

Workers' Compensation Best Practices: My Three Best Practices

Chairperson: Maria DeIMuto, PT, CCM

Tuesday, March 24th; 1:15 – 2:05 pm

None

Disclosures

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Participants will be able to describe how collaborative planning among worker, clinician, and employer/insurer improves return-to-work outcomes and reduces adversarial dynamics.
- 2) Acknowledge there is success when all parties work together in workers' compensation.
- 3) Identify Best Practices for supporting the injured worker.

2026
WORK RELATED
Injuries Workshop

My Three Best Practices- Case Manager



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Disclosures

None

Client Sources for Case Managers

Practice Settings

Workers' Compensation

Client Source

Disability - LCP

Payer Source

Independent/Private Companies

Acute Care

Self Referral

What are the most important parts and components of the case management process?

The Many Components of Case Management

Addressing Concerns
Educating the Client/
Support System
Engaging the Client
Communication
Between Stakeholders
Gathering Relevant
Information
Assessment/Assessing
Skills & Tools
Analyzing Data
Coordination &
Treatment for Patient

Maintaining Continuity of
Care
Case Management
Documentation
Advocating for the Client
Stratifying Risk
Hub of Case
Management Activities
Ethical Decision Making

Case Management Process
Case Management
Documentation
Advocating for the Client
Screening
Regulatory, Accreditation &
Professional Standards
Code of Conduct/Standards for
Professional Conduct

Planning &
Implementation
Empowering the Client
Transitioning to Alternative
Levels of Care
Following Up
Communication/Main
Conduit Between HealthCares
Constant Evaluation of
Effectiveness of
Treatment

My Three Best Practices

1. Engage
2. Educate
3. Communication





Engage The Client



How To Educate

Constant Evaluation



Thank you!

Workers Comp.: Three Best Practices from the Legal Perspective

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None to disclose

Disclosures

Employment Law Best Practices

TOP THREE TIPS AND TRAPS

Job Descriptions!

Develop Good job descriptions:

- Physical and mental qualifications for the job.
- Essential Job Functions
- The basis for any accommodation:
 - Ability to perform ESSENTIAL job duties, with or without reasonable accommodation
 - Do not have to – and should not – exempt from Essential Job Duties

Train Your Eyes and Ears

Supervisors:

- Supervisors are the front-line eyes and ears;
- They are management and must align voice with management;
- Incentivize by providing training (in person) and rate how well they “manage” on their reviews;
- Avoid illness and injuries, implement ADA restrictions; and
- Report need for leave/accommodation.

Manage your Leaves!

Manage All Leaves:

- FMLA
- State Medical/Family Leave
- Workers Compensation Leave
- Do NOT outsource (abdicate) leave approval or leave management or accommodation requests;
- Run all leaves concurrently when possible;
- COBRA when possible

Thank you!

Workers Compensation Best Practices - Employer

Michelle Milligan


Senior Claims Administrator

Tufts Medicine, Inc.

No financial disclosures

Disclosures

Employer Best Practices



Ongoing communication with the injured Employee

Biweekly meetings with team comprised of Occupational Health, Human Resources and Leave of Absence to review open WC claims

Develop/maintain relationship with medical providers to facilitate timely visits, WC approvals and maximize benefits of working for a Healthcare system

Thank you!

My 3 Best Practices - Occupational Medicine

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No financial disclosures

Disclosures

Best Practice #1: Get the Records

- Patient self-reported history can be unreliable
 - “If your mother says she loves you, check it out”

Best Practice #2: Use Best Evidence for Physicals

- Usefulness of clinical data lies in diagnosis and management
 - Are the signs valid?
 - Are the signs reliable?
 - Collecting redundant information?
- Role of Chaperones

Best Practice #3: Pick Imaging Wisely

- Early imaging can cause iatrogenic worse disability unrelated to severity
 - Watchful waiting can sometimes make testing unnecessary
- Are the findings abnormalities?
- Using diagnostic testing to reassure patients is common but the evidence shows the reassuring effect is limited

Thank you!

My Three Best Practices Mental Health

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Disclosures

I have no disclosures

After a workplace injury, attention often goes first to physical trauma and functional limitations. But mental health is equally important—and often determines whether a worker truly recovers, stabilizes, and regains a sense of agency. These three mental health practices consistently support positive outcomes.

MENTAL HEALTH OFTEN DETERMINES RECOVERY AFTER WORKPLACE INJURY

- 1 Early Psych Stabilization – Achieved thru Clear Guidance at Outset
- 2 Environmental Matching – Achieved thru Collaborative Planning
- 3 Empower Worker's Future – by Restoring Agency & Proactive Planning

WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH & HOW WE GET THERE

1 Early Psych Stabilization – Achieved thru Clear Guidance at Outset

After injury the worker's nervous system shifts into survival mode

Early Trauma-Informed Interventions contain rather than overwhelm

WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH & HOW WE GET THERE

2 Environmental Matching – Achieved thru Collaborative Planning

Not every work environment is psychologically safe for a worker

When the fit is right, recovery progresses more quickly

WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH & HOW WE GET THERE

3 Empower Worker's Future – by Restoring Agency & Proactive Planning

A workplace injury can be psychologically devastating because it often creates a sense of lost control over one's body, livelihood, and identity

When workers can imagine a viable future, they become more resilient, emotionally regulated, which is central to recovery

WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH & HOW WE GET THERE

In summary, successful mental health care in Workers' Compensation focuses on three essentials:

- 1) early stabilization so emotional distress does not escalate,
- 2) placement in work environments that match psychological readiness rather than retraumatize,
- 3) and restoration of agency so workers actively participate in their recovery.

When these principles guide the process, recovery becomes more aligned with what people truly need to heal.

Thank you!

My Three Best Practices: Claims Management

Michael Kelley

Session Synthesis

Panel Discussion

Thank you!