

**School:** ATEC – Live Courses  
**Course:** Maximizing the Rehab Therapy Pathway in Work Comp  
**Faculty:** Robert Townsend, Injury Prevention Executive, Bardavon  
Josh Schuette, Physical Therapist & Executive Director, Brooks Rehab  
Dawn Hays, Claims Supervisor, UFG Insurance  
Kurt Leisure, Vice President Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory  
Eric Erickson, Medical Manager, BNSF Railway

### **Summary**

The course titled "Maximizing the Rehab Therapy Pathway in Work Comp," moderated by Rob Townsend and featuring a panel of experts, focuses on improving the rehabilitation process for injured workers in the workers' compensation system. Rob Townsend opens the discussion by highlighting the inefficiencies in the current rehabilitation pathway and the need for more effective and efficient treatment methods. He emphasizes the goal of the panel: to explore ways to enhance the rehabilitation experience for injured workers.

### *Panelists' Backgrounds:*

- Kurt Leisure: Vice President of Risk Services for the Cheesecake Factory, with extensive experience in risk management within the restaurant industry.
- Josh Schuette: Physical therapist and executive director of workers' compensation at Brooks Rehabilitation, with hands-on experience treating injured workers.
- Eric Erickson: Case manager for the railroad industry with a background in treating injured workers in outpatient settings.
- Dawn Hayes: Claims supervisor with UFG Insurance, bringing insights from the insurance industry's perspective on workers' compensation.

### *Improving Rehabilitation Efficiency and Effectiveness:*

- Creating a Supportive Environment: Kurt emphasizes the importance of creating a family-like, supportive environment even before an injury occurs. This involves trust between management and staff, and continuous support and communication after an injury.
- Communication: Josh and Dawn stress the significance of early and continuous communication between all stakeholders—employers, injured workers, and insurance carriers—to ensure smooth rehabilitation and return-to-work processes.

### *Measuring Therapy Outcomes:*

- Data and Metrics: Dawn highlights the importance of using data to identify outliers and trends in therapy outcomes. However, she notes that data alone does not tell the whole story and must be supplemented with personal communication and understanding of individual circumstances.
- Engagement and Follow-up: Kurt discusses the need for continuous engagement with injured workers, including follow-up communication and personalized support to encourage a timely return to work.

#### *Return-to-Work Strategies:*

- Detailed Job Analyses: Kurt explains how detailed job analyses and modified duty options help create accurate return-to-work plans. This involves understanding the physical demands of each position and ensuring that the injured worker can meet these demands safely.
- Addressing Physical and Mental Recovery: Eric and Josh emphasize the importance of considering both physical and mental aspects of recovery. They note that job satisfaction and the injured worker's mental readiness are crucial for a successful return to work.

#### *Enhancing Collaboration among Stakeholders:*

- Open Communication: The panel agrees that open communication between employers, providers, and payers is essential. This includes regular updates and discussions about the injured worker's progress and any adjustments needed in their treatment or return-to-work plan.
- Training and Education: Dawn suggests that better training and education for all stakeholders can improve cooperation and understanding of the rehabilitation process.

*Conclusion:* The panel concludes by summarizing the key takeaways: the need for a holistic approach to rehabilitation, the importance of continuous communication and engagement, and the benefits of collaboration among all stakeholders. They stress that creating a supportive environment and addressing both physical and mental recovery aspects are vital for maximizing the rehabilitation therapy pathway in workers' compensation. This comprehensive discussion provides valuable insights into improving the rehabilitation process for injured workers, ensuring they receive the best possible care and support throughout their recovery journey.

#### **Learning Objectives**

1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the rehabilitation therapy pathway for workers' compensation.

2. Identify key factors that contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of rehabilitation programs.
3. Explore strategies for improving communication and engagement between employers, providers, and injured workers.
4. Examine the importance of addressing both physical and mental aspects of recovery in rehabilitation therapy.
5. Learn best practices for creating an environment that facilitates a safe and timely return to work.

### **Primary Takeaways**

1. Effective rehabilitation requires a holistic approach that includes both physical and mental recovery components.
2. Communication and engagement from employers significantly impact the injured worker's motivation and recovery.
3. Detailed job analyses and modified duty options can facilitate safer and quicker return-to-work outcomes.
4. Collaboration among providers, employers, and payers is essential for successful rehabilitation.
5. Continuous support and follow-up from management help maintain the injured worker's connection to the workplace and improve recovery outcomes.

### **Course Outline**

- 1) Introduction and Panelist Backgrounds
  - a) Welcome and introduction by Rob Townsend
    - i) Overview of panel discussion topic
    - ii) Introduction of panelists and their backgrounds
  - b) Panelists' Initial Insights
    - i) Kurt Leisure: Vice President of Risk Services, Cheesecake Factory
    - ii) Josh Schuette: Physical Therapist and Executive Director of Workers' Compensation, Brooks Rehabilitation
    - iii) Eric Erickson: Case Manager, Railroad industry
    - iv) Dawn Hayes: Claims Supervisor, UFG Insurance
- 2) Key Discussion Points
  - a) Improving Rehabilitation Efficiency and Effectiveness
    - i) Importance of creating a supportive environment
    - ii) Role of management in engaging injured workers
    - iii) Strategies for early and continuous communication
  - b) Measuring Therapy Outcomes

- i) Current metrics and their limitations
  - ii) Importance of data and personal communication in evaluating progress
  - iii) Balancing physical and mental recovery aspects
  - c) Return-to-Work Strategies
    - i) Detailed job analyses for accurate return-to-work planning
    - ii) Importance of modified duty options
    - iii) Addressing the injured worker's concerns and fears
  - d) Enhancing Collaboration among Stakeholders
    - i) Encouraging open communication between employers, providers, and payers
    - ii) Understanding and addressing each party's needs and expectations
    - iii) Training and education for better cooperation
- 3) Conclusion
- a) Summary of Key Takeaways
    - i) Holistic approach to rehabilitation
    - ii) Importance of communication and engagement
    - iii) Collaborative efforts for successful outcomes
  - b) Final Thoughts and Questions
    - i) Panelists' closing remarks
    - ii) Q&A session with the audience

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