

SAW / RTW – Collaborating with WorkSafeBC Nurse Advisors



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SAW/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 SAW/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 SAW/RTW program
- Promptly report all absences

Employee's Supervisor Responsibilities



- Understand policies and procedures in the SAW/RTW program
- Be able to modify job duties/tasks to accommodate employees
- Regularly communicate with the employee while engaged in the SAW/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 SAW/RTW plan
- Report any concerns to your supervisor
- See you 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 WCB 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
- 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

Barriers continued.....



- No return to work policy or procedure at the work place
- Labour relations tensions or issues, not necessarily related to return to work or 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

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

Typical Temporary Limitations



ELBOW FOREARM STRAIN/SPRAIN

- limit repetitive or sustained gripping, especially where high forces are needed
- avoid hanging weights
- avoid forearm rotations
- avoid pressure on the elbow
- limit repetitive elbow bending
- ability to self-pace and/or have micro-pauses
- limit total time spent keyboarding or driving
- limit use of impact tools (including power and hammers)

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