and friends what it is like for you to do your job.

This will help for others to understand what you enjoy or maybe what you find difficult about your job.

Reflect on what you are grateful for in work – take the time to reflect with your family.

Ask your family for their support and any ideas they may have to help you stay connected when on the road – this may include catch up times or shared games.

**An interesting 10 minute talk on Having Better Conversations and some useful communication tips. See link to the TED Talk here – [Click here](#)**

Recognize that you may be tired or fatigued when you return home. Fatigue and rest are different for everyone. What is enough rest after a long run varies for everyone.

Work out what “feeling rested” means for you and set out a plan on how to make it work, both on the road and when you are home.

Work out what works best for you in your “down time” and restoring your energy levels.

Think of a “wind down” activity you can do every day – a simple activity for 15-20 minutes after you wrap up work.

We spend a lot of time with our work colleagues. Even if you are on the road alone, work plays a big part of our day.

Do you have work mates that you spend time with when you are home? Or are there work activities that you attend regularly? Maintaining these activities is a good way to both get to know your work mates and share your experiences in doing your job.



If you are a sole trader or small business owner, returning home often means catching up on paperwork and running your business.

Do you have a part time support who can help out with the books/paperwork? This will be a chance to rest and restore when you are home.

## What else can you do to stay healthy?

Staying on top of your health and wellbeing is important. Make your health a priority when you return home.

Planning will help, including making GP appointments ahead of time for when you are home.

Also, look at your regular health checks, like skins checks or heart checks as an example.

Think about exercise as a set routine that you can stick to easily.

## Find out more

For further information on Rehab Management, contact us on:

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