

RETAIN Solutions: Return to Work (RTW) Coordinator Edition

December 1, 2020

Subject Matter Expert: Derek Shields

Moderator: Ann Outlaw

In this session, RTW Coordinators discussed barriers they currently face in their projects and identified solutions for overcoming these challenges. State-identified challenges and active/proposed solutions from the field are presented in the list below.

Challenges Identified	Active/Proposed Solutions
<p>Virtual Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships • Building technological capacity 	<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoom meetings, or platforms with video options, are more beneficial than VoiceONE meetings with participants or referral sources. • Be present and reduce distractions. • Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues (yours and those of the participant or partner). • Allow time for questions. • Listen for content and emotion. <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DocuSign® is a useful tool for getting required paperwork from participants. • Provide technology, such as a loaner laptop, to participants to achieve Stay at Work (SAW)/RTW goals like attending virtual job interviews. • Develop a checklist to help you and the participants know how to prepare and ask participants how they prefer to connect. • Have a plan B for connection (such as a phone number) if a virtual platform doesn't work or if a participant doesn't have internet access. • Coordinate participant check-in at the time of the medical appointment. • Implement a reminder system, such as text messaging or calendar invitations, to connect with participants.
<p>Worksite walk-throughs for accommodation recommendations are not allowed as businesses implement strict policies for outside visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to send pictures of their workspace to conduct an accommodation assessment. • Partner with an assistive technology lending library to provide accommodations to participants

Challenges Identified	Active/Proposed Solutions
Building and maintaining relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) swag to health care providers and employers to increase awareness. Advertise on billboards to thank providers. • Ask employers to sign off on the attestation webpage as stakeholders in RETAIN. • Partner with a statewide employee assistance program. • Distribute the RETAIN newsletter. • Share infographics showing snapshots of success. • Invite a trusted champion to endorse the program. • Provide refresher training to existing partners. • Plan follow-up at the time of initial outreach.
Diminished business demands at employers due to the COVID-19 pandemic	When possible, conduct face-to-face meetings with employers; reportedly these have more impact on employers' awareness of the fiscal benefits of SAW/RTW.
Referrals to the program	Develop a universal screening process instead of a referral process. Participants complete a brief screening to determine their eligibility for RETAIN (on tablets given to primary care practices). This process reduces the burden on providers.