

Instructions:

Everyone should be able to recognize MSD risk factors and know what to do about them. Here are some situations that you can discuss as a group. Make sure everyone recognizes:

- 1) Whether there is a risk factor present
- 2) What kinds of risk factors could be present
- 3) What action/s they could take

Some examples may be more “borderline” than others; take the opportunity to have an open dialogue about why or why not the people described could suffer from an MSD. We have included some questions that may help begin and develop your group’s discussion. Take notes in the spaces provided.

You can complete all the examples or stop when you feel the employees fully understand the principles being taught.

Good luck and stay safe!

Example #1

Louise has worked as a receptionist in her office for years. However, over the last four years, she's experienced hand and wrist pain. During one particularly busy month, her dominant hand became numb, and she could no longer move it properly.

Is there an MSD at play here? If so, which could it be?

What steps should Louise take to protect her health?

Notes:

Example #2

After recovering from a back injury he sustained at home, Kurt was finally ready to return to work. His doctor recommended that he avoid heavy lifting and awkward stretching. During his first week back, Kurt's supervisor had him lifting and carrying light boxes filled with office supplies to the storage room. After a couple lifts, Kurt felt a sharp pain in his back.

What went wrong in this situation?

If you were in Kurt's shoes, what would you have done differently?

Notes:

Example #3

Erin is a graphic designer, so she spends all her workday on the computer. It's not uncommon for Erin to go home at the end of the day with dry eyes, headaches, and blurred vision. She just assumes it's because she is tired from working so hard, but her coworker Sharon says that her symptoms aren't normal.

What are some actions Erin should take?

Notes:

Example #4

John used to work in a warehouse, but a few years ago several boxes of brake pads fell on him. With his back injury, John had to transfer to a clerk position to avoid further injury. In his new position, John does a lot of computer work and a lot of sitting. It's been a year since he transferred into this new position, and John's beginning to worry about some pain he's experiencing in his wrists and lower back.

Do you think John should be concerned? Why or why not?

What MSD risk factors are at play in John's job?

Notes:

Example #5

George is employed as a medical transcriptionist. After noticing some pain and fatigue in his wrists, he visited his doctor, who explained that George likely had tendonitis in his wrists. George began taking anti-inflammatory pills and went back to work. Over the next couple months, the pain radiated to his elbows, shoulders, and neck. George doesn't want to lose his job, so he keeps typing anyway.

What myths or misconceptions are at play here?

What advice would you give George?

Notes:

Example #6

Grace works at the front desk in her office. She usually ends up standing in place for 7 hours or longer during her shift. At the end of the day, Grace used to return home with pain in her feet, back, and neck. Now, she's started to experience that pain after only a couple hours on her shift.

What risk factor is Grace affected by at her job?

How can you prevent static posture hazards in your workplace?

Notes:

Additional Notes: