

RETAIN Return to Work Coordinators CoP—Notes

Facilitators: Darcee Simon, Deja Torrence

Subject Matter Experts: Leslie Ethridge, Tonia Peterson

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Darcee and Deja welcomed participants and went over the agenda for today's CoP. Afterward, the facilitators introduced the subject matter experts for this session: Leslie Ethridge and Tonia Peterson.

Leslie and Tonia said they were excited to part of today's CoP. Leslie then told participants they would start things off by watching a video of a roleplaying scenario involving a medical review between an RTW coordinator and an injured employee getting ready to return to work. After the video ended, participants were placed into breakout rooms to discuss the scenario and any observed strategies.

Insights from Breakout Room Four on Scenario One

Participants from Breakout Room Four shared the following thoughts regarding the scenario:

- Vermont thought it was interesting that the employee did not want her medical information known to her employer, which is common. All the employer needs to know is what her restrictions are.
- Minnesota also noted that the employee was uncomfortable sharing info with her employer, but liked how the RTW case manager reassured her and kept the strategy going. Minnesota thought this was an effective strategy.
- Kansas thought the RTW coordinator was thorough and informative and allowed the client to make informed choices. Kansas said they want to empower their clients and make them feel like they are in charge.

After the breakout ended, participants engaged in a large group debrief.

Large Group Debrief for Scenario One

- One participant said asking the types of question that the RTW coordinator asked in the scenario can help build trust and relationships with the client.
- Another participant noted that asking these types of questions enables a RTW coordinator to see how educated the client is regarding the RTW process.

Leslie said these types of questions also allow an RTW coordinator to see the story behind the story—in other words, what is going on socially and psychologically? Are there underlying family issues or trips coming up? What are the little details on why a person is stalling?

Leslie then asked participants about other medical questions they may ask in this scenario. Participant responses included:

- Great opportunity to discuss RTW goals.
- Ask if the patient was given a certain set of restrictions and where they are in their recovery process.
- What the pain level is and how much has it improved.

Leslie added:

- Do they know the RTW requirements?
- Do they know who manages the RTW process for employees?

Leslie said the more educated you are on the injured employee's medical condition, the more questions you can ask the employee to help them prepare for their conversation with their employer.

After the large group debrief, participants watched a second roleplaying scenario. This time, the scenario involved the RTW coordinator and employer discussing the potential RTW of an employee.

Insights from Breakout Room Four on Scenario Two

Participants from Breakout Room Four shared the following thoughts regarding the scenario:

- Conversation between the RTW coordinator and employer usually do not flow that seamlessly.
- The employer is always thinking about the legal ramifications.
- One participant noted that they try to inform the employer about who they are and that they are on the same team and how that process can go left or right.
- Another participant stated they email the employer to put things into writing, The email states who they are and mentions accommodation plans. This puts the next step in the employer's hands.

After the breakout ended, participants engaged in a large group debrief.

Large Group Debrief for Scenario Two

Tonia noted the importance of RTW coordinators doing their homework, making sure to identify themselves when reaching out to an employer and stating what services that you provide. RTW coordinators have dual customers, the client and the business. RTW coordinators should know the employer's mission statement, which helps keep the employer accountable during discussions.

Tonia then asked participants: Why is it important for participant to know who you are?

- One participant stated it is because RTW coordinators help facilitate the process and help the employer understand the importance of bringing the employee back to work.

Tonia then asked participants what they would do if an employer states they want the employee back at 100 percent.

- A participant noted that the 100 percent rule is illegal and that employers cannot enforce it. Knowing the ADA regarding accommodations is very important.