



# VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND SERVICES

In the management of disability absence, vocational planning can include assessments or interventions designed to establish a plan member's ability to work in some capacity. Which services to use, and when to use them, are based on the unique circumstances of the disability absence. The following list of assessments and services are grouped based on the goals of the case management plan.



If the goal is to:

## Return the plan member to their job

The following assessments may be used to confirm functional abilities, identify ergonomic solutions and/or to increase a plan member's level of function.

### Functional Abilities Evaluation

A functional abilities evaluation (FAE), also called a Functional Capacity Evaluation, objectively measures a plan member's functional abilities to define their restrictions and limitations. The FAE involves a series of standardized tests with built-in reliability checks. The assessor observes the plan member's biomechanics and physiological responses to ensure they do not surpass their safe maximal limit.

The evaluation can take place over 1 or 2 days. The assessment can outline the plan member's general functional performance, performance comparable to a particular job, or the assessment can be a combination of both.

### Physical Demands Analysis

A Physical Demands Analysis (PDA), or job demands analysis, provides objective measures regarding the physical and environmental demands of a plan

member's occupation. This includes a description of both the essential and non-essential tasks, the job environment and the tools and protective equipment available.

The objective measures focus on the physical requirements of the occupation based on the strength requirements, frequency of tasks, physical activity and/or posture requirements. The measures can include, but are not limited to, standing, sitting, walking, stooping/bending, crouching, kneeling, crawling, lifting, carrying, pushing/pulling, reaching, handling, manual dexterity and stair climbing.

### Ergonomic Assessment

An Ergonomic Assessment is an assessment that takes place at the plan member's worksite. It provides detailed information regarding job tasks, the workstation and work environment, and compares this information to the physical abilities, stature, body type, and body proportions of the plan member. The report may include photographs of the workstation, task and workstation measurements including heights, weights and push/pull forces handled, workstation flow and work pace. The report typically includes recommendations to modify the work environment, job duties and/or workstation by suggesting strategies, assistive devices, technical aids and/or adjustable equipment.

**If the goal is to:**

## Improve the plan member's function

The following services may assist plan members in overcoming the effects of inactivity and loss of daily routines through programs focused on regaining mental and physical stamina and confidence in preparation for a return to gainful employment.

### **Reactivation/Functional Restoration**

Reactivation/Restoration is a 6-week vocationally focused program using a cognitive-behavioural approach. It is designed to gradually build up a plan member's mental and physical stamina, and resolve any issues that may be negatively influencing their return to work. The consultant will travel to the plan member's home for the initial meeting and will then engage the member in weekly sessions. The program may include an exercise-conditioning component at a local clinic and/or fitness centre. The goal of the program is to prepare the member for a return to gainful employment by the end of the program.

### **Chronic Pain Reactivation/Chronic Pain Functional Restoration**

Similar to Reactivation/Restoration, this is a vocationally focused program, using a cognitive-behavioral approach, but is focused on chronic pain management. It is usually 8-weeks in length. Each session teaches the plan member a new skill to help them to better manage their pain and improve their coping skills. The primary goal is to promote an active problem solving approach to managing chronic pain symptoms to prepare the member for return to work. The consultant will travel to the plan member's home for the initial meeting and will engage the member in weekly sessions. This program may include an exercise-conditioning component at a local clinic and/or fitness centre.

**If the goal is to:**

## Resolve workplace issues in order to facilitate a return to work

The following service may assist in facilitating the resolution of work situational issues.

### **Workplace Facilitation/Mediation**

Workplace Facilitation is a form of Alternate Dispute Resolution aimed at resolving workplace conflict with the objective of facilitating a plan

member's successful transition back to work. This approach requires the participation of the employer, the plan member and a trained facilitator/mediator who guides the participants through a structured problem solving process that emphasizes:

- Confidentiality;
- Focused communication;
- Expanding possible solutions;
- Eventual agreement or plan.

**If the goal is to:**

## Prepare the plan member for a return to an alternate occupation

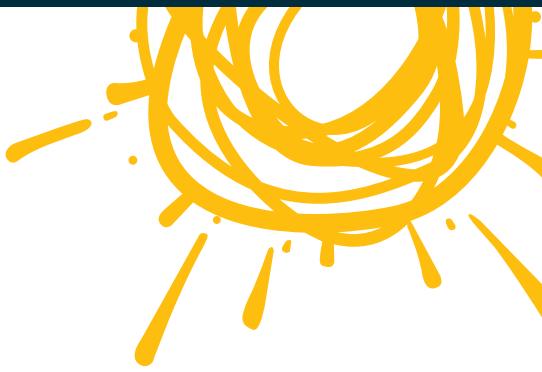
When a return to the plan member's pre-disability occupation is not possible, the following assessments can add value by identifying alternate occupational opportunities that are suitable based on the plan member's education, training, work experience, commensurate wage range and functional abilities.

### **Transferable Skills Analysis**

A Transferable Skills Analysis (TSA) is an assessment that determines if a plan member's existing skills could transfer to alternate occupations. It is useful when the member has a clearly defined set of skills and includes an analysis of their education, employment history, level of function and commensurate wage range. The TSA is based on a review of file documentation and typically includes a telephone interview with the plan member. Canadian wage ranges, occupational demand and labour market information is included to support the recommended alternative occupations.

### **Vocational Evaluation**

A Vocational Evaluation (VE) is used when the scope of the plan member's skills is not as clearly defined based on their education and/or work experience. For example, they may have worked in one job for many years or may not have completed high school. This assessment involves an in-person interview and a series of standardized tests in order to assess the member's interests, aptitudes, intellectual and learning abilities. The goal is to identify potential direct entry occupational options. If no direct entry occupational options are identified, the VE identifies if the member



has the ability to acquire new skills, through short-term training, that would enable them to perform the duties of another occupation.

### **Labour Market Survey**

A Labour Market Survey is a review of labour market trends, such as information on job availability, compensation, current job requirements, qualifications and work environment for a particular geographical area and/or a particular occupation.

Data is obtained from various sources including internet research, Stats Canada, employment databases and telephone interviews with local employers. This information may augment a vocational assessment and/or a transferable skills analysis where confirmation of the availability of alternate occupations within the workforce would be of benefit.

If the goal is to:

## **Prepare the plan member for re-entering the workforce after a long work absence**

The following services can enhance the plan member's job search skillset and build confidence when re-entering the workforce.

### **Job Search Training Program**

Job Search Training is a one-on-one tailor-made program that provides the plan member with the skills required to conduct an independent job search. It focuses on job search skills, not performing a job search for the plan member.

The training program can involve a task specific request (e.g. resume writing or interviewing skills only) or can include a comprehensive program with areas of instruction that may include (but are not limited to):

- Completing job applications
- Resume writing
- Cover letter and Thank You letter preparation
- References
- Post interview follow up
- Tips and strategies for successful interviewing
- Job search techniques including the hidden job market
- Information interviewing, and
- Tracking your job search

### **Work Placement/Volunteer Placement**

Volunteer Placements provide "real life" work experience (unpaid) when the plan member needs to solidify work behaviours and demonstrate their overall capability for work. This program may be initiated upon the completion of a job search training program, when alternate occupations have been identified but the plan member lacks the confidence or skills to initiate the application process related to paid work. A facilitator monitors the plan member's work performance such as attendance, initiative, dependability, ability to receive feedback, teamwork and employer satisfaction and helps to secure a reference letter for the plan member.

Life's brighter under the sun