



REHABILITATION FOLLOWING A SERIOUS INJURY

You or a member of your family has suffered a serious injury. Recovery from a serious injury may take weeks or months and the involvement of a number of health care providers to ensure that you maximize your recovery. The information below is designed to assist you in making informed choices about your care and participation in the rehabilitation process.

Patient/Client: As the patient, you are the most important member of your rehabilitation team and your active participation in your rehabilitation ensures that you receive the best care possible and make the most recovery. Ask questions about the experience and expertise of the professionals who will be working with you and ensure that you understand the treatments that are recommended and how they will benefit you.

Doctor: Your doctor is your primary medical practitioner and responsible for overseeing the medical and rehabilitation services that you receive while you are recovering. Depending upon the type and severity of your injury, your doctor may refer you to a medical specialist who will also assist in your recovery. It is important to ensure that your doctor is kept up to date on your recovery and rehabilitation through regular visits and reports from other professionals so that he/she can adequately monitor your needs.

Case Manager: A case manager or clinical coordinator is a regulated health care professional (registered nurse or occupational therapist) who is responsible for coordinating your rehabilitation, similar to a 'project manager'. The case manager will liaise with your doctor, therapists, insurer and lawyer on your behalf to ensure that information regarding your recovery is shared amongst the relevant professionals and that you receive timely, cost-effective access to rehabilitation services.

Occupational Therapist (OT): As a regulated health care professional, it is the role of the occupational therapist to assist you in returning to your activities of normal life. This may include personal care, homemaking activities, child care, leisure, community reintegration or returning to work or school. The occupational therapist may provide cognitive or physical-functional intervention that will maximize your recovery and help you return to your pre-injury activities as soon as possible.

Speech Language Pathologist (SLP): As a regulated health care professional, it is the role of the speech language pathologist to address any cognitive-communication difficulties you may be experiencing as a result of your injury. This may include difficulty with concentration, memory, understanding language, reading, writing, reasoning, or verbal planning and organization. The SLP will work with the occupational therapist and other members of your rehabilitation team to assist you in returning to your community, school or work following an injury.

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Physiotherapist (PT): As a regulated health care professional, it is the role of the physiotherapist to treat your physical injuries through a range of passive and active exercises that target your specific physical needs. The physiotherapist may also assist in establishing a community exercise program for you at a local gym or exercise facility to help you resume an exercise regime and maintain the physical progress you have made in your rehabilitation.

Psychologist: As a regulated health care professional, it is the role of the psychologist to assist you in adjusting and adapting to the serious injury you have suffered as well as helping you to set realistic goals for your recovery and return to pre-injury activities. In the case of brain injury, a Neuropsychologist may evaluate your cognitive abilities to help determine the nature and extent of your brain injury and provide direction to other professionals to ensure that you receive the appropriate rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation Aide: As you progress in your rehabilitation, you may benefit from the services of a rehabilitation aide who can assist with carrying out the strategies and techniques your rehabilitation team has recommended in your home, community or school. The Rehabilitation Aide is directed and supervised by regulated health care professionals such as an occupational therapist, speech language pathologist or registered nurse and provides opportunities for assisted practice between therapy sessions.

Vocational Counselor: As you progress through your rehabilitation, your treatment team may recommend the services of a vocational counselor to assist you in returning to work. Whether you will be returning to your pre-injury job or a new position, the vocational counselor will assist you in making the transition from home to work. The vocational counselor will also help you carry over any strategies or techniques that you have learned in your rehabilitation to the workplace so that you can maximize your work performance.

Insurer: If you have auto insurance, have sustained a workplace injury or have long-term disability benefits through an employer, your community rehabilitation expenses may be covered. The role of an insurance adjuster or adjudicator is to inform you of the benefits to which you are entitled following an injury as well as the limits of your insurance coverage. Your insurance carrier is also entitled to receive copies of the rehabilitation documentation issued by your rehabilitation team which will assist him/her in funding your rehabilitation expenses.

Lawyer: Depending upon the circumstances surrounding your injury, you may wish to access the services of a lawyer to advocate for you during the recovery and rehabilitation process. Legal services may include ensuring that you receive benefits to which you are entitled through insurance, assisting you in selecting health care providers with the relevant experience and expertise to treat your injury or pursuing any legal claims you may have with respect to compensation. As with regulated health care providers, it is important to ensure that your legal representative has the relevant experience to best advocate for you.