

# INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY MANAGEMENT

Why a robust return-to-work program is just good business

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## AGENDA

**01** Introduction to Disability Management

**02** Roles and Responsibilities of the Employer

**03** Common Challenges to and Effective Return-to-Work Program

**04** Solutions You Can Implement

**Learning Objective:** Understand the importance of disability management and recognize how to improve outcomes.

## WHAT IS DISABILITY MANAGEMENT?

- ◆ The coordinated efforts of an employer to facilitate the return an ill or injured worker back to full duties as soon as safely possible
- ◆ Combines elements such as:
  - Available modified duties
  - Physical or cognitive demands
  - Work environment
  - Medical assessments
  - Overall wellbeing of the worker
  - Legal obligations
- ◆ Navigating the nuances and challenges that may complicate return-to-work



## WHY SHOULD MY BUSINESS PRIORITIZE DISABILITY MANAGEMENT?



Support workers,  
full wages



Reduce WCB or  
STD premiums



Avoid needless  
staff coverage



Minimize loss  
of productivity



Legal obligation

## SOME ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN EMPLOYER

### Duty to Accommodate

- Legal and moral obligation
- Protect yourself from human rights complaints
- Undue hardship has a high threshold
- Lack of awareness by mid-level managers may have unforeseen repercussions



more than **one third** of employees with disabilities require **at least one** workplace accommodation *in order to work*

2017 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) results

## **SOME ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN EMPLOYER**

### **Establish a Disability Management Program**

- Develop best practices and policies
- Build list of suitable modified duties for a variety of different restrictions
- Communicate and promote the program throughout staff
- Train your leaders, managers, supervisors, and first aid attendants

### **Supplemental Training & Education**

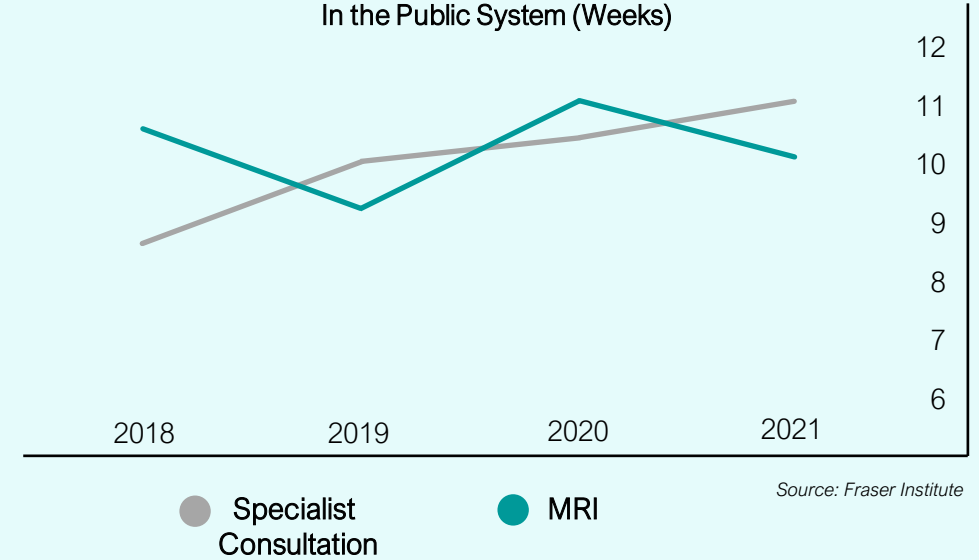
- Assessment by NIDMAR-certified auditor
- Employer representatives
- Hire NIDMAR-certified experts



## COMMON CHALLENGES THAT DELAY RETURN-TO-WORK

- ◆ Wait times for medical assessments
- ◆ Vague medical for indiscriminate time off, incomplete forms, or doctors refusing to complete forms at all
- ◆ Time to get medical information back from doctors

Wait Times for Healthcare  
In the Public System (Weeks)



## COMMON CHALLENGES THAT DELAY RETURN-TO-WORK

Here's a shocking statement: the doctor doesn't have the final say.



As an employer, you are entitled to request the specific functional limitations and functional abilities of an employee after a workplace incident.

There needs to be objective medical evidence to support total absence from work.

The employee also has the right to be informed of their options and choose to return.



## SOLUTIONS YOU CAN IMPLEMENT

Proactive communication with workers on what to expect and how the program works



Build a positive culture around recovery at work (win-win approach)

Immediate written offer of modified duties based on common sense restrictions



## SOLUTIONS YOU CAN IMPLEMENT

Open, collaborative, and regular communication with all stakeholders



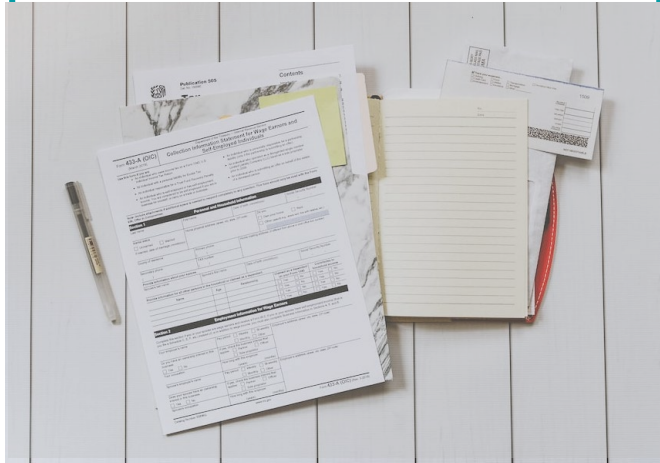
Protest and appeal illegitimate time loss

Get creative with your list of available, productive modified duties



## SOLUTIONS YOU CAN IMPLEMENT

Detailed medical assessments and forms



Early access to physiotherapy and medical diagnostics

Challenge uncooperative physicians, if needed



## SOLUTIONS YOU CAN IMPLEMENT

Take advantage of the provincial grants made available to employers to fortify their disability management program through NIDMAR.



National Institute of Disability Management and Research®



Scholarship opportunities



Free continuing education



Free workplace assessment

# THANK YOU

We would be happy to answer any further questions.



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