

Konekt Psychological Services

Konekt offers an extensive range of psychological services for individuals facing challenges in returning to work following mental stress and/or psychological injuries. These services are designed to identify and overcome barriers to facilitate a sustainable return to work outcome.

Konekt's psychological services include;

- ▶ Psychological Early Intervention Assessment
- ▶ Psychological Injury Management Return to Work, Same Employer
- ▶ Psychological Injury Management Return to Work, New Employer
- ▶ Injury Adjustment Counselling
 - Understanding and managing my emotions – anxiety and stress
 - Understanding my pain
 - Adjustment to change
 - Depression and chronic pain
 - Thinking and coping styles

Konekt Psychological Early Intervention Services

Konekt's Psychological Early Intervention services actively promote an early and sustainable return to work (RTW) for employees with a psychological injury or illness.

It is widely recognised and accepted that early intervention is considered to be the most effective strategy in improving RTW rates and reducing workers' compensation expenses. This is particularly true with psychological injuries.

Rapid response. Superior results.

In many cases there will be some considerable delay before notification of a psychological injury or illness. Accordingly, it is increasingly important that Konekt is able to act quickly to engage the injured employee and employer to increase the likelihood of a favourable RTW outcome.



Analysis of more than 1,500 psychological injury Konekt cases over the past five years show that referrals received within six weeks of injury resulted in a return to work outcome in 94 per cent of cases compared with referrals received between 7-13 weeks which delivered a return to work outcome in only 88 per cent of cases. The trend continued downwards the greater the delay to referral as shown in Table 1 and Chart 1.

Table 1: Return to work outcomes by delay to referral

Delay to referral	Psychological injury Referrals for RTW Services	% of Psychological injury RTW referrals	% RTW outcome	% no RTW outcome
0-2 Weeks	150	10%	94%	6%
3-6 Weeks	334	22%	94%	6%
7-13 Weeks	316	21%	88%	12%
14-26 weeks	226	15%	84%	16%
27-52 weeks	200	13%	81%	19%
53-104	141	9%	79%	21%
> 104 weeks	137	9%	60%	40%
Total	1504	100%	85%	15%

Chart 1: Return to work outcomes by delay to referral



Konekt's Psychological Early Intervention Services focus on providing the best outcomes by delivering care rapidly. The service is designed to assist the employee in achieving an early recovery and a timely and safe return to work, while lowering overall workers' compensation costs through reduction in lost time injuries and lengthy claims.

A Konekt psychological consultant will conduct a meeting onsite with the employee and employer with 48 hours of referral.* During this meeting any barriers will be identified and an agreed return to work (RTW)

suitable duties plan will be drafted. The final RTW plan will be in place within 72 hours of referral.* The service is suitable for work and non-work related psychological injuries.

Konekt's most experienced psychologists are assigned to Early Intervention Services. These consultants have extensive experience in providing best practice early intervention services across a range of psychological conditions. They have demonstrated success in achieving excellent return to work outcomes for psychological injuries and illnesses.

Collaborative service model

Research has shown that clinical service providers who view return to work as a positive treatment option, work collaboratively with third party funders, and communicate regularly with employers, improve return to work outcomes and reduce workers compensation costs by up to 50 per cent.¹

In delivering the best possible outcomes, Konekt adopt a collaborative approach which includes the treating medical practitioner, the employer and any other relevant third parties.

How it works

The Konekt consultant will use a range of psychometric assessment tools to identify barriers that can delay return to work.

Once barriers have been identified strategies to overcome these barriers can be put in place via a complete Return to Work case management program, or by accessing Konekt's Injury Adjustment Counselling.

Return to work, same employer

Following the initial assessment, the Konekt psychologist will complete a Workplace Assessment for individuals who have the capacity to perform some duties. The Workplace Assessment is conducted onsite with the employer and the employee with the objective of determining suitable employment opportunities by measuring risks and matching the abilities of the injured employee to the workplace. The output will be a staged RTW Suitable Duties Plan.

Throughout the case management process Konekt will foster strong communication

between the employee, employer and treating medical practitioners through the setting of agreed goals, doctor case conference and communication checkpoints.

In cases where the Konekt case manager feels that the employee would benefit from participation in one or more of the Injury Adjustment Counselling these will be recommended with a view to achieving an upgrade in medical capacity.

Return to work, new employer

It's not always possible for employees to return to their pre-injury employer. In these cases Konekt is able to offer their return to work, new employer service – a specialist redeployment program that assists injured employees secure new employment.

Unlike traditional return to work, new employer services, Konekt pulls together complementary consultant skills to manage different phases of the return to work program. The first task undertaken will be a vocational assessment to ensure realistic

new employment goals are set, barriers are identified, any training needs are understood, and a job seeking strategy is developed.

The Konekt skills training program will often follow the vocational assessment and is designed to prepare the participants for active job seeking.

The job seeking and employment placement phase of the program will be facilitated by one of Konekt's Employment Engagement Officers – experienced recruiters with specialist skills in matching job vacancies with participants through reverse marketing and canvassing of prospective employers. The Employment Engagement Officer will use Konekt's custom developed database to match the candidate with available roles and prospective employers.

Injury Adjustment Counselling

Konekt's Injury Adjustment Counselling is designed to overcome the most frequently encountered psychological barriers in achieving a return to work outcome. The programs look



to address the root cause of an individual's issues and are designed to complement a return to work plan, not interfere with it.

The five Injury Adjustment Counselling modules available are:

- ▶ Understanding and managing emotions – anxiety and stress
- ▶ Understanding my pain
- ▶ Adjustment to change
- ▶ Depression and chronic pain
- ▶ Thinking and coping styles

Each Injury Adjustment Counselling module consists of five 60-90 minute one-on-one educational sessions with a Konekt registered psychologist. During these sessions the participant and the Konekt registered psychologist will discuss the barriers to returning to work, identify triggers for undesirable behaviour/responses and together will develop a personal action plan incorporating coping strategies. The Injury Adjustment Counselling personal action plans can be made available to the treating medical practitioner so they can be

incorporated in treatment plans. The ultimate objective of participation in Injury Adjustment Counselling is to achieve an upgrade in capacity to work with a sustainable return to work being the ultimate goal.

Understanding and managing emotions – anxiety and stress

Many people struggle to manage their emotions, anxiety and stress, this can be compounded in cases where people are also overcoming a physical illness, injury or are experiencing pain. Konekt's Understanding and Managing Emotions, Anxiety and Stress module provide participants with a detailed understanding of the triggers for their feelings and practical coping strategies.

Understanding my pain

This program is designed to increase a participant's awareness and understanding of the physiological process of their pain and the role they can play in aiding healing. Areas addressed include pathophysiologic responses to injury, the biopsychosocial model of chronic pain, and strategies individuals can engage to interrupt these pain cycles by taking initiative and control.

Adjustment to change

The purpose of this program is to assist the participant cope and adjust when they are facing considerable change. Topics discussed include Stages of change, effects of change, adjusting to changes in health and coping styles.

Depression and chronic pain

During this program the individual will be educated about the role depression and chronic pain play in the recovery from injury and how they can better manage the effects.

Thinking and coping styles

During this program participants will evaluate how their thinking style impacts their feelings and behaviours and how this affects their ability to manage pain. Individuals will focus on identifying negative distortions in their thoughts and learn how to construct more realistic alternative responses.

* '48 hours' refers to two business days, '72 hours' refers to three business days

References

1 Bernacki, E., Toa, X., & Yuspeh, L. (2005). A preliminary investigation of the effects of a provider network on costs and lost time in workers compensation. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 47, 3-10.



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