

Successful return to work involves a lot of questions, Vocational Services help determine the answers...

To suggest topics, please call Angela Veri, National Director of Customer Relations.

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Although there is no question that vocational services are critical for clients approaching the 104-week mark, there is also no question of the many benefits of beginning the return-to-work process well before week 104. Beginning the return to work process as soon as possible post accident is the best approach for helping your clients get back to work as soon as possible.

In fact, assessing your client's ability to return to work, including all the questions that go along with it—like whether their post accident abilities and limitations pose any barriers to returning to their pre-accident employment—is an important component of their *overall* rehabilitation. It not only facilitates a safe return to work as soon as possible, it also benefits your clients' overall health and well-being, not to mention economic situation— while providing you with the information you need to determine benefit eligibility.

Early intervention promotes positive mindset...

As is the case with all types of rehabilitation, early intervention regarding vocational issues makes a difference. With work as a central component of most people's lives, initiating vocational services as early as possible encourages a positive mindset. Your clients feel they are making progress—working toward returning to work is a sign that life will in fact return to normal. This can create a positive 'domino-effect' as this positive mindset carries over into other areas of rehabilitation. With early intervention as a starting point, then depending on each client's specific situation, vocational services help answer important questions to help guide a successful return to work. Questions like:

- Is my client still able to do the job he had before the accident?
- Is my client still capable of doing his pre-accident job if some modifications are made to accommodate his post-accident abilities and limitations?
- Should my client be looking into an alternative type of work?
- What types of jobs is my client now suitable for post accident?
- Does my client need retraining?
- What is the job market like for the kinds of work my client is able to do post-accident?

Client-centred approach is also key to success...

Similar to early intervention, another approach that carries over into most types of rehabilitation is the importance of taking a client-centred, situational approach. Accordingly, where vocational services are concerned, the questions you need answered, and in turn, the most appropriate type of vocational services, depends on each client's specific situation regarding pre-accident employment, as well as post-accident abilities and limitations. Please see the attachment for an example of vocational services in action based on a hypothetical client scenario.