

Using the Clinical Framework to help my recovery and return to work

What is the Clinical Framework?

The *Clinical Framework for the Delivery of Health Services* (Clinical Framework)¹ is a set of five principles for healthcare practitioners to use when delivering services to you. Research shows that using these principles in practice leads to better health and work participation outcomes for workers with compensable injuries.

Why is it important for me?

Although developed for healthcare practitioners, these principles can also empower workers to influence their own outcomes with respect to their recovery and returning to work. This fact sheet provides you with information to do that.



Five principles to help my recovery and return to work

1. Ask yourself, how effective is my treatment?

Recovery is not just about the restoration of your injury and symptoms. Recovery is also about being able to perform your normal activities, including work. So, when thinking about the effectiveness of your treatment, ask yourself:

- is my treatment helping me to return to my normal activities, including work?
- can I see improvement being made? Or, is my progress stagnating or becoming worse?
- am I aware of the normal course of recovery for my injury (e.g. how long recovery may take)?

If you are uncertain about the answers to these questions, talk to your GP and healthcare provider.

2. Speak up early, your whole situation matters

Healthcare practitioners are encouraged to consider your whole situation during assessment and treatment planning. Research shows that taking a holistic perspective (or a biopsychosocial approach) leads to better outcomes. There are many things that impact our health and influence our recovery, including getting back to work. Examples of these include:

- the level of support you are receiving at work
- the offer of duties suitable for your medical capacity
- other medical conditions you are living with
- your own thoughts about your injury, prognosis and recovery

If there are circumstances that are impacting on your recovery and return to work, seek out a support person to work out ways of overcoming these things early. Support people may include your GP, treating healthcare provider, injury management coordinator (employer), workplace rehabilitation provider (if engaged) or your employer's insurer.



3. Your knowledge empowers

You are the greatest influence over your recovery. You are the best person who knows about you and your circumstances. Understanding that you are a partner with your health practitioner can help you influence your own recovery. Health practitioners are encouraged to work with you to:

- educate you about your injury
- set expectations with you about the normal course of recovery
- learn strategies to help you manage your injury (or setbacks) as independently as possible
- learn strategies that support your recovery and return to the workplace

If you would like further assistance, talk to your GP and healthcare provider.

4. Know where you're headed

When you understand where you are headed, it helps evaluate how you are travelling. When healthcare practitioners develop goals for treatment with you, it helps both of you understand how you are progressing, what's working well and what might need to change. Goals should be functional, work-specific and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed).

Goals should also be directed at returning to work. Returning to suitable work is good for health and therapeutic to recovery. Ensuring that goals are directed at returning to work, suitable to your level of capacity, will help you recover.

If you are uncertain about your goals, talk to your GP and healthcare provider.

5. Your treatment should be informed by evidence?

The treatment your health practitioners deliver to you should be informed by the best available evidence. Ensuring there is evidence to support your treatment means that you are provided with healthcare that is suitable and clinically proven.

If you want more information about what treatment is being offered to you, talk to your GP or healthcare provider.

¹Transport Accident Commission and WorkSafe Victoria 2012, *Clinical Framework for the Delivery of Health Services*, Geelong: Victorian Government.