



Spotlight on Sarah Bollom: Smaller steps mean giant leaps for injured workers and employers

[Actevate's rehabilitation consultant, Sarah Bollom says that smaller steps can mean giant leaps for an injured worker and their employer]

Replacing an injured worker to their former position as quickly as possible is Actevate's ultimate goal, according to Actevate rehabilitation consultant, Sarah Bollom.

When this is not immediately possible, the rehabilitation consultant determines other vocational options suitable to the worker and employer.

The process is complex but very rewarding according to Ms Bollom.

"Ultimately, when someone is replaced in employment and financially secure, seeing them regain their sense of worth is probably one of the most fulfilling parts of this role. It can be the small steps that have a profound impact on a person's life," Sarah said. Some of the most challenging cases can have great outcomes according to Sarah. These are where people have worked in a particular role for most of their working life, become physically injured and need to come to terms with the fact that they may never work in their previous role, or go back to the same employer.

"I am often helping older workers. There was a case of a 56 year old forklift driver, planning retirement after 22 years in this job it was looking unlikely he would return to the same line of work, simply because his injury limited his manual dexterity. We are working on getting his quality of life back, even if it is not in the same type of employment," She said. Sarah doesn't work alone in many of these cases, while her challenge is to identify appropriate work options and help the worker adjust to a new vocational goal, the injured person could need support in other areas. According to Sarah, sometimes people have lost some of their motivation and need to regain their sense of worth, or undergo physical therapy.

"I am just one part of the 'return to work team' at Actevate, there are 25 of us and we work between the different and same employer teams, we have nurses, occupational therapists, exercise physiologists, rehabilitation counselors, doctors and psychologists working with us, people have access a range of help needed to get them back on their feet," Sarah said. Sarah holds a bachelor of health science in rehabilitation counseling, which is

specific to this role. Her previous role was with the Wesley Mission, working with disadvantaged youth, tackling homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and identifying training and employment options.

Sarah says her skills from this position, are very transferable. "I learned to case manage people with Wesley Mission, despite their very different needs", she said.

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