

The Importance of Safe and Timely Return to Work



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RTW Goals and Objectives



- Prevention is always the number one goal
- Limit the impact of functional impairment on the ability to perform the regular job
- Educate employees on the RTW program
- Ensure that all internal and external stakeholders work together
- Positive influence on experience rating (WSBC)

Employer's Role



- Provide a safe and supportive work environment
- Support and provide alternate or modified duties
- Educate all employees on the new process
- Educate supervisors and managers on the importance of the RTW program
- Promptly report all absences

Employee's Supervisor Responsibilities



- Understand policies and procedures in the RTW program
- Be able to modify job duties/tasks to accommodate employees
- Regularly communicate with the employee while engaged in the RTW program

Employee Responsibilities



- Communicate with the employer any inability to perform regular job duties
- Promptly report all absences
- Take an active role in developing and participating in your RTW plan
- Report any concerns to your supervisor
- See your health care provider if necessary

Benefits to Employees



- Effective return to work and recovery for injured workers
- Being away from the workplace is detrimental to both physical and mental health
- Rehabilitation at work is good therapy
- Better communication between WSBC and our clients

Benefits to the Employer



- Decreased claim duration
- Decreased claim costs
- Potentially improved experience rating
- Decreased workplace costs and disruption
- Decreased 'human costs' following a compensable injury

Barriers To Successful Return To Work



- An out-dated belief that a worker must be '100%' before being able to return to work
- Belief that there are no, or very limited, options for modified or alternate work in the workplace
- Belief that return to work planning takes too much time and takes people away from the 'real' work

Barriers continued.....



- Belief that a worker on a return to work plan will disrupt 'real' work
- A culture of entitlement to be off work when injured at work
- No return to work policy or procedure at the workplace

Barriers continued.....



- Labour relations tensions or issues, not necessarily related to return to work or the injuries
- Health care providers not understanding benefits of return to work planning
- The longer off work, the less likely a RTW will be successful

Role Of the Nurse Advisor



Facilitator

Advisor

Communicator

Collaborator

Educator



Credentials



- Bachelor Nursing degree preferred
- 5-6 years of related experience
- Demonstrates knowledge in occupational health and safety, disability management, or similar focus

Role of the Nurse Advisor



- Collaborate with physicians, employees, and health care providers
- Apply principles of disability management and evidence-based best practice guidelines
- Develop safe and timely return to work plans and provide assistance with recovery plans

NA Role Continued....



- Assess the modified duties being offered by the employer. Are they within the worker's current limitations?
- Meet workers at the job site
- Monitor the return to work plans until completion

Third Party Providers



- Hired by employer to do full return to work planning
- Hired by employer to be the liaison between the employer and WorkSafeBC
- NA role - working with the Third Party Providers

Pending Claims



Nurse Advisors receive pending claims and do the following:

- Contact the worker and assess medical status - set expectations regarding return to work, if appropriate
- Contact the employer and discuss whether modified duties are available and were they offered to the worker
- No cost intervention

Stay at Work Centres



- Important to keep the employee at work if medically reasonable and appropriate duties are available
- Rehabilitation at work
- Monitoring the employee while at work to assure they are working on appropriate duties and to ensure their safety

Definitions



MODIFIED WORK

- Modified work means that the worker's *regular* pre-injury work responsibilities are changed in some way to accommodate an injury or illness
- Modifications can be made to the hours of work and/or to the work duties performed
- The modifications are usually temporary but might also be permanent depending on the circumstances

Definitions



ALTERNATE WORK

- Alternate work is work that the worker *does not usually perform* but is being offered as a way of re-introducing a worker back into the workplace
- Alternate work can be either temporary or permanent

Principles Of Return To Work Planning



GOAL OF RETURN TO WORK PLANNING

- To achieve timely, appropriate, safe and durable return to work

Typical Temporary Limitations



LOW BACK STRAIN/STRAIN

- ability to frequently change position between walking, standing and sitting
- no long periods of static standing or sitting
- no repetitive bending
- no extreme bending of the back; no twisting of the back
- lifting and carrying limitations to light or medium, depending on frequency and postures
- avoid jarring and limit walking on uneven ground
- ability to self-pace and/or have micro-pauses

RECOVERY PLANNING



- Hospital Discharge Planning anytime in the life of a claim, not just up to 12 weeks
- Arranging of Home Care and Equipment anytime in the life of a claim
- Arranging for Home IV
- Serious injuries – Nurses will go to the hospital to meet with the families

Special Care Services



2009 – a specialized unit to coordinate and enhance services to WorkSafeBC's most seriously injured clients

- WorkSafeBC recently hired 5 Nurse Advisors to work in this specialized unit to provide home assessments and assure that the workers are being provided the appropriate care

Injured at Work / Cared for at Work



- Injury Management / Return to Work Program for Employers and Workers
- Training program regarding the importance of injury management and returning injured workers to work in a timely and safe manner
- Call Construction Nurse Line if interested at 1-877-633-6233 or 604-279-8155

Injured at Work / Cared for at Work



Participants will be able to:

- Gain an understanding of the Principles of Disability Management and elements of the Disability Management Program
- Assess their Injury Management and Return to Work Strategies and Programs
- Develop action plan to go forward with Injury Management Program
- Learn about Resources available to them

Injury Management Roadmap



- Helps to deal with detours and unnecessary bumps in the road to return-to-work
- Helps ensure the return-to-work process is managed efficiently and effectively, allowing injured employees to remain at work or return to productive and appropriate work as soon as possible
- [Injury Management Road Map](#)

A Changing Philosophy



You don't get people better to get them back to work.....

You get them back to work to get them better