

BCPVPA Member Support Services: Supporting Member Health & Well-being

by Rochelle Morandini

One of the pillars of the BCPVPA's Strategic Plan is to:

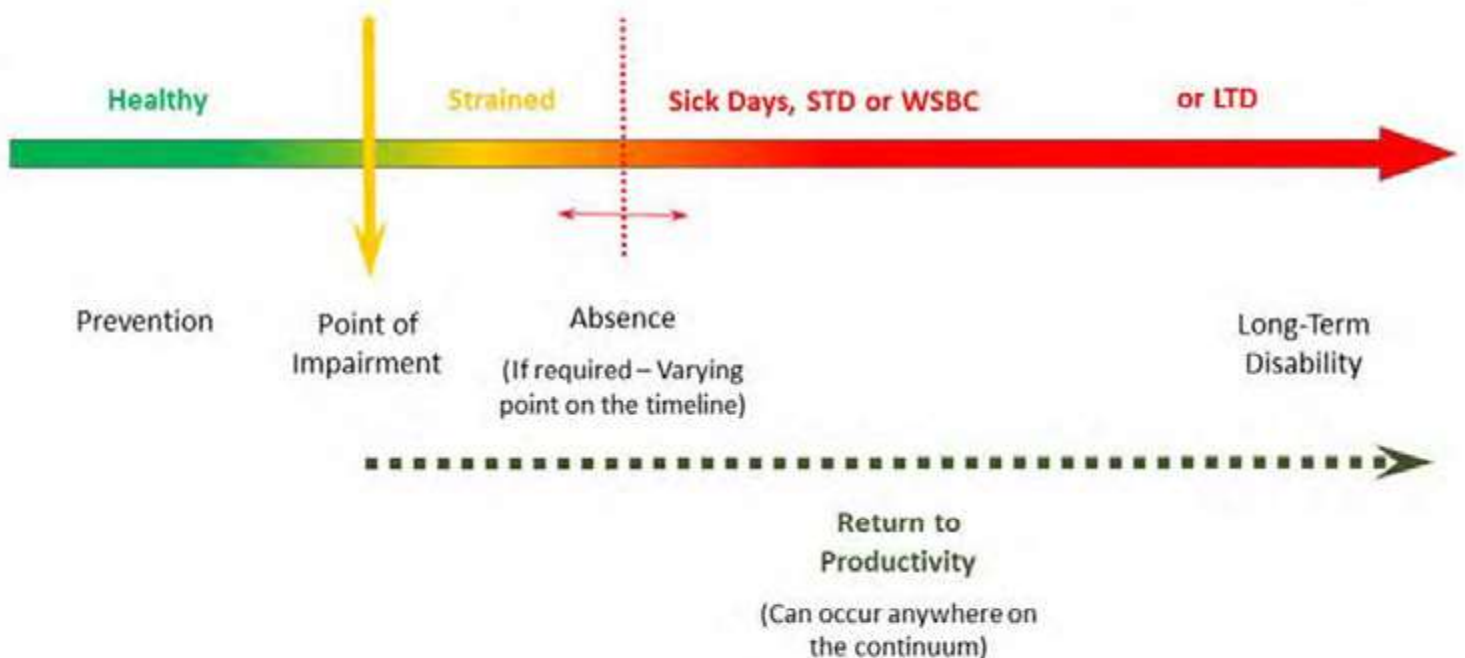
“Provide supports to maintain and improve the well-being of Principals and Vice-Principals”

There are many ways that the BCPVPA provides health and well-being support to our members:

- Administration of the long-term disability plan
- Access to coaching and counselling support through the humanworks Early Intervention Program (EIP)
- Access to support through the BCPVPA's Director of Member Health and Well-Being (the Director).

The Director offers support and resources to members across the health and recovery continuum.

Health and Recovery Continuum



There are five stages across the continuum where the Director provides one-on-one support for members:



Healthy

This is the stage where members are doing well, and thriving. The available support is intended to help maintain or improve health, and prevent illness or injury.



Strained

This is the stage where members may be struggling with their health, and/or finding that health issues are impacting their ability to be their best at work. When the member first identifies these health concerns, we refer to this as the Point of Impairment. The member may go off work at their point of impairment (for example, the day of a car accident) or remain at work, and find their well-being is strained over time (for example, in cases of exposure to trauma).



Absent

Sick Days, Short Term Disability, WorkSafeBC

This is the stage where a member needs to take a medical leave from work, as their condition restricts them from performing the essential duties of their job. This leave could be due to personal injury or illness, or due to a physical or mental workplace injury.

Return to Productivity



The return to productivity stage may happen at any time across the health and recovery continuum, either when a member is still at work or is returning to work from a medical leave. A temporary, transitional, or gradual return to work from either type of medical leave may occur at any time along the continuum; this could take place during the short-term disability phase, or in long-term disability time period. Support for a return to productivity includes temporary workplace accommodation(s) during the strained period, to keep a member at work with modifications. Support is also provided when a member needs permanent accommodation to remain or return to a suitable job position.

Long-Term Disability



Regardless of whether a member went on medical leave as the result of a personal or workplace related disability, once the member has been off for either 120 sick days (or 117 calendar days, if they did not have enough sick days), they need to apply for long-term disability. Long-term disability provides income replacement – or WorkSafeBC top up – for members who qualify under the policy until they are capable of either returning to work, returning to alternative employment after two years, or until they reach the earliest marker of 35 years of pensionable service, or the age of 65.

What guidance can members expect from the Director during each stage of the Health and Recovery Continuum?

Healthy

Members who are healthy and productive have access to health and well-being content as they seek to remain healthy, improve their health, and prevent injury, illness, or disease. These resources include:

- **ReFresh**: weekly articles on a wide variety of well-being subjects
- **ReCharge**: Self-directed articles and exercises related to your nervous system, regulation, and rumination
- **The Learning Brain**: a series on mental health



BCPVPA has partnered with WelTel to offer a weekly text connection that simply asks,

“How are you?”

Members can respond in their own time, based on their self-reflection, and at their desired level of interaction.

The Director responds to all texts, provides information, and – where requested – directs members to other necessary resources, including other supports within the BCPVPA.

We are welcoming new participants to the program. The first 50 interested members who email Rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca will be added to the program for September 2023!

- WelTel: A weekly text connection that simply asks, “How are you?”

The Director can answer questions about members’ extended health and disability health plans. Members looking for specific health resources can contact the Director for links, articles, or a reference to community services that will best meet the members’ needs.

Strained

The best time to reach out to the Director is when members start to feel strained at work, and/or where their health may impact their ability to do their job well. The Director is available to provide or refer members to information and support to mitigate their health condition, and the impact at work. Once contacted, the Director can:

- Refer members to the Early Intervention Program, the BCPVPA-funded coaching/counselling support provided by humanworks
- Help members access other situation-specific support or resources
- Facilitate temporary accommodation with the district to help members stay at work during recovery
- Take steps to identify and communicate concerns about physical and psychological safety in the workplace
- Represent members when the district requests a Duty to Inquire meeting, signalling that health issues may be impacting performance
- Answer member questions about taking a medical leave or filing a WorkSafeBC claim

Sick Leave/ Short Term Disability

Members who can no longer stay at work due to an injury or illness can receive support. Once contacted, the Director can:

- Answer questions about the sick leave process and calculate the long-term disability qualifying period
- Coach the member about what is required to complete the medical certificate that a district may require during a members’ leave
- Provide or direct members to resources or information, including referrals to humanworks
- Coordinate with the Member Support Service team in circumstances where a member is part of an investigation, but concurrently experiencing health concerns

- Discuss funding concerns when a member is short on sick days, and does not have access to short-term disability
- Advise on the process to apply for short-term disability
- Coordinate short-term disability appeals, should a claim be denied
- Advocate for members, troubleshoot issues, and offer professional guidance

Long-Term Disability (LTD)

Once contacted, the Director can:

- Provide an approximate start date of disability, as well as the approximate benefit amount
- Offer support for navigation of the LTD claim process, including:
 - Claim application
 - Resource request and advocacy for resources available through LTD
 - The rehabilitation protocol
 - Travel while on claim
 - Return to work planning
 - Preparation of information for the change of definition after two years on LTD
- Offer a regular touch base and direction to resources for members who want to stay in contact
- Coordinate between LTD and WorkSafeBC where applicable
- Troubleshoot issues, including:
 - Perform appeals
 - Investigate and negotiate overpayments
 - Identify and advise regarding pre-existing conditions
- Offer advocacy and professional guidance

WorkSafeBC

- Provide incident reporting guidance
- Offer support for navigation of the WSBC process including:
 - Injury reporting and claim application
 - Preparation for WorkSafeBC intake interview
 - Resource request and advocacy for resources available through LTD
 - Vocational rehabilitation
 - Return to work planning
 - Permanent Functional Impairment assessments
- Troubleshoot issues, including:
 - Perform appeals
 - Investigate and negotiate overpayments
- Offer a regular touch base and direction to resources for members who want to stay in contact
- Coordinate with LTD provider where applicable
- Offer advocacy and professional guidance

Return to Productivity

As indicated in the Health and Recovery Continuum diagram, support for a member's return to productivity can occur either:

- When the member is still at work and requires temporary – or even permanent – accommodation in order to remain in their role or an alternative role
- When the member is returning to work from a medical leave and needs either a temporary, transitional return to work and/or a permanent accommodation

The Director will work with both the member and the team facilitating the member's accommodation which could include:

- The member's medical/health team
- District representatives
- STD/LTD insurance company representatives
- WorkSafeBC

Members may be assisted by the Director through advocacy and support during:

- The process of gathering necessary functional information for return to work or accommodation determination
- Gradual return to work planning
- The coordination of return to work payments and benefit payments
- The identification of compensation concerns upon return to work
- The duty to accommodate process
- Permanent accommodation agreements

Reach Out Anytime

Other situations that may involve the Director's support include:

- Navigation of the independent medical examination process
- Identification of human rights concerns, particularly as they relate to actual or perceived health issues
- Reassignments due to health concerns

The scope and number of questions related to member health and recovery is broad, and this is an overview of the support available to members across the continuum.

Ideally, members are practicing self-care and engaging in healthy behaviours. However, members who are struggling can be assured that they are not alone. ***Principals and Vice-Principals have very demanding jobs***, and there will be ups and downs. Reach out the moment you recognize that you are struggling: it may be the critical call that helps you get back on a healthy track!

Rochelle Morandini 604-877-5392
Director, Member Health & Well-being