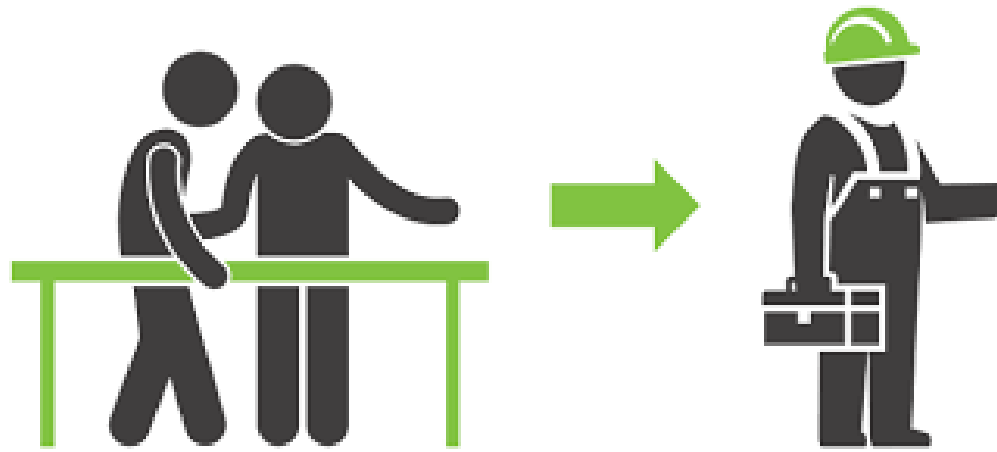


# Outpatient Occupational Therapy Vocational Services Overview

Matt Miller

*Occupational Therapist*

*Nova Scotia Rehabilitation and Arthritis Centre*



# Vocational Rehabilitation

**Goal** = To reduce work disability and assist clients in returning to meaningful roles (Work and Academics) (Escorpizo et al., 2011)



# 5 Essential Elements of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

1. An engagement or re-engagement to work \*(or academics/ unpaid work) as an outcome
2. Along a work-continuum
3. Involving health conditions or events leading to work disability
4. Patient centered and evidenced based
5. Multidisciplinary

# Importance of Vocational Rehabilitation Within ABI

- ▶ Those living with ABI often have difficulties returning to work/academics
  - ▶ Resulting from changes in:
    - ▶ Cognition
    - ▶ Mobility
    - ▶ Fatigue etc.
- ▶ ~40% of individuals with ABI RTW after 1-2 years (van Velzen et al., 2009)
- ▶ Unemployment rose from 14% pre-injury to 71% post injury (Brooks et al., 1987)
- ▶ 75% of patients with ABI are working age (Foy, 2014)
- ▶ Importance of employment
  - ▶ Social environment, sense of purpose, quality of life, life satisfaction, economic impact (McFadden et al. 2010; Pendleton, 2006; Saunders, & Nedelec, B. 2014; Soderback & Ekholm, 1992)

# Today's Presentation: OT Vocational Services

## What is the Vocational Goal?

- ▶ Readiness
- ▶ 1. Exploring New Employment/Retraining?
- ▶ 2. Returning to a Previous Position at Work?
- ▶ 3. Academics?



# Readiness

- ▶ **Assess readiness for work/school**
  - ▶ Realistic goals/ setting expectations
    - ▶ Don't want work/school to compromise recovery
  - ▶ Managing ADLs/IADLs? (Jang et al., 1998; Johansson & Bernspang, 2001)
  - ▶ Self-Ax of readiness to return to work after stroke (Stroke Network of Southwest Ontario)
- ▶ **What if they're not ready to return to work/school or are unsure?**
  - ▶ \* Safely test and understand tolerances
    - ▶ Activity tracking
    - ▶ \*Simulate work/school related activities to test tolerance and develop strategies
      - ▶ Depends on goal: e.g., try to learn a new skill, take a course, go for a walk, etc.
  - ▶ Ready to prepare for a return to work/school
    - ▶ Build consistency in routine and build activity tolerance over time.

# New Employment: Funding

## ▶ Exploring New Employment/Retraining

### ▶ Canada Pension Plan-Disability Benefits

- ▶ Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- ▶ Discussion re: limits regarding earnings

### ▶ Employment insurance (Ei)

- ▶ NS Works: establish funding support for various re-training programs
  - ▶ Skills Development Program
  - ▶ Self-Employment Benefit Program (GO3D)

### ▶ Income Assistance (IA)

- ▶ Connect with case worker
  - ▶ Educate to Work Program
  - ▶ Self Employment support

# New Employment: Connect with Resources

- ▶ **Local Nova Scotia Works Employment Service Centers**
  - ▶ E.g., Teamwork Cooperative, Opportunity Place, Employment Services Society, etc.
- ▶ **Career Counselling**
  - ▶ In depth assessments to guide a career path
- ▶ **Job Development**
  - ▶ Resume/cover letter, interview preparation, networking with employers
- ▶ Imperative as I am **not** trained as a Career Counsellor and don't offer these services





# New Employment: Find a Fit

- ▶ Provide guidance regarding whether employment opportunities may be a match with functional abilities.
  - ▶ **Optimize fit with work demands**
    - ▶ Modifications/ accommodations to address limitations and restrictions
      - ▶ e.g., No heavy lifting, flexibility to take breaks, etc.
      - ▶ Gradual increase in hours if possible
  - ▶ **Strategies/functional interventions**
    - ▶ Interventions focused on the individual to optimize performance
      - ▶ e.g., Compensatory cognitive strategies, activity pacing, metacognition, deep breathing strategies.

# Case Study: New Employment

- ▶ Right MCA stroke many years ago
  - ▶ Persistent difficulties with fatigue, memory and attention.
  - ▶ Worked with day program to develop strategies previously.
  - ▶ Previously worked in sales
- ▶ Goal to build their own business
  - ▶ Worked with client to review pacing and compensatory cognitive strategies
  - ▶ Once managing daily tasks: connected with GO3D program through NS Works- Teamwork Cooperative.
    - ▶ Basic living allowance and startup costs while also receiving CPP-Disability Benefits.
  - ▶ Liaise with Teamwork + client
    - ▶ discuss strategies to manage the GO3D program
    - ▶ Feasibility of completing business tasks based on client's abilities



# Return to Work: Funding

- ▶ **Returning to Previous Employment**
  - ▶ **Short-Term or Long-Term Disability/Illness Benefits**
    - ▶ Liaise with Case Worker or Rehabilitation Consultant
      - ▶ Gradual RTW trial with accommodations
      - ▶ New/modified roles
  - ▶ Letters of support for continued benefits

# Return to Work: Assessment of Client

- ▶ 1. Assessment of the person
  - ▶ Background information/Social History/Collateral
  - ▶ Physical abilities (liaise with physio)
    - ▶ Ambulation, ROM, strength, tone, sensation, pain, fatigue, etc.
  - ▶ Cognitive/Perceptual abilities (liaise with Neuropsychology)
    - ▶ Valuable to have neuropsychological Ax or Cognitive Evaluation
      - ▶ Attention/concentration, memory, executive functions, visual/perceptual status,
  - ▶ Daily Function
    - ▶ ADLs, IADLs
  - ▶ Psychosocial/Mental Health (liaise with social work/psychology)
  - ▶ Communication abilities (liaise with speech)
  - ▶ Medical status (liaise with medical team)

# Return to Work: Assessment of Job Demands

- ▶ 2. Assessment of the Occupation and Job Demands
  - ▶ Description of the job/job demands
    - ▶ Using Information from interview and JDA if available
  - ▶ Job analysis
    - ▶ Physical
      - ▶ (lifting, carrying, push/pull, sitting, standing, walking, climbing, balancing, etc.)
    - ▶ Cognitive
      - ▶ (multitasking, reading/writing, verbal/written communication, attention, memory, organization, decision making etc.)
    - ▶ Psychological/emotional
      - ▶ (emotional/confrontational)
    - ▶ Safety requirements
    - ▶ Responsibilities and expectations
      - ▶ Deadlines, Independence required, working with public. Supervision, etc.
    - ▶ Work Schedule (hours, shifts, breaks, overtime etc.)

# Return to Work: Assessment of Environment

- ▶ Utilize info from Job Site Assessments (JSA) when available.
- ▶ Employer/client
- ▶ Work environment
  - ▶ Using information from interview and Job Site Visits
  - ▶ e.g., hot/cold, inside/outside, quiet/loud, etc.

# Return to Work: Medical Restrictions

- ▶ **Define Risks-** Identify any medical restrictions with the medical team
  - ▶ Risk of harm where performance error could result in injury to the worker or those around them
  - ▶ Things the client should not do
    - ▶ e.g., No lifting boxes over 20lbs
    - ▶ e.g., No carrying corrosive chemicals given balance and fine motor difficulties

# Return to Work: Limitations/Barriers

## ▶ Identify Barriers/Limitations

- ▶ May not pose risk of harm to the worker but interferes with their ability to perform essential work duties.
- ▶ Things the client should not do frequently
  - ▶ e.g., headache from screen sensitivity
  - ▶ e.g., fatigue from standing at a desk as a sales manager
  - ▶ e.g., difficulty concentrating/ remembering information in team meetings



# Return to Work: Address Limitations/Barriers

## ▶ Intervention

- ▶ Strategies focused on the individual
- ▶ e.g.,
  - ▶ Compensatory cognitive strategies
  - ▶ Activity pacing
  - ▶ Building activity tolerance
  - ▶ Metacognition
  - ▶ Deep breathing strategies

# Return to Work: Build Gradual RTW Trial

- ▶ Liaise with client and key stakeholders to establish a RTW plan
  - ▶ e.g., worker, manager/supervisor, HR, etc.
  - ▶ Gradual progressive process
  - ▶ Modifications/ Accommodations
    - ▶ Individualized to mitigate risk and accommodate limitations as needed.
  - ▶ Remaining on benefits until back to duties
  - ▶ Ensure all parties agree with plan



# Case Example- Return to Work

Posterior lentiform Nucleus Stroke - Works in IT.

## Assessment of client

- ▶ Decreased fine motor dexterity
- ▶ Difficulty ambulating (used dictus)
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Decreased attention and memory (especially when fatigued)

## ▶ Assessment of Job

- ▶ 8 hour/day x 5 day per week with overtime occasionally
- ▶ Working at computer in office setting
- ▶ Project deadlines and presentations
- ▶ Leads IT team- meetings supervision/oversight
- ▶ Software tasks

# Case Example- Return to work

## ▶ Build tolerance

- ▶ Developed daily routine around work schedule
- ▶ Compensatory cognitive strategies
  - ▶ To-do lists, alarms, reminders, decrease clutter, control environment, etc.
- ▶ Test/track ability to work at computer
  - ▶ Fatigue and fine motor abilities
- ▶ Enrolled in online IT course
- ▶ Practiced presenting at home

## ▶ Liaise with Short Term-Illness

- ▶ 12-week gradual RTW Plan (OT check in weekly)

## ▶ Accommodations

- ▶ Work from home initially
- ▶ Flexible breaks
- ▶ No overtime during gradual RTW
- ▶ Not required to lead meetings initially (review after 6 weeks)
- ▶ Not solely responsible for meeting project deadlines during RTW
- ▶ Meet at end of 12 weeks to discuss possible re-integration of duties.

# Employee's Rights

## Nova Scotia Human Right's Commission - Duty to Accommodate

- ▶ “Employers must not discriminate against employees based on protected characteristics, such as disability. An employer has what is called a “duty to accommodate, to undue hardship.”
  - ▶ E.g., shorter work hours, changing job duties, or providing equipment that will let a person continue to work.
- ▶ Factors that influence undue hardship include:
  - ▶ Size of organization
  - ▶ Role of the employee within the organization.
    - ▶ The larger the organization, the greater is the ability to accommodate. Accommodation does not have to be perfect, but it should be reasonable.
- ▶ An employee also has a duty in the accommodation process to provide sufficient medical information to show how his or her medical condition affects his or her ability to do the job.
  - ▶ If an employee does not provide this, the employer may not need to accommodate the employee.

# Return to Academics

- ▶ What is the Goal?
  - ▶ University/ Community College
  - ▶ High school
  - ▶ Adult Learning programs/GED
    - ▶ e.g., NSCC, Bedford Forsyth Education Centre, etc.

- ▶ Readiness to return to school
  - ▶ Learn a new skill
  - ▶ Test ability to study/retain information
  - ▶ Simulate your day as if attending school



- ▶ Look into program requirements
  - ▶ Fulltime/part-time
  - ▶ In person/ online

# Academic: Funding/ Program Requirements

- ▶ Funding Sources
  - ▶ Department of Community Services/Income Assistance
    - ▶ Educate to work program
  - ▶ Employment Insurance
    - ▶ Skills Development Program
  - ▶ Student Loan
    - ▶ Nova Scotia Grant for Services and Equipment
  - ▶ Bursaries/scholarships/grants

# Return to Academics

- ▶ Connect with School's Disability Support Centre/Accessibility Centre
  - ▶ e.g.,
    - ▶ Dalhousie, NSCC, CBBC Career College Saint Mary's, Acadia, St.FX
    - ▶ Citadel High, Bedford Forsyth
- ▶ Learning Accommodations
  - ▶ e.g.,
    - ▶ Additional time
    - ▶ Different testing formats (e.g., MC)
    - ▶ Quiet space
    - ▶ Note taking support
    - ▶ Visual aids for learning (e.g., pictures, diagrams)



# Return to Academics Intervention

- ▶ **Strategies to manage cognitive and physical difficulties**
  - ▶ Compensatory cognitive strategies
    - ▶ e.g., memory aids
  - ▶ Fatigue management/pacing
    - ▶ e.g., Planning, prioritizing, pacing, organization etc.
- ▶ **Learning/Study Strategies**
  - ▶ Internal Memory
    - ▶ e.g., Mnemonics
  - ▶ Attention
    - ▶ e.g., Modify environment, refocus

# Case Study Return to Academics

- ▶ Goal to Return to Academics to complete program related to Electrical Work
- ▶ History of concussion
- ▶ Neuropsychological Assessment Completed
  - ▶ Impairments noted in short term memory, organization, fatigue, sensitivity to screens/noises
- ▶ Neuropsych Recommendations for Accommodation:
  - ▶ 60% course load spread throughout 3 years
  - ▶ Use of sunglasses, headphones or a hat as needed.
  - ▶ Priority seating at the front of the class- away from windows.
  - ▶ Visual aids (e.g., pictures, diagrams, charts) and/or verbal context (e.g., elaborations, associations, mnemonics).
  - ▶ Provide audio alternatives to reading when possible and provide class notes
  - ▶ Connect with a tutor to support throughout the program.
    - ▶ Consistent check ins regarding deadlines.
  - ▶ Exams in a quiet room and breaks during
  - ▶ Alternative testing formats or aids for tests/exams (e.g., open book, multiple choice)

# Case Study Return to Academics

## ▶ Develop Strategies

- ▶ E.g., Review material prior to class.
- ▶ Study material in the order that you learned it.
- ▶ Highlight or draw a box around important information.
- ▶ Make meaningful associations with the material.
- ▶ Maximize repetition of material.
- ▶ Begin studying for exams/tests early and set deadlines for studying and completing assignments.
- ▶ Utilize phone/agenda to track important information as well as set reminders regarding the start time for classes, meetings, studying that day etc.

## ▶ Connect client with School's Accessibility Center

- ▶ Outline steps to access accommodations
- ▶ Outline steps to access accommodations
- ▶ Write letter of support outlining need for accommodations.
- ▶ Access supports through funding:
- ▶ NS Grant for Services and Equipment Through Student Loan.
  - ▶ Funding for tutoring, note taking.

## ▶ Monitor Progress and Support as Needed!

# Vocational Outpatient OT Service at the NSRAC

- ▶ Ambulatory clients aligned with the Rehabilitative and Supportive Care Portfolio
  - ▶ Those connected with:
    - ▶ ABI
    - ▶ SCI/Neuro
    - ▶ MSK/Amputee
- ▶ Eligible in any zone across Nova Scotia
- ▶ Virtual care options
  - ▶ Telecare
  - ▶ Zoom for Healthcare

# Referral



## Occupational Therapy

### VOCATIONAL OUTPATIENT SERVICES REFERRAL FORM

Fax to: 902-473-1384

Department use only: Date Received: _____ (YYYY/MON/DD)	Priority: <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Referral Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Inpatient: _____ (Services)	D/C date: _____ (YYYY/MON/DD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Outpatient: _____ (Services)

Diagnosis / Relevant Medical Information (including date (YYYY/MON/DD) of injury / illness)

Cause of injury:  Workplace  MVA  Fall  Assault  Medical Event / Condition  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Funding:  LTD  CPP  Income Assistance  WCB Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 If known, please include end date for current funding source (YYYY/MON/DD): \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Client's Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

Education:  Less than secondary  Post-secondary  Community College  
 University  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Education Goal / Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date for return to work / school (YYYY/MON/DD): \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License:  Yes  No License Classification: \_\_\_\_\_

Disciplines Involved:  Occupational Therapy  Physiotherapy  SLP  Psychology  
 Neuropsychology  Social Work  Physiatry  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Referral Source:

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of referral (YYYY/MON/DD): \_\_\_\_\_



Referral Forms

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(Form ID: NS\_VOSRF)

# OT Vocational Service

- ▶ Clients who are experiencing barriers in returning to work as the result of physical and/or cognitive impairments from an injury or illness.
- ▶ Intended for individuals who require supports for returning to work **in addition** to their Primary Care Practitioners or their available Employer/Employee Support Program/Human Resource support.

# OT Vocational Service

- ▶ Provide information and recommendations regarding the return-to-work process
- ▶ One to one support for navigating readiness to return to work
  - ▶ Assess current activity tolerances
  - ▶ Identify potential work restrictions and limitations
- ▶ Establish a gradual return to work plan including potential job modifications to problem solve functional barriers.
- ▶ Liaise with Employers, HR representatives, insurance providers etc. to ensure an effective return to work plan is developed.

# Vocational Employment Support

- ▶ Clients who require assistance in determining and accessing appropriate community-based services to support their vocational needs.
- ▶ Assist clients to identify and connect with existing community-based employment agencies that offer services like employment skills training, resume/cover letter development, job search skills, and administration of interest inventories.
- ▶ **\*\*\*\*\*Service does not provide vocational/career counselling.**
  - ▶ Connect with community resources that provide detailed career counselling
  - ▶ Once an employment opportunity is identified, we will work with the individual to develop an appropriate vocational plan that matches their current functional abilities.



# Vocational Academic Support

- ▶ Clients previously enrolled or looking to enroll in school, who are unlikely to successfully transition without vocational services after changes in health/function.
  - ▶ Assist with exploring opportunities for post-secondary education/training
    - ▶ Explore academic options (e.g., liaise with school counsellors etc.)
    - ▶ Connect with resources to support funding needs

# Vocational Academic Support

- ▶ Assist in liaising and connecting with the School's Accessibility Center/ learning strategist
- ▶ Assist in determining and requesting appropriate accommodations and support for returning to school.
- ▶ Develop strategies to support academic success

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# Questions