



behavioral health solutions



With many injuries, the psychological and emotional components can significantly impact the claim's progression and outcome. Our behavioral health services are designed to identify and address psychosocial barriers to help ease the return-to-work process and reduce litigation.

A unique role in the marketplace

Historically, case management focused heavily on the physical aspect of recovery. However, mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and stress can drastically affect the employee's ability to return to work and the duration of medical treatment. These cases require assistance from a specialist trained in the management of psychiatric disorders and skilled in teaching coping skills and improving an injured employee's resiliency. The expertise required to fill this role differs significantly from the skills of a registered nurse.

Our behavioral health specialist (BHS) can provide the expert assistance needed to help employees manage psychosocial concerns. The BHS also serves as a patient advocate, fostering a non-threatening, friendly professional relationship. In this role, the BHS can identify additional problems within a claim that may need addressed to help reduce the risk of litigation.

Tailored for injured employees

Many clients offer employee assistance programs (EAPs) to their employees. Unfortunately, many EAPs are not geared toward workers' compensation and return-to-work issues. Our BHS works closely with the employee, claims examiner and other members of the clinical team to identify and address barriers within a claim and assist in facilitating a timely return to work.

The BHS can also work in conjunction with an employer's EAP to ensure psychosocial issues are being addressed, supporting the return-to-work process and the overall progression of the claim.

Our experienced team understands the unique needs of employees in different age groups. For example, millennials generally have different priorities than older employees and they will have their own set of concerns.

For elderly employees, strategic guidance to their employer's EAP is particularly helpful because they can be more prone to depression after an injury. Other possible issues for this age group may include financial insecurity, caregiver stress (spouse or parent), increased recovery times and comorbidities impacting recovery, cognitive difficulties after surgery or while taking certain medications, cognitive impairments in spouse or self, and isolation.

For millennials, the primary concerns after an injury center around the decrease in income. Stressors can include loan payments, transportation, inability to pay for their smartphone causing a reduction in social media activities and other communications; they may also be living with younger siblings and parents.

Behavioral health referral criteria

When psychosocial flags are noted on the file, referrals can be made by the examiner, telephonic case manager, return-to-work (RTW) specialist, client or employee advocate. We can also identify psychosocial issues using data mining capabilities within the claims system.

Psychosocial flags include:

- Client requests assistance with post-robbery trauma
- Employee has post-traumatic stress disorder
- Assistance requested on psychiatric claims to ensure appropriate treatment



- Employee reports concern over any of the following:
 - Stress associated with the relationship with their supervisor and/or other employees
 - Fear of returning to work and/or concern about a repeat injury
 - Concern or fear about job transition or performing different job duties
 - Concerns associated with a divorce or separation
 - Financial hardships such as difficulty paying bills
 - Concerns regarding childcare
 - Stress associated with caring for a family member with a chronic or terminal illness
 - Death of a family member
 - Other health issues that may be causing stress
 - Lack of a support network including family or friends
 - Stress associated with caring for an elderly parent
 - History of drug/alcohol abuse
- Works with the employee to develop short- and long-term goals for psychosocial progression/recovery
- Provides short-term telephonic discussions and works with the employee to overcome barriers and develop coping skills
- Facilitates communication with treating providers to ensure optimal care and improve medical outcomes
- Helps the employee identify resources such as group therapy, bereavement groups, addiction groups, etc.
- Follows up with the employee regularly to discuss progress
- Engages employer's EAP when appropriate and for any ongoing management post-case closure
- Meets monthly with the examiner and other clinical specialists to discuss issues impacting the claim and review goals

When Sedgwick's behavioral health intervention is provided for our clients' injured employees, temporary total disability time is reduced by an average of 120 days.

Providing specialized care

The examiner, telephonic case manager or RTW specialist will inform the injured employee that a clinician who specializes in helping with their issues is available. They will ask if the employee would like to speak with the BHS. If the employee agrees, the examiner or clinical specialist will make the referral. The BHS reviews the referred case and takes the key steps below to help the employee recover and return to work:

- Contacts the examiner or clinical specialist who made the referral to discuss the claim
- Contacts the examiner (if not the source of referral) to discuss any claim or jurisdictional issues that may prevent them from contacting the employee
- Calls the employee, provides an introduction and discusses the employee's concerns
- Conducts an assessment and identifies psychosocial barriers impacting the employee's return to work and/or healing process

Patient privacy and sensitivity regarding documentation

Psychosocial and mental health information is sensitive and if it is not part of the claim, it will not be shared with the client. The BHS documents sensitive information in Sedgwick's proprietary clinical system. These notes may transmit to the claims management system to be shared with the examiner on a need to know basis and are not visible to clients in viaOne.

Contact Sedgwick today to learn more about our behavioral health solutions.

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