

Best practice for vocational programs June 2020

This report outlines the published evidence on vocational programs between 2009 and 2019.

TYPE OF PROJECT

Literature review

AIM OF THE PROJECT

To identify best practice for vocational programs that are designed to support worker's rehabilitation and recovery.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

This research report was prepared by the John Walsh Centre for Rehabilitation Research.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- SIRA
- John Walsh Centre for Rehabilitation Research

Background

- The impact of delayed return to work on injured people is a serious concern.
- There is a strong body of empirical evidence that shows the longer an injured worker is away from work, the less likely they are ever to return.

Results

Best practice for VR programs:

- incorporate multiple components i.e. healthcare, service coordination and workplace/employer components
- have early intervention
- are tailored to meet the individual worker's needs

Workers injured at firms with employer RTW programs were more likely to return to work

Modifying work equipment was associated with the greatest reduction in injury duration relative to any other stand-alone program component.

Discussion

Multi-component, comprehensive VR programs:

- seemed more able to integrate the differing perspectives of the various RTW stakeholders
- facilitate cooperation and commitment to the goal of work-disability reduction
- demonstrate improved and sustained work reintegration, and reduce costs associated with work-related injury or illness.

Service coordination components play a critical role in keeping all stakeholders informed keep them working together toward a common goal.

Recommendations

All vocational rehabilitation programs should:

- incorporate healthcare, service coordination and workplace/employer components
- commence early after injury/illness
- be individually tailored
- target workers who are at a higher risk of delayed return to work
- involve employer and other stakeholders
- encourage stakeholder awareness of the value of work for health and recovery.

SIRA funded



State Insurance Regulatory Authority