

Communications Needs & Approaches with RETAIN Participants: Technical, Functional, and Emotional Messaging

Technical, Functional, and Emotional Benefits

The Technical, Functional, and Emotional (TFE) Model helps you adapt your message to the interests, desires and concerns of RETAIN participants.

- **Technical benefits** refer to the program components.
- **Functional benefits** refer to how the program works and how to engage with the program.
- **Emotional benefits** refer to what people feel or experience when engaging with the program.

By breaking down your response to address different aspects of participant concerns, you can be more precise in your communications and better address their needs.

Key Message: Technical

If a participant has **technical concerns**, he or she may be asking questions like:

- How does this program work?
- Who can participate in this program?
- What do RETAIN services include?

You may want to consider key messages such as:

- **Coaching and Coordination Services**
“We can help you return to work sooner by connecting you with different services.”
- **Workplace Accommodations**
“We coordinate with your employer to provide reasonable stay-at-work accommodations.”

About TFE Messaging

Use this handout to determine an effective approach to address participant concerns. The Technical, Functional, and Emotional (TFE) Model presents three key messaging perspectives with examples of common concerns. Be sure to tailor your responses to each participant and highlight your program’s successes.

- **State-Specific Eligibility Requirements**

“We share and explain any state-specific eligibility requirements.”

Key Message: Functional

If a participant has **functional concerns**, he or she may be asking questions like:

- What is the enrollment process?
- What does this program require of me and my employer?
- Will I have to dedicate a lot of personal time to getting started?

Consider emphasizing key messages such as:

- **Return-to-Work (RTW) Coordination**

“We can help you with this process. We have translators and other supports available to help.”

- **Enrollment Assistance**

“Our program will help guide you through the enrollment process.”

- **Privacy Protections**

“We do not share any personal information without your approval.”

Key Message: Emotional

If a participant has **emotional concerns**, he or she may be asking questions like:

- What will my employer think of my participation in this program?
- Will I have to find a new job?
- Will involvement in this program cause me added stress or anxiety?

You may want to consider focusing on key messages such as:

- **Reinjury Risk Reduction**

“We can help you stay at or return to work safely with the tools and supports you need.”

- **Improved Quality of Life and Reduced Stress and Anxiety**

“Getting back to work can help relieve the stress of not working. RETAIN can connect with your employer and provider to create a plan so you can safely return to work.”

- **Job Retention or Job Search Assistance**

“RETAIN’s coaching and coordination services can help you keep your job or find a new one if necessary.”