

Welcome

.....to the second edition of our 2005 newsletter.

In this issue we introduce the latest on-line rehabilitation resources available from the Creating Healthier Workplaces Website, provide advice on conducting the initial interview with an injured/ill employee, provide information on Mediation and

the Department's Internal Mediation Network, plus all of the regular features.

If you have any feedback or articles that you would like to contribute, please contact Renee Dawson on telephone 3235 4030 or at email Renee.Dawson@qed.qld.gov.au



What's New in Rehab?

Rehabilitation Forms

The Organisational Health Unit (OHU) have been busy updating a range of rehab forms, available from the Creating Healthier Workplaces (CHW) website. Visit <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/rehab/res-forms.html> to view the latest version of the: *case note form, return to work plan, case closure form, medical authority form, personal details summary, rehabilitation plan, rehabilitation survey and additional allocation application form*. All rehab coordinators are expected to use these updated forms.

Occupational Rehabilitation Fact Sheets

Four new occupational rehab fact sheets have been released onto the CHW website <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/rehab/res-fact.html>. The four fact sheets: *Claims for Workers' Compensation; What are Suitable Duties Programs; Claims for Sick Leave; and Practical Strategies for Minimising Voice Strain*, provide information and advice

on managing a broad range of rehab issues. Should you have any suggestions on other possible fact sheet topics, please contact Renee Dawson at Renee.Dawson@qed.qld.gov.au.

Rehabilitation Links

The Rehab Links available from the CHW website have undergone a face lift. The site now includes hyperlinks to web-pages focusing on rehabilitation, psychological health, physical injuries and other useful sites. Visit <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/rehab/links.html> to view the latest links.

WorkCover Asbestos Claims

Jerome Paige, Snr HR Consultant (Rehab) in the OHU is coordinating responses to asbestos-related WorkCover claims for the Department. If you become aware of a new claim or have any questions about asbestos-related injury claims, please contact Jerome on 3237 0316 or at Jerome.Paige@qed.qld.gov.au

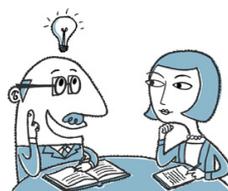
Conducting the Initial Interview

The initial interview is an important stage of workplace rehabilitation. Conducted effectively, the initial interview is a valuable strategy in establishing a well coordinated and managed workplace rehabilitation program and hence appropriate RTW outcomes for the ill/injured employee.

The aim of the initial interview is to introduce the ill/injured employee to the Department's rehabilitation process and their entitlements and responsibilities in relation to workers' compensation.

The initial interview should be conducted face-to-face, where possible, by the WPRC as early as possible following notification of the injury/illness. The focus of the interview is to:

- Establish a positive relationship;
- Identify the illness/injury & the impact of the employee's functioning at both home & in the workplace;
- Establish the employee's expectations & ensure a focus on RTW;
- Advise the employee of the likely rehabilitation process & reinforce the Department's support;
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities, rights & obligations in the rehabilitation process;
- Obtain authority to speak to the employee's treating medical practitioner(s) using the ap-



- proved Departmental Medical Authority Form;&
- Ensure that appropriate paperwork & leave applications have been completed & lodged.

Basically, the initial interview is similar to a needs assessment, where the needs, objectives, strategies and actions of rehabilitation are established. To assist in performing the initial interview the *Personal Details Summary, Initial Interview and Rehab Plan* forms from CHW website: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/rehab/res-forms.html> should be used.

At times the WPRC may need to approach employees who are distressed or troubled. When faced with this situation, the following strategies can assist:

- Use active listening skills - ask open ended questions & maintain eye contact;
- Be welcoming & relaxed whilst showing concern;
- Focus on the relevant issues, avoid making judgements or using labels, opinions or inferences about personal issues; &
- Remain empathetic & be prepared for emotional responses;.

By adopting these strategies, the initial interview will assist in maintaining the ill/injured employee at the workplace or returning them to appropriate employment in a timely and safe manner.



Frequently Asked Questions



Q1. Why do I need to obtain a Workers' Compensation Medical Certificate when I am injured at work?

All WorkCover applications must be sent with an accompanying **Workers' Compensation Medical Certificate**. The medical certificate needs to be signed & completed by your treating medical practitioner and forwarded to your Principal/Manager as soon as possible after the injury/illness occurred.

The medical certificate must also include a medical diagnosis. If you submit a certificate stating you are suffering from a 'medical condition', your claim will not be accepted.

Delays in submitting this information may affect the determination of your WorkCover application and create unnecessary delays to your recovery and return to pre-injury duties.

Throughout the period of your claim you are required to submit ongoing medical documentation. Failure to do so will prevent WorkCover from continuing to support your claim.

Q2. Am I entitled to lodge a WorkCover claim if I am injured on my way to work?

If you are injured on your way to or from work, you may be entitled to compensation from WorkCover Qld. For a journey claim to be successful, the injury must have occurred outside the employee's property boundary. Some exclusions apply such as if the employee is convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol or dangerous driving. To find out more information visit: <http://www.workcoverqld.com.au/worker/Workerhome/Statutoryclaims/Lodgingclaim/Journeyclaims.html>.

Q3. What do I need to do if I participate in an external rehab training course?

The Department organises WPRC training courses for new & continuing WPRCs throughout the year.

If you participate in an external rehab training course (1 day re-certification or 3 day certification), you will need to forward a copy of your Q-COMP Certificate of Registration to the OHU at PO Box 15033, Brisbane City East 4002. This will ensure the Department captures your WPRC accreditation details on TSS. For further details, including information on internal WPRC courses, please contact Renee Dawson on 3235 4030.

Mediation

What Is Mediation?

Mediation is a form of Alternative Dispute Resolution aimed at assisting people in dispute reach an agreement that is mutually satisfactory. The process is confidential and involves two or more people in dispute coming together with an impartial and neutral third party who helps them make informed and clear decisions on how to resolve disagreements.



The Role of the Mediator

The mediator's role is to guide the discussion between the parties so that they can work out an agreement that suits them all. The mediator does not take sides or sit in judgement and they have no authority to impose a settlement. The mediator works to remedy the problem through assisting the parties resolve their own differences rather than assigning blame.

Benefits of Mediation

Mediation can be used as a formal early intervention strategy or as a tool in resolving a formal grievance. Workplace mediation has many benefits such as assisting parties resolve workers' compensation disputes. It can foster a problem-solving approach to complaints and workplace conflict by focusing on finding and implementing positive and productive solutions. In this way, mediation is an effective intervention strategy during complex psychological claims.

The DEA Internal Mediation Network

As part of the implementation of the Grievance Directive (08/03) and to further support the local resolution of employee conflict, the Department of Education and the Arts (DEA) have successfully trained 46 internal mediators.

The role of the workplace mediator is to guide discussion between parties in conflict so that they can work out an agreement that suits them both.

Further Information

For further information on the Mediator Network, please contact Workforce Diversity and Equity on 3237 0841.

On-line information about mediation is available from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Dispute Resolution Branch, Mediation website at: <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/mediation/home.htm/>.

WPRC Profile

Helen Yench is a school based WPRC, a teacher & currently an Acting Deputy Principal at Chatsworth Hills SS. Since 2002, she has handled a number of diverse & complex rehab cases such as brain injury, stress related illnesses & car accident injury.

Helen applies a number of key principles to her role as the WPRC including:

- Use active listening & observational skills;
- Show compassion & empathy & offer a smile or positive comment – to show that she cares;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Liaise with all parties to offer maximum assistance;
- Maintain regular contact with each ill/injured employee to extend support & commitment;
- Follow up - even after recovery or case finalisation.

Helen has found that it is the TIME that people need most of all. She will phone her client at home when they are unable to attend work, just to let them know they are in her thoughts. Helen takes the time to say hello. Her reward is knowing that she is contributing positively to the ill or injured employee's recovery.

Useful Websites to Visit



The **Dispute Resolution Branch** of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Mediation website at <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/mediation/home.htm>.

The **Rehabilitation Links** web-page from the CHW website. Visit <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/rehab/links.html> to view the latest links.

To view all of our resources and services visit our **Creating Healthier Workplaces** website at www.education.qld.gov.au/health.



Creating Healthier Workplaces

Organisational HealthUnit