



# Juggling the Triad: How the Workplace, Worker and Work affect each other



SISA 'Closing the Loop Conference'

20th July 2010

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# Background



- Trained at WITS MBBCh 1989
- UCT Student Health (Dance + Rugby Union)
- 2 Oceans, Giro, Mountain Bike, WXC 1996
- MPhil (Sports Med) UCT 1995
- Diving + Acupuncture + Aqua 1995
- GP and Sports Med Practice- WPRU
- Rugby Union + Surgical Assistant- KL/SYD



# Island Change



- 1997 IT Opportunity- Brisbane
- Specialist Rep BMS - Nutritional Division
- Permanent Residence
- PT GP Rep Mundipharma- Hard
- June 2000 QLD Registration AFOEM
- Grad Dip OHS, Perth, Melbourne,
- Sydney FAFOEM 2005, ACCAM 2006
- Private Practice in Brookvale + ARB
- Winston Churchill Fellowship 2009



# Closing the Loop



Rest



Relax



Rescue



# Juggling the Triad



Workplace



Worker



Work



# Why do we have to Juggle?



■ P  
R  
A  
C  
T  
I  
C  
E  
R  
R  
E  
F  
E  
R

## Work

- provides employment
- expectation of service delivery
- "Ho Ho off to work I go"

## Worker

- individual (with a baggage)
- expectations

## Workplace

- unique environment
- may be static or changing

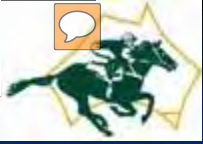


# Work & Workplace



Weigh in

ATAGO  
HAND REFRACTOMETER



# What does a Jockey actually do?



- Commandeer a 500kg thoroughbred horse from 0-60 km/hr
- 2-3m off the ground...
- 10+ riders in the race
- Makes split second decisions
- Interpret the environment
- Negate fallen riders
- Lifestyle -driving
- 6% Dehydration







# The Worker in action



Passive passenger or Active athlete??



# Caught in the Triad



- The **Workplace** needs the worker  
small company, individual skill set, deadlines to meet.
- The **Work** requires a certain level of Physical Health  
bending, twisting, pincer grip movements,  
work above shoulder height.
- The **Worker** needs to work/ allergic to work  
contract worker, financial commitments, scared of losing their job.





# Case Study 1

## Mr. SM Commercial Diver



- Referred by Employee.
- Injured back while at work.
- Had a significant back ache.
- Seen by GP
- X-ray Normal
- Treated with analgesia.
- 6 weeks cleared to return to work
- Although still some residual pain





# Commercial Diver Job description- Work



- Work below surface of water.
- Use scuba gear to inspect, repair, remove, or install equipment and structures.
- May use a variety of power and hand tools, such as drills, sledgehammers, torches, and welding equipment.
- May conduct tests or experiments, rig explosives, or photograph structures or marine life.





# Commercial Diver Worker



- Young and fit.
- Experienced diver.
- Injured his back while at work.
- X-ray Normal.
- Concerned as his back still hurts.
- Final Medical Certificate:
- Fit to return to pre injury duties





# Commercial Diver Worker.....!!



THE SOURCE OF THE BACK PAIN IS FOUND



# Commercial Diving Workplace



- Work below surface of water, 100M.
- Use scuba gear to inspect, repair, remove, or install equipment and structures.
- Working on a sat line and living at pressure.
- May use a variety of power and hand tools, such as drills, sledgehammers, torches, and welding equipment.
- At the base of an oil rig.
- May conduct tests or experiments, rig explosives, or photograph structures or marine life.





# Case 2 Aged Care Worker Work



- Personal care duties.
- Putting clothes out, Showering, washing, dressing.
- Feeding duties including preparation of trays for tea.
- Room cleaning including above cupboards and toilets.
- Personal errands like mail, minor shopping.
- Washing and drying hair and make up.





# Case 2 MS JC Aged Care Worker



- Presented with a back injury
- Actual incident not visualised
- New to the job
- Multiple past employers
- Attendance at work a bit sporadic
- Work a bit concerned as to the case



# Case 2 MS JC Aged Care Worker



- History of injury very scanty vague
- Past medical history clean
- Past occupational history ... missing dates
- Physical examination ... difficult not too consistent
- Given exercises and spoke to the physio..
- RTW plan....

EDUCATE AND EXERCISE



# Case 2 MS JC Aged Care Worker



- But then... did not show at work
- Missed IME
- Phoned in acute pain
- Came in .... ROM really not bad at all
- Reassured ....
- Asked for stronger Meds...maybe Oxycontin .... No not needed.
- Review appointment made...



# Case 2 MS JC Aged Care Worker



- Called as in acute pain with abdominal pain... if so bad ...  
Emergency
- MRI disc lesion Minor
- History & Presentation ... internet classic
- Came in asked for more Oxycontin...given it at hospital
- ... and the discharge note stated.. Panadeine forte





# Case 2 MS JC Aged Care Worker



- Now we had a problem.
- She was advised that if it was that bad she should go straight to the emergency unit at the hospital.
- School holiday week I was away but....
- I raised my concern with clinic staff
- The next day she called to see another doctor....
- Asked for Oxycontin
- What does one do next???





# Case 3 MS SV

## 57 yr Package worker



- Referred for shoulder injury by Orthopaedic surgeon
- RC surgery but just not getting better now the other shoulder ?  
CRPS
- Review of duties
- Moved her on process line over the next few weeks
- Then the missing piece....
- doc I'm so tired, now we had a problem ....





# Case 3 MS SV

## 57 yr Package worker



- Referred for pathology.
- Diagnosed with a parathyroid adenoma
- referred to an Endocrinologist
- No Private health care...
- Company paid it all
- Excellent RTW Fantastic team
- Back full time employment



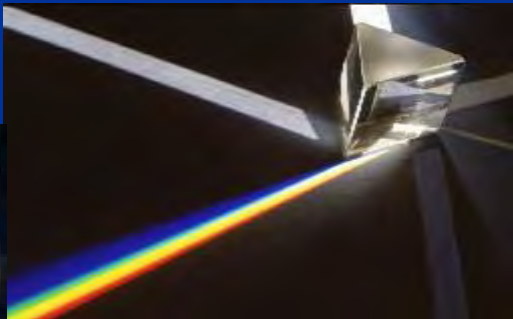
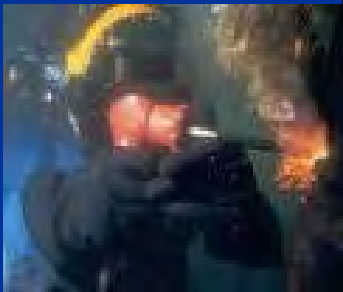
# Juggling The Triad



Workplace

Worker

Work







# Closing The Loop & Juggling The Triad



Workplace

Worker

ork



# What do we need to know?



## Worker

**M:** Understand the medical condition

**P :** Past medical and surgical history

**V:** Vocational training, occupational history

**S:** Social (family and habits)

**L:** Legal, legislation, likes

**C:** Current situation (attitude and expectations)



# What do we need to know?



## Work

- Task: Basic of the job (Readers Digest version)
- Functional requirements: what does the job entail
- What does it take to do the job: the logistics.
- Are restricted duties feasible and possible.
- **The wood work teacher**



# What do we need to know?



## Workplace

- Location
- Approach to restricted duties
- Are there any outstanding issues
- Any recent changes to systems and management
- Staffing requirements and pressures
- Site Visit... use all your senses



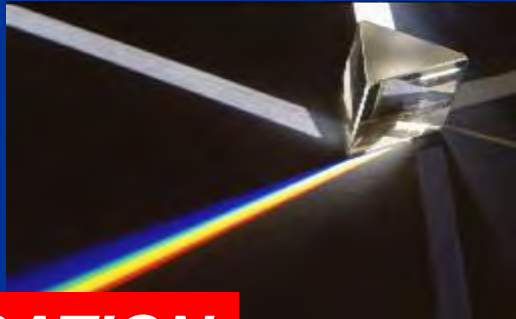
# Juggling the Triad The Key



Workplace

Worker

Work



**COMMUNICATION**



# Potential outcomes and Interpretation



- **Fit:** they may have had an injury but it is acceptable
- **Fit (A):** with accommodation may have to sit
- **Restricted duties:** meaningful alternatives
- **Permanently modified duties:** unlikely to improve
- **Temporarily Unfit:** post surgery or off-shore company
- **Permanently unfit:** may require vocational & functional assessment





# Confidence in the outcome SMARTER goal setting



- **Specific:** Identify the specific tasks
- **Measurable:** weights, frequencies
- **Agreed:** and accept the goals
- **Realistic:** unrealistic are demoralizing and will fail
- **Time bound:**, small steps
- **Exciting:** there should be some challenges , sense of satisfaction
- **Recorded:** essential to keep write it all down



# Change in Bone Fracture Treatment



*'Treatment of bone fractures has **changed** dramatically over the years and today yields much better results than those previously accepted.*

*The once common practice of placing casts on the entire limb and immobilizing for long periods of time was found to cause permanent weakness and stiffness of the joints, both above and below the affected area.*

*Today, removable braces are placed **briefly** on the affected area only when a bone is broken and only until it adequately repairs itself. This method isolates the fracture yet allows patients to continue full movement of the limb, which keeps joints strong and eliminates the risk of stiffness.'*





# Detraining in Fit Athletes

- Deconditioning in fit athletes doesn't appear to happen as quickly or drastically as in beginner exercisers.
- One study looked at well-conditioned athletes who had been training regularly for a year.
- They then stopped exercise entirely.
- After three months, researchers found that the athletes lost about half of their aerobic conditioning.



# Detraining in Beginner Exercisers



- Researchers had sedentary individuals start a bicycle fitness program for two months.
- During those eight weeks, the exercisers made dramatic cardiovascular improvements and boosted their aerobic capacity substantially.
- At eight weeks, they quit exercising for the next two months.
- They were tested again and were found to have lost all of their aerobic gains and returned to their original fitness levels.



## However... :-)

- Research has shown that even though there are many individual differences in detraining rates it appears that if you maintain some higher intensity exercise on a weekly basis, you can maintain your fitness levels fairly well.
- Studies have shown that you can maintain your fitness level even if you need to change or cut back on you exercise for several months.
- In order to do so, you need to exercise at about **70 percent of your VO2 max** at least **once** per week.



# Use it or lose it.. *Smarter*

- **Stop** exercising or work leads to ..... Disuse
- **Muscle**
- **Atrophy** however .....it can be
- **Regained** with realistic,
- **Time based**
- **Exciting** challenges otherwise known as
- **Return to work plans** essential to write it all down



# Closing the loop... at what pace?



Downhill  
Health wise

Worker

Work

Uphill battle



Practitioner

Rehabilitation  
Provider

Going round in  
circles

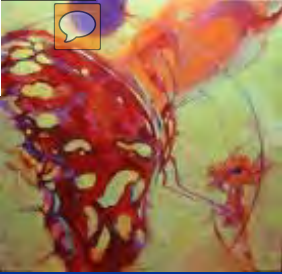


# Pearls of wisdom



*"Life is like a bicycle - you don't fall off until you stop pedalling...  
It is better to wear out than to rust out, so keep pedalling." Dr.  
Janet G. Travell 1901-1997.*

*The first female doctor appointed as personal physician to a serving  
US President, viz. John F. Kennedy*



# Thank you for listening

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