

# RTW: RTW PLANNING MEETING

There can be many problems and challenges with the development of an individual RTW plan. The degree of success achieved can depend a great deal upon how the individual RTW planning meeting is conducted.

## RTW Planning

- Involve the worker
- Involve the union (if applicable)
- Be open to new ideas
- Be flexible
- Anticipate and raise potential concerns or problems

Whether or not a RTW plan will be successful or not can also depend upon whether good “People Skills” are practiced – by the people initially developing the RTW plan as well as the supervisor/s responsible for monitoring that plan once it is implemented.

People skills refer to an individual’s ability to interact and relate with others.

Effective people skills can involve:

- Active listening
- Asking questions
- Paraphrasing
- Exhibiting empathy

## Listening

Good listeners:

- Don’t interrupt when others are speaking
- Think before replying
- Are aware of both their and the other person’s non verbal behaviour
  - I.e. if there is hostile or defensive body language, etc.
- Are aware of personal biases or values that may distort what they hear
- Look for the feelings and basic assumptions beneath what is being said
- Concentrate on what is being said
- Don’t judge

## Questioning

Asking questions facilitates communication because it:

- Helps you get more and valuable information
- Shows that you are paying attention
- And shows you are interested in what the speaker has to say.
- Shows you value what the speaker has to say.

There are two ways of phrasing any question:

- A closed question activates a simple reply (yes, no, maybe, don't know).
- An open question transfers the speaking role to the other person and forces him/her to be more informative.

## Paraphrasing:

Paraphrasing is when a listener restates a speaker's message in his/her own words without adding anything new.

By restating the speaker's comments in his/her own words it crosschecks the information to ensure the listener correctly understood what the speaker said.

If the listener's paraphrasing is inaccurate, the speaker will have the opportunity to correct it.

## Empathy

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in somebody else's shoes. It involves:

- the ability to take on the viewpoint of another person
- the ability to experience the feelings of another person
- genuine concern for the welfare of the other person

RTW is about working with people – and people (workers, RTW coordinators, management, and supervisors alike) are not perfect. People are unique. People have emotions. People have fears. Not everyone is rational. Not everyone is trusting. Injury tends to heighten feelings and emotions.

By giving a bit of thought and consideration not just into “what is being done in RTW” but “how it is being done” may be able to alleviate many problems before they even begin – and that is a good thing. That is good business.

RTW planning meeting tips:

- avoid prejudging
- put the injured worker at ease
- express concern and support for the injured worker's condition
- allow the injured worker to talk
- be attentive
- be patient
- ask for clarification if needed
- close the meeting on a positive note