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RETAIN REPORT

Retaining Employment
and Talent After
Injury/Illness Network



The RETAIN Report

February 2021

Welcome to the February 2021 issue of The RETAIN Report —the internal e-newsletter for awardees of the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Initiative. Please feel free to share this subscription link with other RETAIN team members as appropriate.

Please Note: Several of the links in this newsletter take you to resources housed in the RETAIN Online Community (ROC). If you do not have access to the ROC and are a member of a state team, please visit RETAINTA.org and click "Request an Account" in the right-hand sidebar.



Focus on Mental Health and SAW/RTW

Each year, nearly one in five adults in the United States experiences a mental illness—a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior, or mood and that deeply impacts their day-to-day living and may also affect their ability to relate to others. Understanding how mental illness impacts workers recovering from a recent injury or illness and the role that RETAIN can play is critical to promoting successful employment outcomes. Be on the lookout for *SAW/RTW After a Mental Injury or Illness — Strategies to Support RETAIN Participants with Mental Health Conditions*, coming soon! This new RETAIN brief will provide an overview of the impact of mental health illnesses and injuries on employees in the workplace and highlight strategies that RETAIN programs can implement to support the SAW/RTW goals of participants who are experiencing mental health challenges.



Data for Decision Making: Blog Series Capstone

You made the decision to be data driven. You developed your strategic questions and selected your data sources. You went through the data cleaning process. You are now ready to analyze your data and develop data visualizations that answer your

strategic questions. The fourth blog post in our Data for Decision Making series — [Data Analytics, Predictive Analytics, and Other Statistical Analysis](#) —walks you through various types of data analysis that will help you draw actionable insights and conclusions that can be used to improve program implementation and strengthen continuous quality improvement efforts.



ICYMI: Webinar Review

In case you missed them, recent RETAIN TA webinars focused on employer arrangements and accommodations to support SAW/RTW. Check out [Enabling Work: Accommodations as an Essential Element of the RTW Process](#) to hear Anne Hirsh from the Job Accommodation Network and Lou Orslene from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) discuss services and tools that can be used in developing and sustaining a coherent accommodation process; and [SAW/RTW During Recovery: The Basics of Arranging Temporary or Transitional Work Assignments](#) to hear Dr. Jennifer Christian provide an overview of one of the major strategies for reducing work disability: temporary or transitional work assignments.



For Your Insight (FYI)

Have you been keeping up with RETAIN TA's [For Your Insight: Research and Practice From the Field](#) releases? These monthly FYI updates highlight relevant research for RETAIN states and summarize key takeaways that may benefit program implementation. Each summary includes a link to an article, resource, or formal abstract. The [latest FYI](#) focuses on supervisor support of job accommodations, employee concerns about return to work and job security amid recessions, and a tool for health care providers for facilitating return to work. Have a research article, brief, or report on promising or evidence-based SAW/RTW practices we should highlight in an upcoming FYI? [Email us!](#)

Quotes From the Field

The [December RETAIN Report](#) shared RETAIN state project teams' experiences in Phase 1—and now it is ODEP's turn! Here is what the RETAIN Field Project Officers (FPOs) had to say when reflecting on Phase 1:

"When I think of the California team, I'm reminded of just how far they've come. Each RETAIN grantee has been on a journey, and California's is uniquely their own. I've appreciated their willingness to accept that and continue moving forward at their own pace and in their own way. I've also been grateful that they are so willing and open to feedback and assistance. It has made all the difference."

- Nadia Mossburg, FPO, California RETAIN FPO

"I think it's pretty remarkable that Connecticut recognized the need to pivot to make their model more successful; all of this happened during a worldwide pandemic. They have shown that mistakes can lead to success."

- Andy Arias, FPO, RETAIN-CT FPO

"Working with Kansas while they implement Phase 1 of the RETAIN grant continues to be an exciting endeavor. The RETAINWORKS team used the various TA resources and their own ingenuity to support Kansans in staying at or returning to work during this challenging year. Like all of us, Kansas had to adjust how it conducts its work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the RETAINWORKS team worked together to find service delivery solutions to ensure continuing support for workers in their state."

- Melissa Turner, FPO, RETAINWORKS (Kansas) FPO

"Whenever I connect with the Kentucky team, I am always astounded by the amount of energy they bring and the sheer volume of truly top-notch work they consistently accomplish. And they do it all with a wonderfully Kentucky style of inclusivity that I'll forever try to emulate."

- Meredith DeDona, FPO, RETAIN Kentucky

"I enjoy reflecting on Minnesota's Phase 1 journey because it is a great story to tell. The Minnesota RETAIN team thawed out the layers of implementation barriers to claim their 'Star of the North' status by pulling all their partners together to develop a solid foundation of support upon which RETAIN can thrive. They discovered that this solidarity in partnership between health and employment systems is a key to successfully serving the community they live in. I have no doubt that this discovery will lead the Minnesota team in serving Minnesota in many more serendipitous ways."

- Savi Swick, FPO, Minnesota RETAIN

"The vision and drive of the Ohio team are simply unmatched. From the start of Phase 1, they understood and internalized the very essence of

RETAIN and worked tirelessly to realize RETAIN's potential. When it became clear that they were planning not just for Phase 2, but for a Phase 3 beyond the federal demonstration, I knew this team would make amazing things happen."

- Meredith DeDona, FPO, Ohio RETAIN

"The Vermont team tackles every task with an energetic spunk, clarity of purpose, and a healthy dose of humor. Their focus on details in the early stages of Phase 1 helped them construct a strong infrastructure from which to grow their program. I once characterized them as the 'Little Engine that Could,' and I'm now compelled to amend that to the 'Little Engine that Will!'"

- Meredith DeDona, FPO, Vermont RETAIN

"One of the things I've appreciated most about the Washington team is their perseverance. No matter what happened outside RETAIN, they adapted, they adjusted, and they continued working to find not just a way through, but a better way forward. That sort of commitment is indicative of the type of services they now provide to their RETAIN participants."

- Meredith DeDona, FPO, RETAIN Washington



Mark Your Calendar

Webinar: Looking at SAW/RTW from the Other Side...Let's Talk About What Works and Why, Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 2:00 p.m.– 3:15 p.m. EST

Opportunity is everywhere. The key is for each team member—whether a physician, nurse, RTW Coordinator, or case manager—to know the therapeutic use of “self,” an approach that is integral to the therapeutic relationship and occupational outcome in occupational therapy practice. This session will focus on three successful return-to-work and retention cases from an occupational therapist's perspective. **Tonia Peterson, MA, LPC, CRC, OTR/L**, a program manager with the Michigan Rehabilitation Services Business Network Unit, will discuss these three cases and the key components that moved the cases forward to retention, including communication, job analysis, transferable skills analysis, and reasonable accommodations. Lastly, Ms. Peterson will also discuss the need for empathy and continuity from a personal perspective and discuss how a company's wrong turn allowed her to assist

participants to recognize their strengths and actively engage in the return-to-work process.

[Register now!](#)

This publication was prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy and Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) state grantees, by the American Institutes for Research under DOL Contract Number 1605DC-18-F-00429. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to DOL, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

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