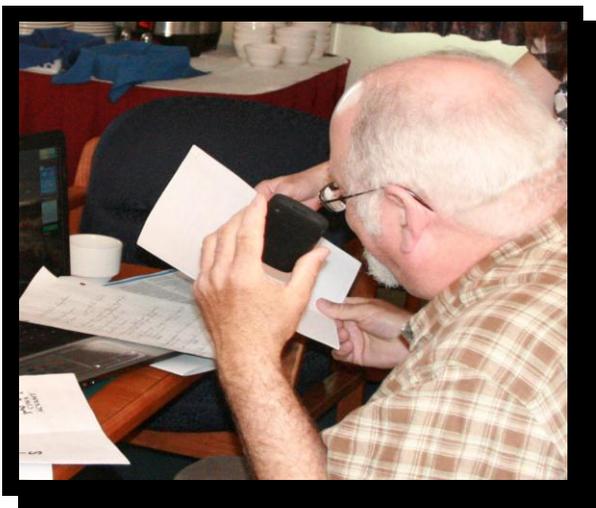


Work Transition Tips: For workers – *Ways to find the information you need*

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Reviewed by CIWA BOD 2010.



“If I know, I have hope about the future. I can make decisions to adjust routines, to live the best I can and go back to work safely”

“Persons with work injuries and chronic disabilities want to and can help themselves and others use information to make the right decisions at the right time.”

Every year there are over a million workers who are injured on the job. Suffering from a work injury and being off work affects every part of a worker’s life, their physical and mental health, the daily lives of their children and families as well as their social life and work relationships.

All workers need information to heal and safely return to their lives without re-injury –

Unfortunately most workers and their families do not have the right information on their current and future health, benefits, and abilities needed to live well and be safe when returning to work.

Not having the right information can be addressed through ensuring workers are provided with the knowledge and support they need to use and understand information.

Support is needed so that workers know what they need to do in managing their health and their benefits. In addition, workers need support to share their views and think about how new information might be useful in making immediate and long term decisions about returning to a productive life at work and at home and to restore their wellbeing.

Research^{1,2,3,4} with workers experiencing unemployment or loss of work due to disability suggests:

- Information is not effectively shared between people in the health and return to work systems.
- Workers with injuries do not have timely access to information they need at the right time.
- Information that workers need is often not easily accessible.
- Information is not shared in a way that helps workers know what information means or how it relates their situation. Workers are often discouraged and left without a clear understanding of information they need to ask about from health care providers, insurers and / or employers.
- Workers feel left out of the communication processes they should be included in.
- Injured workers need and want to talk with other injured workers who have knowledge and experience in finding and making sense of information.
- Injured workers want to be in the know so that they have up to date information when making decisions about getting back to work and learning to live with changes.
- Injured workers want to participate in helping themselves and others through the difficulties of getting better and returning to work.

What can workers do:

- **Know that** having an injury and managing your injury is hard work. You need to be organized. Ask others for information when you need it to find the answers or information to make decisions.
- **Know that** you are not alone in struggling to find information.
- **Keep all documentation** and correspondence.
- **Keep a note book** to document and track everything. In it record the dates of calls, emails, names of people you talk with and information shared or discussed.
- **Find out the timelines** and dates you need to have information for your employer or insurer.
- **Talk with your care givers** and make sure that they have a full understanding of your situation about your injuries. Example doctors, therapists etc.

- **Connect with others** who can share information with you such as an injured worker's group or other persons who have experience managing their injuries.
- **Talk to your family** about your injury and keep them up to date on your situation.
- **Talk with** your worker's advisor, worker's advocates and / or your union rep.
- **Tell your doctor** what it is really like to live with your injuries or your worst days rather than say you are just fine when in fact you may be suffering.
- **Have a family member** or friend go with you to doctor's to be an extra set of ears. Write your issues down on a list before going to the doctor's. Get people to help you with research.
- **Know what you can do** and what you are good at, try to do things that you can do rather than always asking others to do what you could do yourself, try to keep some of your personal power.

After reading this KIT-Tip Sheet and / or view a KIT-Tip video on the CIWA website www.ciwa.ca consider the following:

- Make a list of key information you want to find out more about.
- Make a list of information to ask your health provider, make a list of information to ask your boss or other person or agency.
- Contact a local support group to find out more information and how I might help others.

CIWA invites you to look further:

If you found this KIT-TIP sheet useful or wish to have more information about other resources or research contact CIWA by email at ciwa@vianet.ca

1. Korzycki, M., Korzycki, M., and Shaw, L. (2008) Left behind in the return-to-work journey: Consumer insights for policy change and practice strategies. *WORK*, 30, 277-288.
3. Shaw, L., Knott, M., Lindsay, R., Brake, P., Page P., Argyle, C., MacDermid, J., and Kothari, A. (2009) Opening doors to information for injured workers through knowledge exchange and research with consumer community groups. *Occupational Therapy Now*, July/August 11, 23-26.



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