

How Employers Can Reengage Injured Workers

Written by Willie Henning,
DMI EH&S Consultant

Happy New Year Everyone! As we roll into another year, I would like to applaud your efforts in reducing hazards and preventing injuries. Unfortunately, we still experience claims related to employee injuries, but proper management of these cases can help employees get back to work sooner and reduce the overall costs related to the claim. A written Return to Work program along with close involvement in the case has continued to produce better outcomes for both the injured party as well as the college. Our goal is to reduce and eliminate injuries on our campuses and hopefully any injury will be minor. However, should an injury require restrictions or time away from work, bringing folks back to work and continual management of their care should become top priority. The following information is provided by our service partners a Safety National and provides some great tips on successful case management.

Reengaging an injured worker during their return to work depends on the culture embedded within an organization. We explore how consistent, compassionate leadership, paired with quality care and communication, can create a lasting impact.

Employee engagement can reduce costs, improve quality, and enhance morale in the workplace. When executed well, a reengagement strategy can also lead to lower absenteeism, higher productivity, and stronger employee loyalty. So, how can organizations help support these goals?

“Reengagement is not a program; it must be built into the foundation of a company’s culture for return-to-work success,” said Sean Fitzsimmons, Large Casualty Workers’ Compensation Claims Manager at Safety National. “When employees feel seen and supported, the entire culture of safety and wellness is strengthened.”

Below are elements to potentially include when building a culture of reengagement.

Foundational Leadership

Strong organizational leadership begins with a clear, consistent vision for employee health and well-being and ensuring that vision is effectively communicated. This includes setting expectations around both wellness and injury management.

Effective leaders make wellness and safety a part of everyday work life, not just an annual initiative. They demonstrate visible support for injured workers and the company’s return-to-work programs. The tone for care and engagement starts at the top, with leaders modeling empathy and integrity at every step and reinforcing key messages throughout the organization.

Building a Culture of Connection and Care

When injured employees feel heard, needed, and valued, their engagement remains strong, even during the recovery process. Active involvement and consistent communication from leadership reinforce an employee’s sense of belonging and purpose. Consider treating an injured employee as you would a newly hired employee. Where new employees continue to be trained and developed, the same standard is best applied to injured workers.

Provided by your....

| *Collaborators in Risk Management* |



Regular check-ins to discuss progress demonstrate genuine care and help maintain connection. Leaders can also seek feedback on wellness and safety initiatives to foster inclusion. Celebrating small recovery milestones further shows employees that they are appreciated and supported on their journey back to work.

High-Quality Care and Recovery Management

Providing quality care is essential to the reengagement process. This begins with ensuring access to high-quality resources such as on-site medical care, nurse triage lines, and web-based health tools. Employers should partner with providers who prioritize patient communication and psychological support, while setting clear expectations and performance standards to ensure effective collaboration.

Continuous communication and early intervention can lead to faster and more positive outcomes. Employers should begin return-to-work discussions early and maintain frequent contact throughout recovery. Offering modified duty options can help an injured employee maintain a sense of normalcy. Ongoing communication among HR, management, and medical providers ensures a coordinated recovery process and helps identify barriers, including psychosocial factors, that may delay a successful return to work.