

Programme Modules

Module A: Effective disability management programmes

In this overview, participants will examine the field of disability management, the rationale for establishing a disability management programme, various structures for providing a return-to-work capacity within an organisation, and the process followed in setting up a disability management programme or analysing an existing programme.

Module B: Introduction to return-to-work coordination

Topics covered include the elements of the plan; the roles of people involved in the process ranging from medical service providers to coworkers; types of accommodations; and the hierarchy of return-to-work options.

Module C: Physical impairments, rehabilitation services and return to work

Participants will obtain a basic understanding of the body systems (respiratory, pulmonary, etc.); treatment providers and the type of information that they are likely to provide; and the impact of physical impairments on individuals and their work.

Module D: Mental health issues, rehabilitation services and return to work

A brief overview of mental health issues in the workplace is provided along with a more in-depth focus on stress and depression. Participants will explore symptoms, treatments and disability aspects of stress and depression and strategies for assisting individuals with stress- and depression-related illnesses to return to work. Disabilities that may have a mental health component and the biopsychosocial impact of disabilities will be considered.

Module E: Job analysis

Different approaches to job analysis are examined and participants will be provided with skills and knowledge relating to the job analysis process from the perspective of disability management.

Module F: The role of assessment

Participants will examine the different types of assessment and consider how return-to-work coordinators can identify qualified assessment professionals and interpret their assessments. Medical diagnoses, functional capacity assessments, and vocational assessments will be discussed.

Module G: Communication and interviewing skills

Participants will explore the communication skills that form the basis of the interview and how they are used together to create an interaction in which the returning worker becomes an active partner in the return-to-work process. Communication techniques for formal interviews and informal discussions will be considered including those that involve supervisors and health care providers.

Module H: Interviewing and helping skills

Interviewing strategies are explored as is their contribution to a problem-solving process in which Return to Work Coordinators identify barriers to return to work, resources that might be helpful in the process, and options that might be part of an integrated plan. Effective interviewing skills are essential in carrying out the three-stage model of helping that is presented in this module. The difference between helping and therapy is considered along with how and when to refer clients for professional counseling. It is recommended that participants take Module G before Module H unless they have had a recent course in communications skills.

Module I: Legislation and occupational rehabilitation

Participants will examine relevant legislation and the requirement for accommodation as it applies to workers with disabilities. Acts such as safety, privacy and health information will also be discussed. Commissions such as the HSE and Commission of Equality and Human Rights will be covered.

Module J: Workers' compensation and return to work

Please note this module covers the workers' compensation system in North America and will not be delivered in the UK. If required this module can be taken online through NIDMAR Canada.

Workers' compensation income, services, and requirements play a crucial role in returning an employee who has incurred an occupational injury or illness to the workplace. This module explores the knowledge required to provide information about income replacement to employees; to interact with workers' compensation representatives about funding for treatment, rehabilitation and services such as counseling, special equipment or adaptations to the work station, gradual or part-time returns, and training; to identify available expertise within the workers compensation organisation; and to fulfill any Board requirements.

Module K: Introduction to conflict resolution

The skills and knowledge required to analyse conflicts and to develop strategies for satisfying the interests of all stakeholders will be covered in this module—with a specific focus on return-to-work situations. The steps in resolving conflicts are explored including initially getting people to the table to discuss and define the problem and, as interests are identified, considering ways to expand the benefits that are available as part of the solution.

Module L: Insurance and other benefits

The workshop covers income protection, Employers' Liability insurance, motor insurance, private medical insurance, sickness benefits and other relevant state benefits. Government programmes and community organisations that might provide assistance to workers with disabilities will be discussed.

Module M: Problem-solving with organisations

The module covers a range of facilitation skills such as clarifying issues or dealing with obstruction—skills that Return to Work Coordinators will use in return-to-work case meetings involving the employee, supervisor, union rep or other service providers, and in Disability Management Committee meetings. These group techniques are related to a problem solving process that can be used to move the

return-to-work process forward or to deal with issues arising from the programme in general.

Module N: Disability management in unionised organisations

The purpose of this module is to examine the role unions play in disability management. Dispute resolution in a union setting will be explored. The Trade Union Disability Alliance will be covered.

Module O: Disability and diversity in the workplace

The purpose of this module is to examine diversity issues including attitudes towards minorities and people with disabilities, to consider how diversity issues can affect a return to work, and to explore strategies for dealing with cultural differences during the return to work process. Common components of diversity programmes will be outlined and the interaction between diversity programmes and disability management programmes will be examined.

Module P: Occupational Rehabilitation from a human resources perspective

The human resources strategy of an organisation will influence the benefits that are provided to employees—including assistance with return to work. Benefits and benefit plans and their relationship to disability management will be considered. Policy and procedure development, alternate dispute resolution and committee processes will be explored.

Module Q: Management and organisational skills for Return to Work Coordinators

Participants will review and analyse their organisational skills including planning, delegating, negotiating, budgeting, and time management. Many return-to-work coordinators must obtain the cooperation of people who are not under their direct supervision and a variety of leadership, planning and communication skills will help in achieving goals and objectives.

Module R: Assistive technology and accommodation

(Prerequisite: Module E: Job analysis) This module covers the process of implementing low to high tech assistive technology in the accommodation of a worker with disabilities. The process includes evaluating the needs of the employee; researching and choosing the most appropriate equipment, software or other job aid; researching and choosing the best supplier; developing a business case for the application; testing the technology and training the worker as necessary; maintaining the assistive technology; and evaluating the outcomes.

Module S: Managing change

This module is designed to enable participants to apply theories of change in practical ways. Issues of change management are examined from an organisational and individual perspective. The administrators of disability management programmes must be able to adapt to external changes ranging from the effects of new technology to new legislation and regulation. Internal policies and procedures will affect, and be affected by, the disability management programme. Individual returns to work may be influenced by changes within the organisation or by the effect of personal changes in physical and other capacities. A positive workplace culture and effective leadership can help individuals and organisations adjust to change.

Module T: Evaluating the return to work process and disability management programmes

(Prerequisites: Module A: Effective disability management programmes and Module B: Introduction to return-to-work coordination) Participants will consider client satisfaction surveys and other approaches to assessing the return-to-work process. An overview of techniques employed in evaluating programmes including matching outcomes to goals, benchmarking with other organisations and departments, programme audits and cost-benefit ratios will be provided.

Module U: Marketing and education in disability management and return to work

This module covers the planning and development of internal communications programmes aimed at creating support for disability management among management and workers, employees who might incur disabilities, and their coworkers. The requirement for external communications components is examined including education and information targeted to medical and other service providers.

Module V: Information management

Participants will explore what kind of programme and client information is collected, how it is collected and used, and what issues of confidentiality are involved. The applicability of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) is considered. Also examined will be the Return to Work Coordinator's role in collecting information on community services and resources, keeping professional skills and knowledge up to date, and researching information on an as needed basis.

Module W: Injury prevention and health promotion

This module provides an overview of safety programmes, approaches to ergonomics, and the implementation of wellness programmes. The interaction of such programmes with the disability management programme is considered. (This is not a substitute for a safety course.)

Module X: Professional conduct

Participants will identify and analyse situations in disability management where ethical issues might arise. The module will also examine how codes of ethics are developed and how they are used in dealing with ethical issues.

Module Y: Managing the return-to-work process

(Prerequisites: Module A: Effective disability management programmes, Module B: Introduction to return-to-work coordination, Module E: Job analysis, Module F: The role of assessment, Module G: Communication and interviewing skills, Module H: Interviewing and helping skills) This module covers the case management process including working with a return-to-work team that includes internal personnel and external service providers. The return-to-work process including assessment, return-to-work planning, implementation, monitoring and adaptation, and evaluation is examined.