

Recovery of an affected employee *FIRST*
A manager's approach





- Causal factors of psychological injury and an injured worker's vulnerability during this time
- The importance of training line managers to recognise psychological injury



- The role of the line manager in preventing psychological injury and facilitating recovery
- The impact of “good work” on our health

Comcare

Comcare works to achieve the following outcomes for the Australian community:

- The protection of the health, safety and welfare at work of workers covered by the Comcare scheme through education, assurance and enforcement.
- An early and safe return to work and access to compensation for injured workers covered by the Comcare scheme.
- Access to compensation for people with asbestos-related diseases where the Commonwealth has a liability.

High cost of psychological injury

- 8% of Comcare claims lodged in 2009 were attributed to psychological injury
- psychological injury claims accounted for 23% of Comcare's *total* claim cost
- average cost per claim: \$139 522

Mental health conditions: Causes and triggers

Non-modifiable	Modifiable	Modifiable work factors
Genetics	Stressful events	Stress
Predisposing personality type	Poverty	Unrealistic goals
Trauma or abuse	Substance mis-use	Unemployment
Previous episodes	Poor social support	Burnout
Physical illness	Social stigma	Unfair treatment
Upbringing	Physical wellbeing	Job dissatisfaction
	Cognitive skills	Job insecurity
		Poor perceived control
		Poor effort/reward balance

Critical incidences and traumatic events

- 60-65% of Australians will experience a potentially life threatening event or trauma in their life time
- 80% of people who experience a traumatic event do not go on to develop significant trauma-related psychological problems
- most people who experience a traumatic event should be coping relatively well within one month

Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health

Early warning signs

Early warning signs include:

- increased rate of unplanned absences
- increased accident and injury reporting
- rising levels of conflict in the workplace
- uncharacteristic decline in work performance
- other personal indicators.

Modifiable workplace factors

- **Workplace culture**

Manager approach: provide opportunities, be approachable, avoid encouraging long hours.

- **Demands of the job**

Manager approach: establish clear/realistic deadlines, match individuals to the job, provide training when needed, consider job rotation for repetitive roles.

- **Support and the individual**

Manager approach: provide training in coping strategies, consider more flexible work schedules, ensure employees are supported after traumatic events.

Modifiable workplace factors (continued)

- **Control**

Manager approach: give staff scope to plan their own work.

- **Relationships**

Manager approach: seek assistance if required, provide training in interpersonal skills, set up systems to prevent bullying and harassment.

- **Change management**

Manager approach: provide opportunities for staff to contribute ideas, communicate the changes and support staff throughout the change process.

- **Role**

Manager approach: make sure people are clear about role requirements and clearly defined responsibilities.

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I think this last paragraph needs rewording.

pender.robyn, 11/8/2010

A manager's response to traumatic events

- Promote mental health self-care following trauma or injury.
- Promote Psychological First Aid by workplace peers and supervisors, and only involve external professionals when a person does not show normal recovery.
- Psychological First Aid: provide comfort and reassurance, facilitate links with family and friends, provide information about recovery, return to work and where to seek professional assistance if needed.

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The manager and the return to work process

- Keeping in touch during absence is critical.
- Good return to work outcomes occur where injured workers are supported by management.
- Be mindful of any perceived challenges the worker has about returning.
- Make reasonable adjustments for an **early** and durable return to work program.

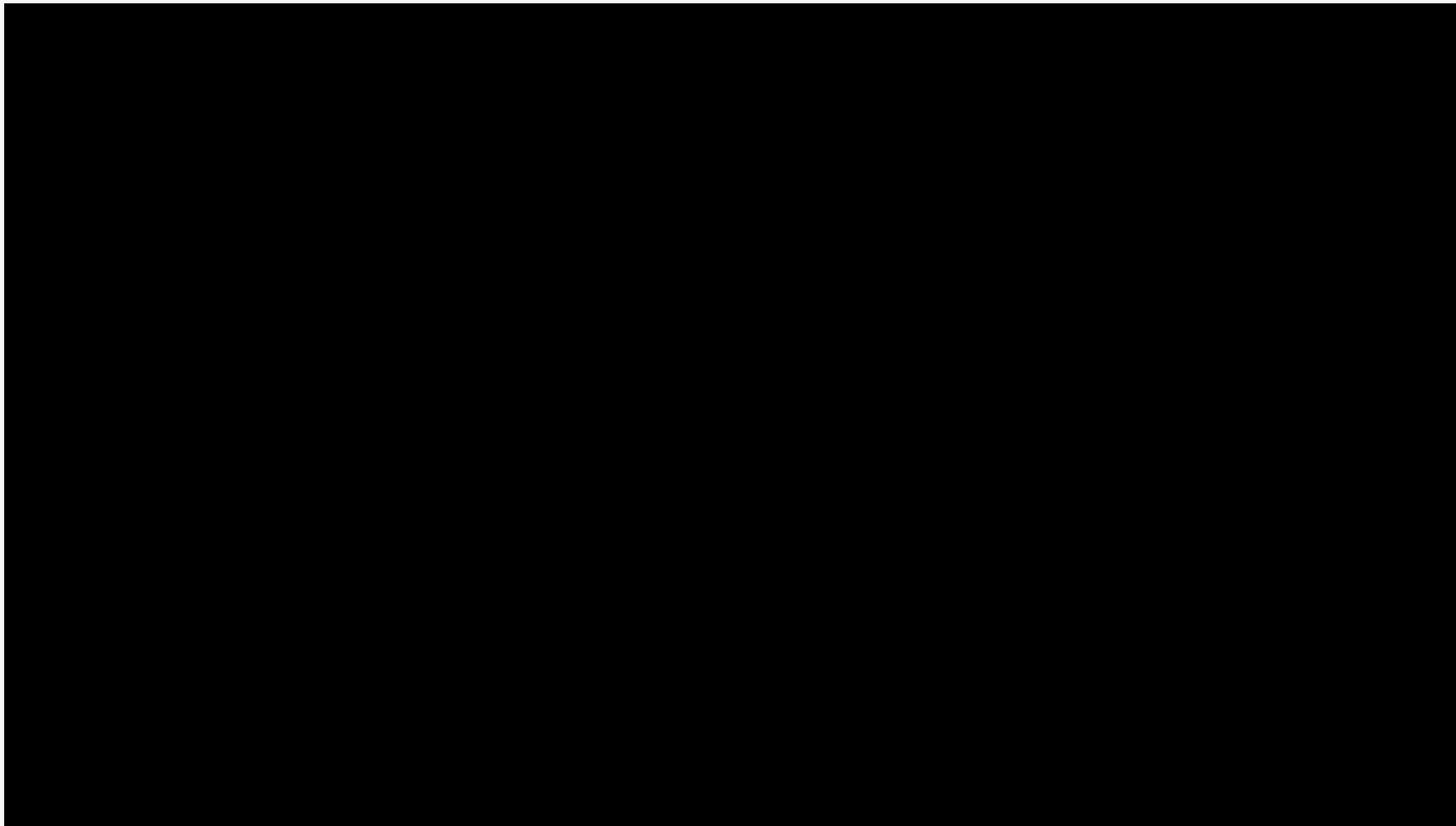
Occupational rehabilitation

Best practice occupational rehabilitation involves:

- employee participation in the planning process
- workplace focused assessment and program
- emphasis on ability by providing suitable duties
- proactive management and effective co-ordination
- rehabilitation activities aligned with recovery timeframes
- assistance from specialised rehabilitation professionals where required
- consideration of the return to work hierarchy.



ONE WORKER AT A TIME
Learning from Martin McCabe





Health benefits of good work

People in work are generally healthier because:

- work is a source of wellbeing, personal growth, fulfilment, autonomy and meaning
- job quality, employee health and an employee's ability to perform productively at work are closely linked
- employment and socio-economic status are the main drivers of social gradients in physical and mental health and mortality.

What is good work?

- safe
- meaningful/purposeful
- well designed
- engaging
- provides a collective sense of purpose
- uses an employee's knowledge and skills
- ensures each employee feels respected for their contribution
- ensures each employee understands what they do meets the needs of the organisation.

Guarding minds at work

1. Psychological support
2. Organisational culture
3. Clear leadership and expectations
4. Civility and respect
5. Psychological job fit
6. Growth and development
7. Recognition and reward
8. Involvement and influence
9. Workload management
10. Engagement
11. Balance
12. Psychological protection

www.guardingmindsatwork.ca

“A 21st Century approach to mental health means that the response from family, friends, workmates and health professionals is supportive and skilful. Everyone is equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond in a helpful way, the same as when someone sprains their ankle, has an asthma attack, faints or develops chest pain. Today, we’re uncertain about how to respond to distress and disturbance and naturally turn away. Tomorrow with the right information we could really help”

Prof. Patrick McGorry, Australian of the Year

For further information

- Ability at work – Tapping the talent of people with disability, APSC <http://www.apsc.gov.au/abilityatwork/index.html>
- Rehabilitation publications and further better practice information at www.comcare.gov.au
- 2010 Workers with Mental Illness: a practical guide for Managers at www.humanrights.gov.au
- Australian Network on Disability (AND)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine www.afom.racp.edu.au
- IMAS.help@Comcare.gov.au
- www.guardingmindsatwork.ca