The Importance of Safe and Timely Return to Work

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WorkSafeBC
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.
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
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
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