

Rehab of the Injured Worker

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Learning Objectives

- Identify the monetary impact of workers' compensation injuries
- Discuss how the length of time can affect medical and indemnity costs.
- List six indirect costs of a workers' compensation claim.
- Summarize the ways that preventive and proactive strategies can minimize disability, lost time and claim costs.

How Big Is The Problem?

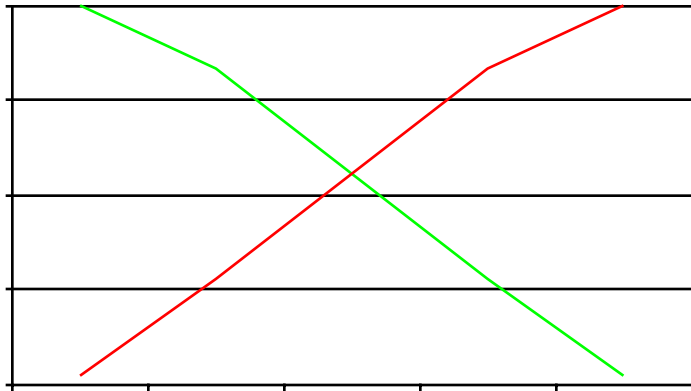


- The tip of the iceberg
- Direct costs
 - Medical
 - Indemnity

...But What Sunk the Titanic?

- Indirect costs are often 4-5 times direct costs
- Overtime
- Temporary help
- Lost production
- Training
- Administrative costs
- Errors

Time Is The Enemy



As time passes the cost of medical and indemnity rises while the likelihood of returning to gainful employment diminishes.

TIME Is Of The Essence For Return To Work

A study, Return-to Work Approaches for People with Soft-Tissue Injuries, found that **time is everything** when it comes to treating sprains, strains and getting employees back on the job.

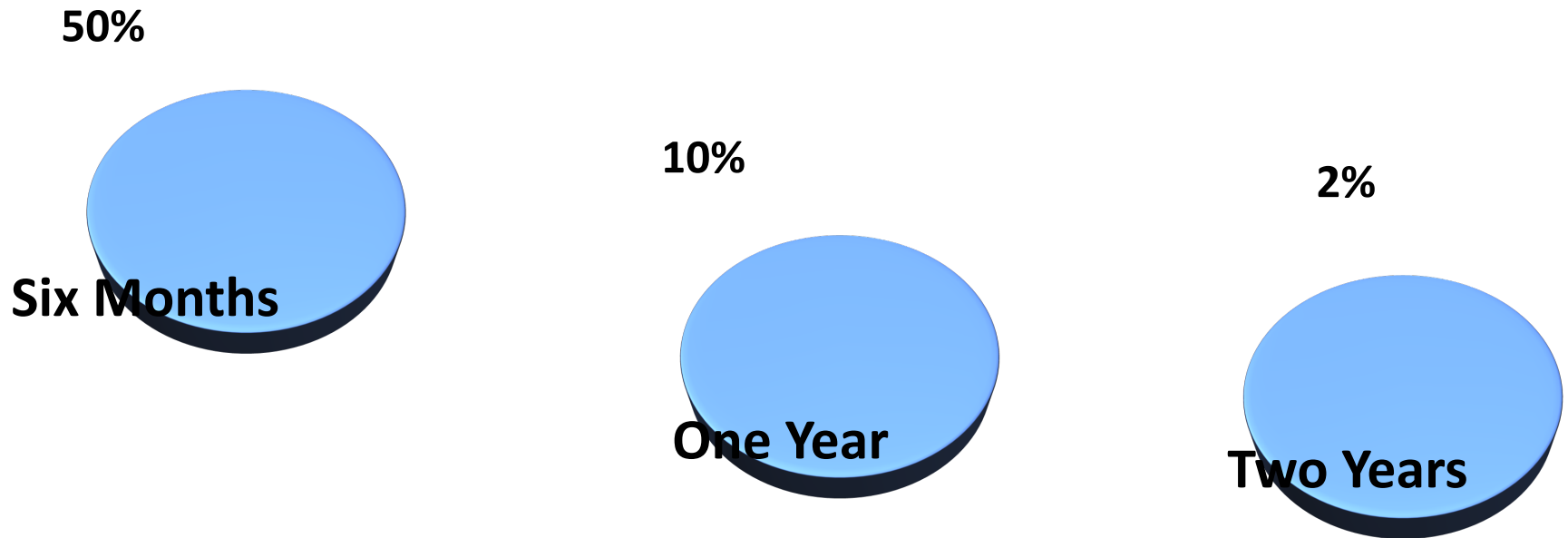
National Institute of Disability
Research 2002

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"I was on workers comp for 18 months to recover from a job injury. After that, I had to go to rehab to cure my addiction to daytime TV."

Return to Work Rate



***50% Never Return to Work
After 6 Months***

Info from Bureau of Labor Statistics – 2014

Bureau of Labor Stats

- Private industry employers reported 2.8 million workplace illness and injuries in 2019
- There were 888,220 nonfatal injuries and illnesses that caused a private industry worker to miss at least one day of work
- 30% of injured employees have loss days at work
- 80-90% of injured workers would rather return to work than collect disability

What Contributes to Excessive Lost Time Costs?

- Lack of contact with injured worker
- Ignored/lack of understanding of psycho-social factors
- delays in diagnosis or treatment
- Poor coordination between claims, injured employee, and workplace
- Lack of available modified work duty

Upjohn Study (1989)

- Strict safety practices and injury management techniques such as coordinated medical care, monitoring treatment and providing modified work can produce a lost time rate of 30-50% below the expected norm.

Post-Injury Management

- Accident investigation
- Early reporting
- Prompt quality medical care
- Provide modified work option
- Open communication with injured employee

Treatment of the Injured Worker

- Assess impairment
- Assess function
- Assess functional abilities



Keys to Treating Pain

- 
- 1 Utilize pain education and incorporate them into the care
 - 2 Include Biopsychosocial approaches to care
 - 3 Incorporate graded exposure in the treatment of pain
 - 4 Promote Independence vs. Dependence

Utilize Pain Education and Incorporate Them Into the Care

- Literature is indicating that there is a significant value in the education of healthcare consumers about “pain”

JAMA Neurology July 2018 Volume 75, Number 7:
“Effect of Pain Neuroscience Education Combined
With Cognition-Targeted Motor Control Training
on Chronic Spinal Pain - A Randomized Clinical Trial”

- Key Results: Combining pain neuroscience education with cognition-targeted exercises does not affect brain gray matter morphologic features but can reduce pain and disability and improve mental and physical functioning and pain cognitions in people with non-specific chronic spinal pain.

Incorporate Biopsychosocial Approaches to Care

- Motivational interviewing
- Meaningful activities
- Aerobic conditioning to release endorphins
- Stress reduction
- Sleep hygiene
- Gratitude journaling

Incorporate Graded Exposure in the Treatment of Pain

- The exposing of a patient to a specific situation which they are fearful
- This exposure is gradual and hierarchical, in which you introduce an exercise or activity which elicits very little fear and gradually introduce more fearful situations

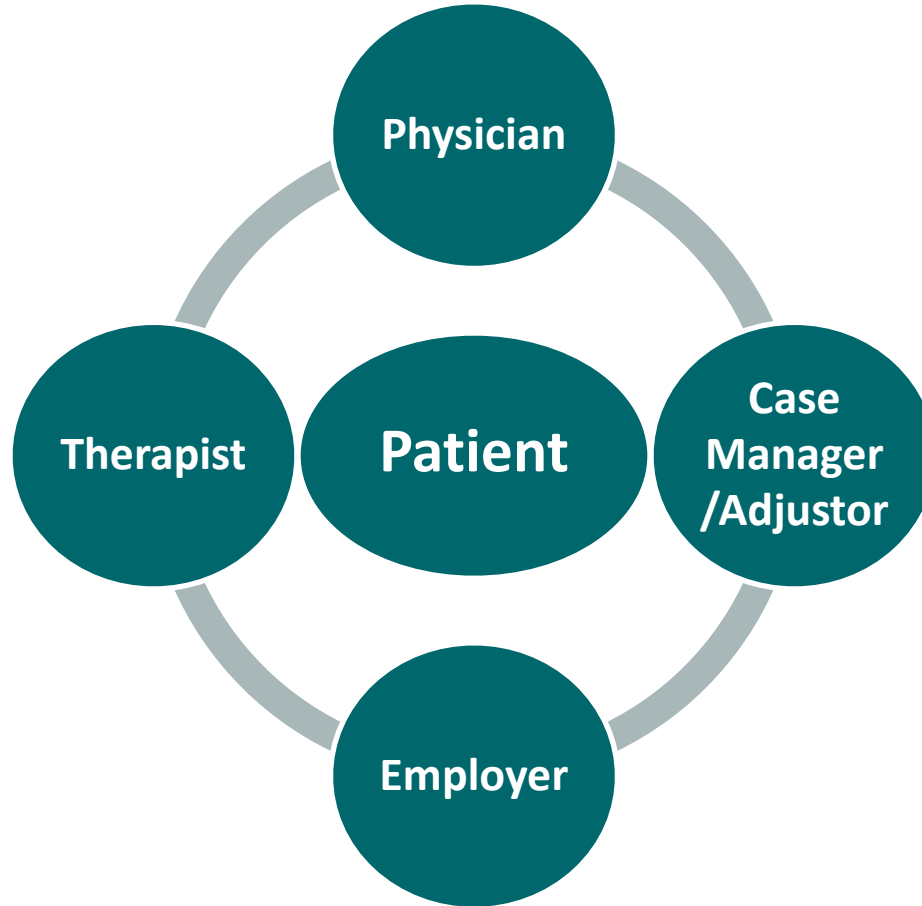
Graded Exposure



Promote Independence vs. Dependence

- Effective use of manual therapy and modalities when appropriate
 - long term “passive” based approaches can create dependency
- Active early movement and incorporation of functional based activities
- Aerobic activity – well supported in research to impact aerobic capacity and endurance for return to work

Key to Successful Outcomes - Communication



Communication With Health Professionals

- Tell us what you need to know
- Job descriptions
- Modified work available
- Work modifications
- Talk to your employees

Modified Work

- Can save 20% or more on workers' compensation costs
- Ideal way to rehab the injured worker
- Prevents behavioral changes
- Role of 1st line supervisor



Employee Input

- Encourage early reporting
- Watch for employee modification of workplace
- Develop incentive plans
- Safety/ergonomics committee

Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Employee selection
 - POET Testing
- Safety
 - Ergonomic analysis and modification
 - Education
 - Back safety, safe lifting education, falls/trips/slips prevention

Full Spectrum



Questions?

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Thank You!

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