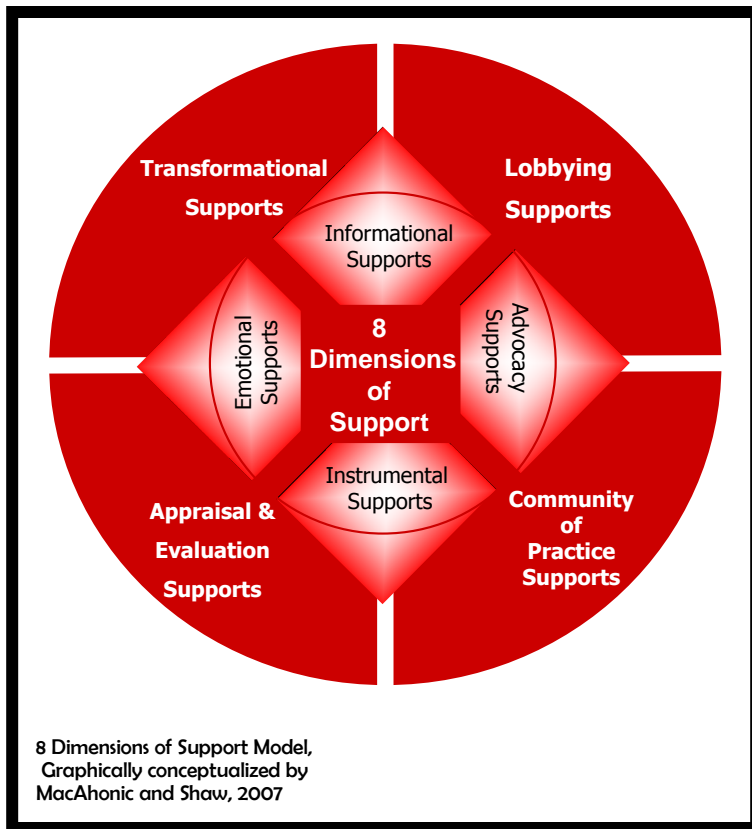


Work Transition Tips: For support groups & health care professionals

Developing a network of supports

This *KIT*Tip sheet developed by Dr. Lynn Shaw, Nathan Shaw, CIWA IKT Advisory Committee 2010
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“Persons with complex work injuries and disabilities require a broad range of supports to adjust, adapt, try new approaches and reach their potential through meaningful participation in everyday life”

Going back to work after a work injury and / or chronic disability is not easy or straightforward. Each person requires a different range of supports, resources and services. However, access to the supports a person needs is not always available or accessible for workers with chronic conditions across Canada.

Without access to support, persons with chronic health conditions experience a loss of self worth and self esteem, poor health, family disruption, and decreases in their standard of living. Over time the chance of returning to work or functioning declines. Unfortunately, most support programs receive little to no regular funding.

There is a need to establish a range of supports at the local or regional level to address the challenges faced by persons with chronic conditions who have lost work.

Supports are needed to restore hope, health, and the human potential of workers and their families.

A range of transitional supports are needed to make sure that all workers with chronic conditions can make adjustments, restore well being and continue to participate in meaningful everyday life and work.

Research^{1,2} suggests that:

- Participation in meaningful daily life activities and work is a determinant of health.
- Persons with chronic conditions and work disabilities who experience a loss of work require a range of supports to improve their wellbeing, to regain and maintain their health and find to ways to work.
- Types of supports needed vary across persons.
- Not all communities or regions across Canada offer a range of services that workers or persons with chronic conditions need.
- Many support programs are run by people who are volunteers.
- Most health care professionals are unaware of the range of services and supports available in the community to help persons with chronic conditions.
- Many support groups are unaware of the range of health professional supports and the cost of services within the local area.
- Eight types of transitional supports can address the complexity of issues that workers with chronic conditions face.

Examples of supports are:

Emotional Support	People need access to social supports to share experiences and to learn from others
Informational Support	People need access to immediate information about their health condition, their benefits, and responsibilities to return to work, what others can do to help them and where to get access to information to make long term decisions. For example workers need information to guide them through an unfamiliar process and life changes such as What do I do now that I have an injury? How do I manage with ongoing pain?
Instrumental Support	People with chronic conditions need vital supports given the losses they experience such as sources for financial aid, housing, etc
Advocacy Support	People need specific knowledge about claims or insurance or disability systems and health related information about medications and often requires people to help them talk with or communicate in writing with others to address needs.
Appraisal and Evaluation Supports	People need access to services to find out what they can do, to get feedback on how to adjust ways of doing tasks in daily life and at work they can no longer do. People need access to professionals that can provide insights into both the short term and long term abilities and expectations on how to manage changes overtime.
Community of Practice Supports	People want to have timely and financial feasible access to a well developed local network of supports of social, community, professional based service providers that they believe to be trustworthy and understand the needs of persons with chronic conditions.

Lobbying Supports People want to participate in change processes and have connections with groups so that they can have a voice in communicating needs and in supporting improvements in eliminating system injustices, work injustices, isolation and gaps in access to services and supports.

Transformational Supports People want to have access to services programs and supports that help workers and families explore new ways of doing. They need transformation supports that help them live with their health conditions and disabilities, as well as new ways to explore what they can do, such as occupations that they might be able to do so that they can live and work with their disabilities in the long term. They want and need supports to help them reach their potential within the context of living with a disability. While this includes access to training programs and education for employment, it also includes supports to help transition to through the process, within their capacities and for participation in a transformative working society.

What can support groups, health professionals and workers do?

- **Set up a meeting** with people in your community to make a map of the services and supports.
- **Identify gaps in services** and identify programs needed or make adjustments to current programs.
- **Plan to advocate** for new funding.
- **Create a brochure** of services and supports for workers and their families.
- **Talk with workers** with chronic conditions about their greatest needs.
- **Plan an educational sessions** with other health professionals and community groups to share knowledge about available services.
- **Review case examples** of other communities and what works for them.

After reading this KIT-Tip Sheet and viewing the KIT-Tip videos at www.ciwa.ca consider next steps:

- What do I currently know about what programs are missing in my area?
- What do I need to find out from others?

Moving forward:

Set a date and time to: 1) Share and discuss the support and service needs of workers with chronic injuries with others and 2) Explore funding opportunities and 3) Contact CIWA for more information.


CIWA invites you to look further:

If you found this *KIT-TIP* sheet useful or wish to have more information on other *KIT-TIP* Sheets or about the research and / or other resources to help workers and persons with chronic injuries please contact CIWA by email at ciwa@vianet.ca

Shaw, MacAhonic, Lindsay and Brake, (2009) Evaluating the support needs of injured work in managing occupational Transitions after injury. *WORK*, 32 477-490.

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