

Running on Empty

The Impact Shift Work Has on Return to Work
within Hospital Systems



PRESENTERS



Stephanie Willett currently works as a director in the Workforce Solutions Group with Unum. In this role, she helps Unum's largest customers understand and reduce the impact of lost time, and maximize their employee's productivity. Stephanie provides complex data analysis, policy/plan design review, customized program development and, return-to-work programs. She previously worked directly with employees as a lead disability benefit specialist in long term disability at Unum. She has over 12 years' experience in the disability field, and she received her Master's Degree in public health in 2012.

Stephanie Willett, MPH
Director, Workforce Solutions, Northeast Region
Unum



Kim is a senior vocational rehabilitation consultant and has worked at Unum for 17 years. She has a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, as well as a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation. She is a nationally Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Certified Professional Disability Manager and Lean Six Sigma Project Management Green Belt. She has experience in STD, LTD, LWOP, workers' compensation, FMLA, ADA, personal injury, expert testimony, longshoreman, state vocational rehabilitation, vendor management, and medical management. Prior to Unum, Kim worked in field case management and not for profits.

Kim S. Walker, MS, CRC, CPDM
Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant
Unum

AGENDA



- Learning objectives
- Impact of shift work
 - 12-hour shifts
 - Working overnight
 - Physically demanding jobs
 - Health effects
- Absence rates in healthcare
- Drivers of absence
- Return to work
 - Creative solutions
 - Case studies
 - Best practices

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1** **Understand** the health effects that shift work, physical job demands, and long schedules have on health and wellbeing. Understand how they can lead to missed work, and impact patient satisfaction.
- 2** **Review** the unique aspects of the healthcare industry that lead to higher costs and rates of absence.
- 3** **Explore** creative solutions and best practices to help bring these employees back to work in the high demand setting of healthcare.

SHIFT WORK – THE DEFINITION



“A pattern of work involving rotation through different fixed periods across working week or month.”¹

¹. Shift work and burnout among health care workers. Occupational Medicine June 2014.
<https://academic.oup.com/occmed/article/64/4/279/1464114>

SHIFT WORK – IMPACT ON HEALTH^{1,2}

Sleep
disruption

Mood disorders

Gastrointestinal
disorders

Injuries/
Accidents

Metabolic
disorders

Cancer

Cardiovascular
disorders

Interference on
family life

Limited social
life

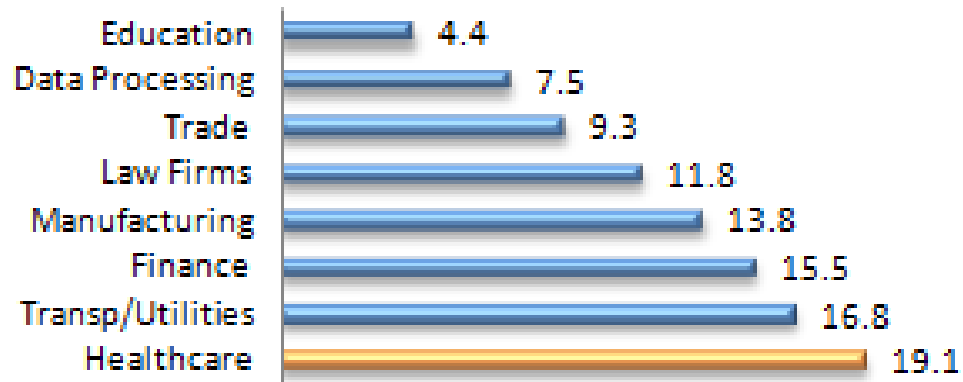
¹ <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/1116/pages/how-hr-can-help-sleepy-shift-workers.aspx>

² Shift work and health: Current problems and preventative Actions.

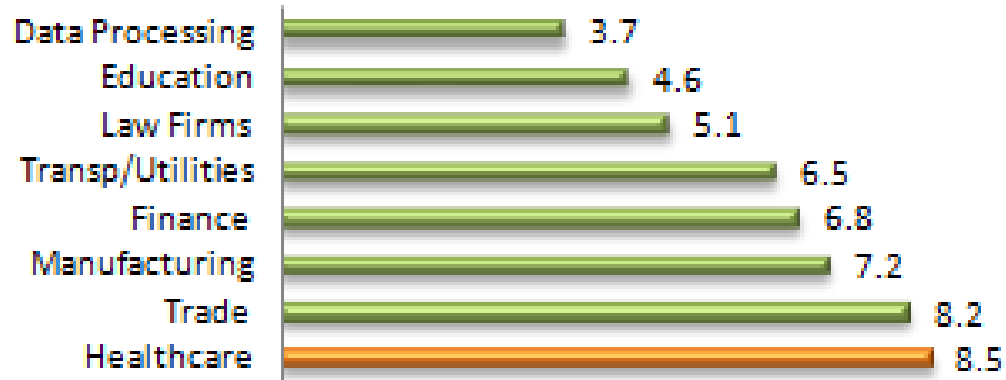
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2093791110120034?via%3Dihub>

HEALTHCARE, SHIFT WORK, & ABSENTEEISM

Annual Leave Requests/100 Employees



Annual STD/100 Employees



PROVIDER BURN OUT

Burnout is defined as a syndrome characterized by a high degree of emotional exhaustion, high depersonalization and a low sense of personal accomplishment from work.

In 2017 more than one-half of U.S. physicians reported experiencing substantial symptoms of burnout

(up from 40% in 2013)

Key Drivers

- Work Overload
- Lack of Work/Life Balance
- Loss of Control
- Insufficient Rewards
- Community Breakdown
- Conflicting Values

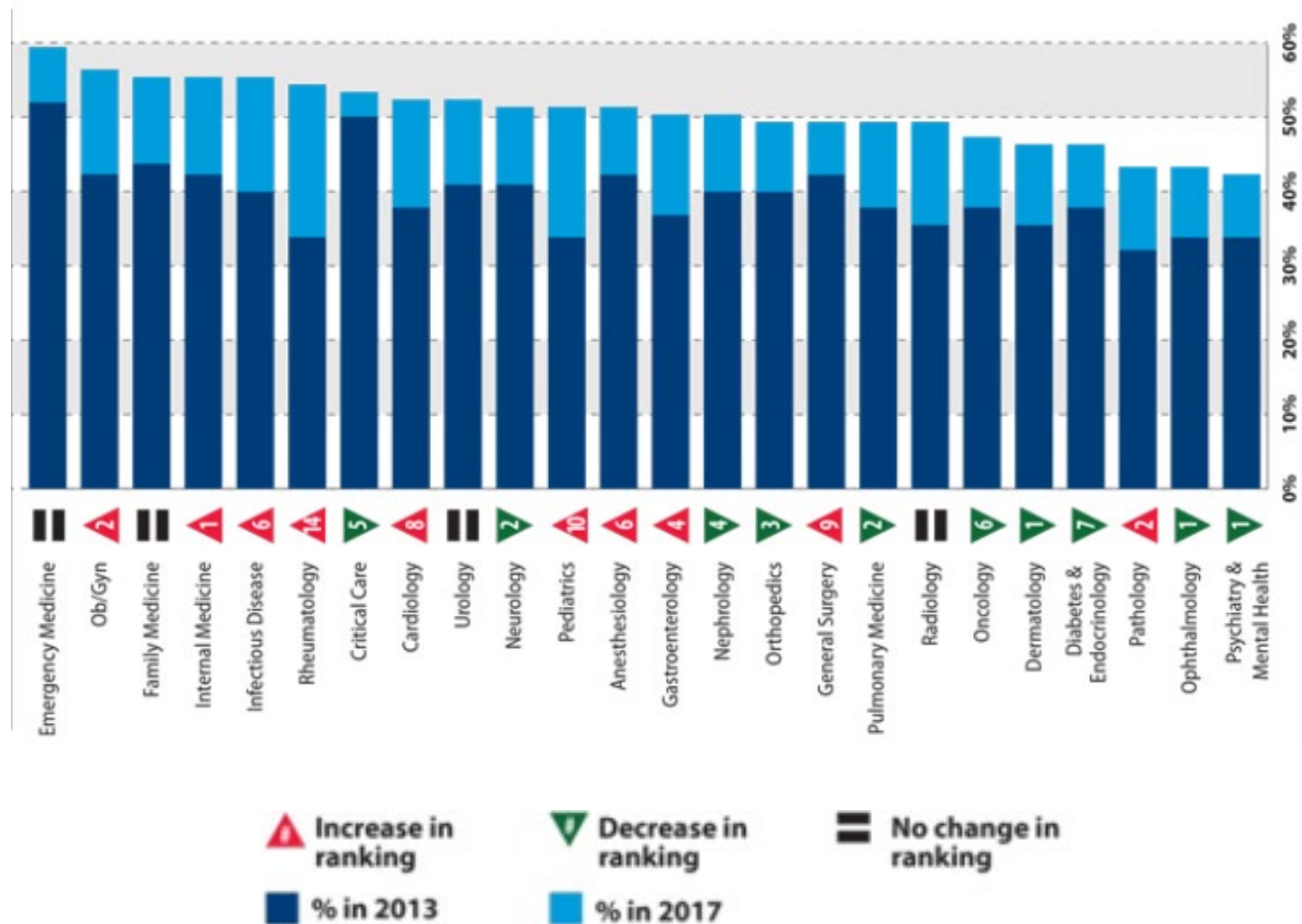
External Factors

- Healthcare Reform
- Changing Reimbursement Models
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Electronic Medical Records
- Opioid Crisis
- Healthgrades
- Silver Tsunami – Aging Population
- Complex Chronic Disease

Why the Concern for Employers?

- Medical error and malpractice
- Patient satisfaction
- Job dissatisfaction/intent to leave
- Loss of productivity
- Increased healthcare costs:
 - Cost of turnover
 - Increased referrals/ordering of tests
 - Malpractice claims
 - Absenteeism
 - Lower productivity
- Substance abuse/dependence
- Depression/suicidal ideation

PROVIDER BURN OUT BY SPECIALTY



Source: <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/report-reveals-severity-burnout-specialty>

Copyright 2019. Disability Management Employer Coalition (DMEC). All rights reserved.



Nine labor and delivery nurses at Maine hospital pregnant at the same time



PROVIDER BURN OUT

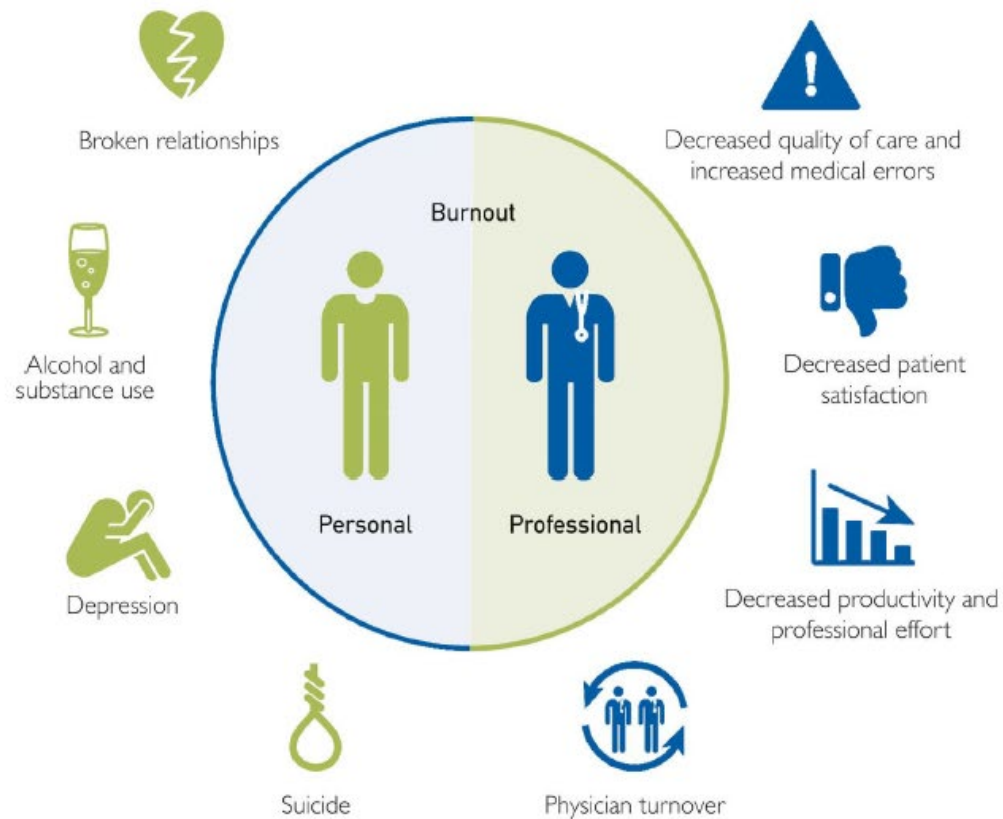
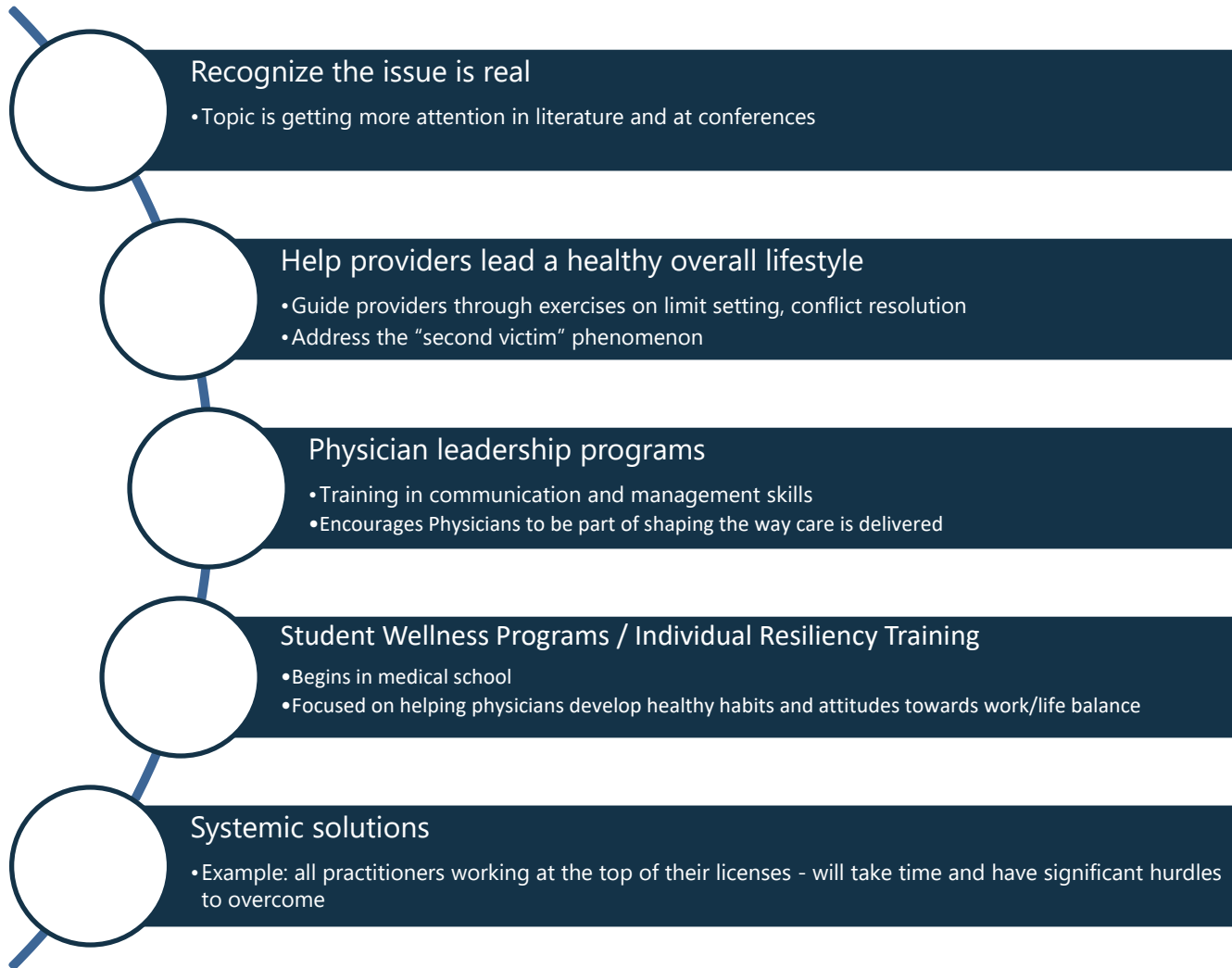


Image credit: *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 2017 92, 129-146 DOI: 10.1016/j.mayocp.2016.10.00
Copyright © 2016 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

PROVIDER BURN OUT – WHAT CAN BE DONE?



CHALLENGES OF RTW IN HEALTHCARE



MOST COMMON OCCUPATIONS

Nursing Staff

- Education levels vary (Associates Degree, BSN, Master's degree)
- Specific duties vary by assignment/floor
- Physically and emotionally demanding
- Fast paced
- 8-12 hour shifts – day, evening or overnight
- Part time or full time, on call, per diem, overtime

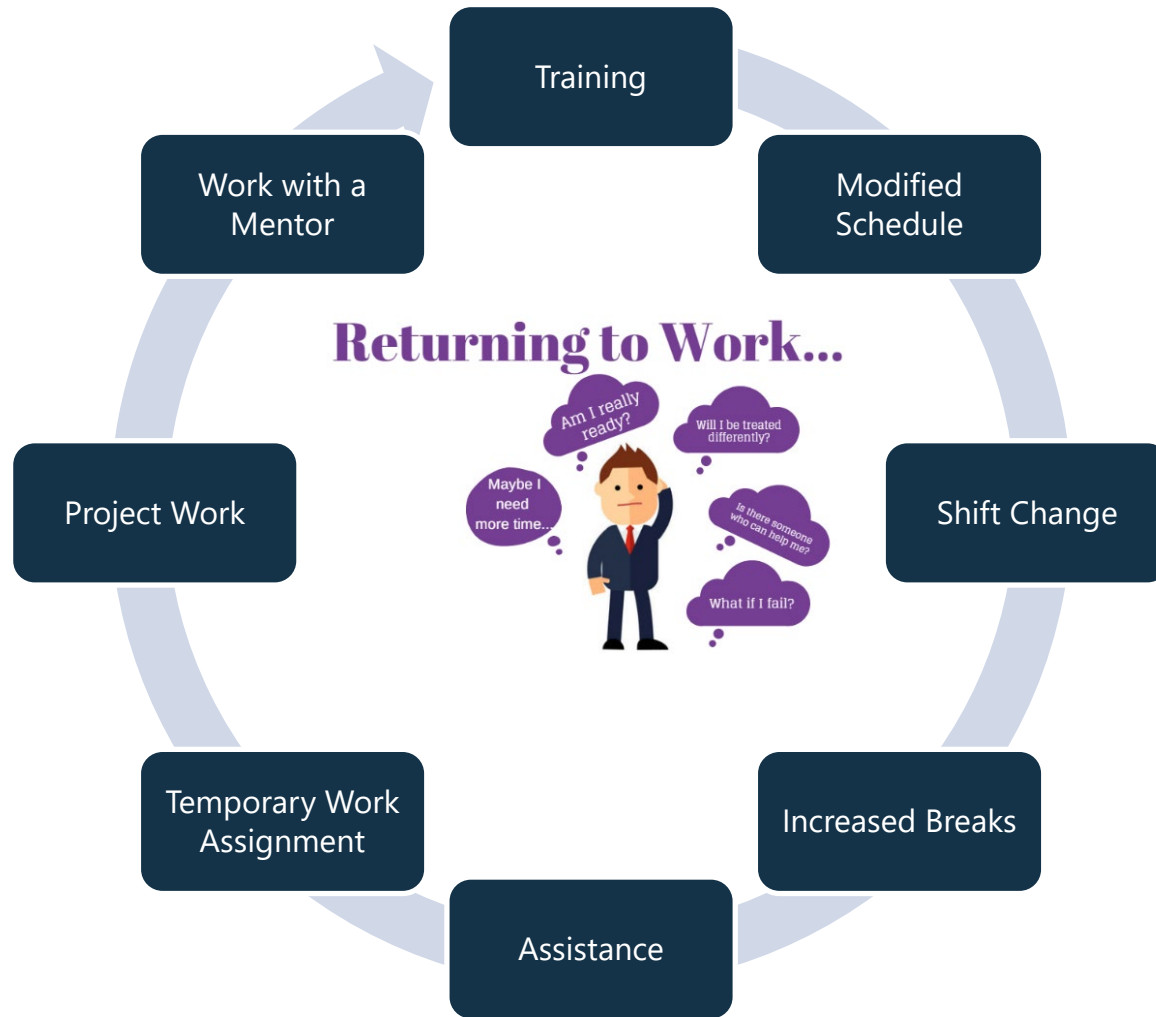
Environmental Services

- Includes housekeeping, maintenance, laundry etc.
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Physically demanding
- Repetitive motions
- Day, evening, or overnight
- Part or full time

Hospitality

- Includes dietary services, nutrition, etc.
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Prepare, deliver, clean up meals or work in cafeteria
- Physically demanding (walking, lifting, pushing, pulling, prolonged standing)
- 8-12 hour shifts, early morning through late evening
- Part or full time, overtime

TRTW MODIFICATION OPTIONS – THE DEFINITIONS



HELPING A NURSE RTW

| Transitional Work Option | Transition Description |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Modified Work Schedule | Modify work schedule by reducing hours as restricted by treating physician. Work may be combined with a work conditioning or rehabilitation program. The key to transition is to gradually increase hours. |
| Alternate Work Location/Float | Identify other units or departments worker could temporarily move to if the Floor/department cannot accommodate the restrictions. |
| Shift Change | Provide a temporary shift change to allow for a reduced schedule or a slower paced shift to ease back into the workplace. |
| Reduce Patient Load | Temporarily alter patient load to reduce lifting demands. Gradually increase patient load until back to full capacity. |
| Partner with a coworker | Pair with co-worker as a team or partner with co-worker. In some units co-workers will increase patient load, and divide work according to the employee's restrictions. |
| Adjust Productivity | Temporarily reduce employee's productivity requirement – keeping in mind the goal is full capacity so productivity goals would be gradually increased. |
| More Frequent Breaks | Temporarily allow employee to take more frequent breaks. |
| Project Work | Consult managers to identify temporary project work. Examples include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• quality audits• medical records review• education sessions• utilization review |

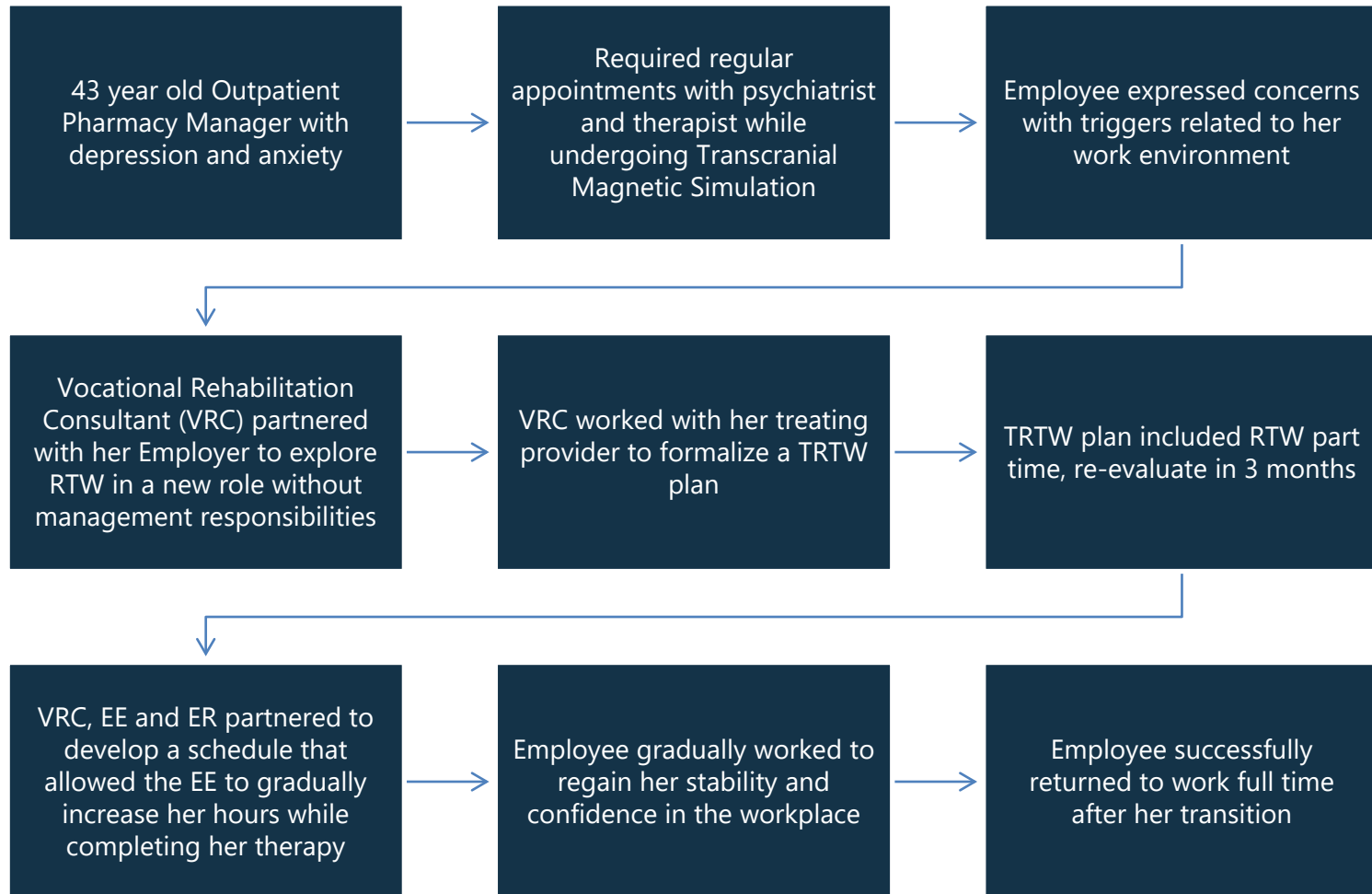
HELPING A NUTRITIONAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE RTW

| Transitional Work Option | Transition Description |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Modified Work Schedule | Modify employee's work schedule by reducing hours as restricted by the treating physician. Work may be combined with a work conditioning or rehabilitation program. The key to the transition is to gradually increase the employee's hours. |
| Alternate Work Location/Float | Identify other units or departments the employee could temporarily move to if the department cannot accommodate the restrictions. |
| Shift Change | Employee is provided a temporary shift change to allow for a reduced schedule or a slower paced shift to ease back into the workplace. |
| 'Helping Hand' Associate | Employee temporarily has no assignment/line position, but instead assists the department with tasks such as serving food, rolling silverware, etc. The goal is to transition the employee back to full capacity. |
| Cross Training | When appropriate, certain employees can be trained in several areas of food service based on employee's experience and training. |
| Partner with a coworker | Employee is paired with co-worker for lifting assistance as needed. |
| Adjust Productivity | Temporarily reduce employee's productivity requirement – keeping in mind the goal is full capacity so productivity goals would be gradually increased. |
| More Frequent Breaks | Temporarily, employee would take more frequent breaks to reduce standing. For example, a 15 minute break each 1½ hours. |
| Project Work | Consult managers to identify project work. |

HELPING AN ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE RTW

| Transitional Work Option | Transition Description |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Modified Work Schedule | Modify employee's work schedule by reducing hours as restricted by the treating physician. Work may be combined with a work conditioning or rehabilitation program. The key to the transition is to gradually increase the employee's hours. |
| Alternate Work Location/Float | Identify other units or departments that the employee could temporarily move to if Environmental Services cannot accommodate the restrictions, such as a specific nursing unit to clean equipment and offices. |
| Shift Change | Employee is provided a temporary shift change to allow for a reduced schedule or a slower paced shift to ease back into the workplace. |
| 'Helping Hand' Associate | Employee temporarily has no formal assignment or job position, but instead is paired with co-workers to assist the team in completing tasks. |
| Cross Training | Employees are trained in a seven-step process which can be used to perform tasks in most other areas in the department. This option will be based on the employee's past experience and manager discretion. |
| Partner with a coworker | Employee is paired with co-worker for lifting assistance as needed. |
| Clean Equipment | Identify equipment in Environmental Services that requires cleaning and can be done accommodating employee's restrictions. |
| 'Helping Hand' Associate | Employee temporarily has no formal assignment or job position, but instead is paired with co-workers to assist the team in completing tasks. |
| More Frequent Breaks | Temporarily allow employee to take more frequent breaks to reduce standing. |
| Project Work | Consult managers to identify project work. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning chart holders• Cleaning glass doors or windows• Washing wheelchairs• Assembling patient admission materials |

RTW CASE STUDY



EMPLOYER BEST PRACTICES

Provide schedules that are as predictable as possible

Limit the number of nights worked consecutively

Designate areas and times for employees to rest in the workplace

Provide health and wellness programs that are accessible at night and on weekends

Employees want more control over their schedules – shift based hiring

Keep TRTW schedule as close to their normal schedule as possible

Provide resources on good sleep hygiene

Offer concierge support services

