

Welcome

..... to the third edition of our newsletter for 2003.

In this issue we will introduce the new Rehabilitation Consultants across the State, provide an update on the Intensive Case Management Pilot, and discuss negotiating host rehabilitation placements through the Principal Personnel Officer.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Helen Cooke on 3237 0789.



What's New in Rehab?

NEW REHABILITATION CONSULTANTS

To assist with the rehabilitation process and to improve our statutory claims costs, 9 new Rehabilitation Consultants have been appointed in the Corporate Service Units across the State for 12 months.

Please welcome:

- Lisa Clancy - Outback (Longreach, Mt Isa, Roma)
- Belinda Hemmett - Northern (Townsville, Mackay)
- Meeca Lynch - Far Northern (Cairns & Cape, Tablelands-Johnstone, Torres Strait)
- Denise McNamara - Met North (Murrumba, Stafford, Geebung)
- Veronica O'Neill - Met South (Logan-Beaudesert)
- Marian Peters - Met South (Gold Coast North & South)
- Judi Sinnamon - Central (Bundaberg)
- Yvette Wareham - Met South (Coopers Plains, Mt Gravatt)
- Janette White - Met North (Corinda, Ipswich)

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT PILOT UPDATE

Referrals to the external Intensive Case Management providers has commenced. Rehabilitation Consultants from Metropolitan South and Metropolitan North met with representatives from Inergise and National Workforce consulting at a workshop on 6 November to ensure an agreed understanding of aims and processes.

Principals and Workplace Rehabilitation Co-ordinators (if in Met North & Met South areas) are encouraged to approach Rehabilitation Consultants at their Corporate Service Unit if they have identified an employee who may be eligible for the service.

For general information on the pilot visit the Creating Healthier Workplaces website at <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/docs/icm-factsheet.doc>

Ergonomic Workstations for Keyboard Operations

A well designed workstation can minimise health hazards from your office. By using ergonomics to suit the workstation, tasks and environment to the individual, potential problems can be minimised which ensures the work environment is healthy and safe.

The Right Chair

Chairs are one of the most important pieces of office equipment. Features of ergonomically designed chairs:

1. back rest, easily adjustable in height and angle
2. adjustable back rest depth
3. preferably cloth covered seat and back
4. curved edge
5. height adjustable
6. five-star castor base for stability



✕ For more Workplace Health and Safety tips please visit <http://whs.qld.gov.au/brochures> or <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/healthsafety/>

The Right Position

Adjust the seat height so your feet rest firmly on the floor and you take weight through your feet. Thighs should be fully supported except for a two finger width space behind the knee. Adjust the back rest depth (on chairs where depth is adjustable) to achieve this.

Maintain a relaxed posture where:

- your shoulders are relaxed
- your elbows are by your side
- your forearms and hands are parallel to the ground (approximately 90° angle at the elbow)
- your wrists are not bent or cocked when using the keyboard
- you are seated at a comfortable distance from the keys (the length of your forearm away).

The Best Screen Position

Ideally, the top of the screen should be at approximately eye level and about 60-70cm from your eyes. Your neck should be at rest or relaxed.

The Best Keyboard Position

- You should be able to maintain the recommended seating position when using the keyboard.
- The keyboard should be placed 6-7cm from the edge of the keyboard surface to allow the forearm/wrist to rest when you are not keying.

Recognising Depression

Depression is not just about feeling down now and then. The difference lies in the length and severity of the feelings. Clinical depression is a mental, emotional and physical state that is intense, long-lasting and seriously affects daily life.

Depressed people can experience a couple or many of the following symptoms:

- ψ Feeling sad or empty
- ψ Sleeping problems
- ψ Worrying and negative thinking
- ψ Feeling helpless and hopeless
- ψ Irritability and agitation
- ψ Loss of interest and energy
- ψ Poor concentration
- ψ Change in appetite
- ψ Loss of confidence
- ψ Feeling guilty and worthless
- ψ Suicidal thoughts

Depression is not something to be ashamed of or guilty about, nor is it a character flaw or a sign of weakness. Most importantly, depression is not permanent. The chances for complete recovery are excellent. A number of psychological and drug treatments are effective, affordable and readily available.

There are two major forms of treatment for depression that may be used individually or in combination, depending on the type and severity of depression.

Psychological treatments

Psychological therapy provides the opportunity to share and work through difficulties in a supportive environment. It offers skills and strategies to change thinking patterns and behaviours that contribute to depression.

Medication

One aspect of depression is a change in the balance of chemicals in the brain, which can impact on mood and contribute to feeling low, sad and fatigued. Antidepressant medications are drugs that help restore the chemical imbalance and to alleviate biological symptoms of depression.

For further information on this topic visit <http://psychsociety.com.au> or <http://beyondblue.org.au/site/>



Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1. Do I need a rehabilitation plan if someone is returning on alternate duties?

Yes. You can find the rehabilitation plan forms on the Creating Healthier Workplaces website at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/rehab/resources/forms>

This site also contains resources including EQ's rehab policy, other case management forms, contact lists and lots of other information that you may find useful.

Q.2. Can I send a partly completed Employer's Report to WorkCover Queensland?

Yes. You can send in the Employer's Report partly completed advising that further information is to be supplied. If you are unsure whether Education Queensland should be supporting this application then request WorkCover Queensland contacts the relevant person to discuss the matter further. This helps ensure the time frame of 10 days employer's have to lodge a claim is maintained.

WPRC Profile

Organisational Health is considered to be an important function for all staff at Toolooa State High School. The team of WHSO and two trained Rehabilitation Co-ordinators ensure that the school is a safe and healthy environment for all staff and students. The CSU Rehabilitation Consultants complement the school's Rehabilitation Co-ordinators on different projects i.e. rehabilitation programs, presentations at staff meetings and information updates.

The two trained Rehabilitation Co-ordinators; Raelene Fysh and Jenny Prizeman acknowledge the benefits that early intervention provides. The main benefit, besides offering greater opportunities for ill or injured workers to maintain or return to work, "allows us to keep skilled employees at work and also reinforces the value we place on our staff". Feedback from staff who have accessed rehabilitation services has been extremely positive and productive.



With the Workplace Health and Safety arena the school provides additional non teaching time for the trained Workplace Health and Safety Officer to work on identified priorities.

Discussion Forum

Negotiating Host Rehabilitation Placements

One of the strategies that is sometimes used to assist an employee return to work after an injury or illness is to organise for them to work at an alternate location as part of their rehabilitation. If you identify that this may be necessary for a case you are managing then you will need to contact the Principal Personnel Officer/Workforce Management Advisor for your district to discuss the case. If they support the placement then they should be able to assist you with the negotiations to find an appropriate workplace for your client.

