

## BCTF members, through their Salary Indemnity Plan, fund the Teacher Rehabilitation Program to:

- facilitate timely, safe, and durable return to work for teachers needing assistance
- assist teachers in maximizing their recovery from disability and reduce the incidence of recurrence
- support teachers in their adjustment to disability
- provide early rehabilitation and intervention to prevent future disability for high-risk teachers
- assess the impact of disability on the teacher's ability to work
- recommend to the employer accommodations for return to work

## Role of the Salary Indemnity Plan

- administer the Salary Indemnity Plan according to the regulations
- share information between Salary Indemnity Plan benefits and the Teacher Rehabilitation Program
- house the rehabilitation reports and share information with other BCTF divisions only with the written permission of the teacher
- adjudicate short term disability claims
- provide assistance to members in applying for long term disability benefits
- provide general information on group benefits and insurance
- report to the Executive Committee on the operation and finances of the Salary Indemnity Plan

## Cost

The Teachers' Rehabilitation Program is funded through the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan.

## Program objectives

- To provide a community-based disability rehabilitation program supporting the terms and conditions of the BCTF Salary Indemnity Program
- To encourage teachers with disabilities to maintain or regain work activity
- To provide assistance to disabled teachers to realize their potential and minimize the impact of disability
- To provide support to teachers and/or their families coping with adjustments resulting from the disability
- To enhance economic/social security of members and their families whose quality of life may be altered through loss of income due to disability
- To develop cooperatively with the employer the necessary workplace accommodations

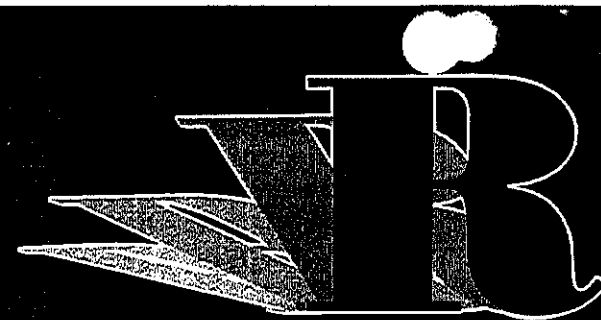
1-800-663-9163

The overall goal of the Teacher Rehabilitation Program is to return teachers to work as soon as possible and/or to assist them in achieving maximum medical recovery from their condition.

## Salary Indemnity Plan Teacher Rehabilitation Program



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## Salary Indemnity Plan

# Teacher Rehabilitation Program

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



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## History

The Teacher Rehabilitation Program began as a pilot project in 5 districts in 1993. The success of this pilot led to major provincial expansion. As of January 2007, the Teacher Rehabilitation Program is available in 55 of 60 districts covering 99% of all eligible teachers.

## Vision

The BCTF will assist teachers who are or who become disabled to **maintain or to return** to their teaching positions as early as possible by funding an **early intervention** rehabilitation program offered on a **voluntary** basis. As well, the program will promote wellness initiatives for teachers.

## What is Rehabilitation?

Restoration of or improvement in a teacher's health, functional capacities, or ability to engage in occupational and personal activities through the development and implementation of a plan designed to assist and support a teacher through his/her recovery.

## How does the program assist a teacher?

**A professional Rehabilitation Consultant will:**

- meet with you, and if applicable, your family
- consult with your health care providers
- meet with representatives from your local and school district to explore your return to work options
- work with you and the above parties to create a plan aimed at work re-entry
- coordinate rehabilitation services during your return-to-work period

**Rehabilitation professionals assist teachers to:**

- maximize their recovery from disability
- reduce the incidence of recurrence
- prevent future disability
- develop rehabilitation goals
- plan a safe, timely and durable return to work in accordance with medical information

## Who is eligible to access the program?

- A teacher who has identified that he/she requires assistance in maintaining his/her assignment
- A teacher who is using sick leave to manage his/her symptoms (non-consecutive use of sick leave- approx. 10 days in the current school year and approx. 10 days in each of the previous two years)
- A teacher who has a reduced assignment due to disability
- A part-time teacher who has not worked his/her allocated hours for 4 consecutive work weeks
- A full-time teacher who has been absent from work for 20 consecutive working days

## How can I be referred to the program?

Potential candidates can be referred for rehabilitation assistance in four ways:

- self referral
- referral by local president or designate
- referral by school district representative
- Salary Indemnity Plan – STD/LTD(GWL)

**Self-referral** to the program may be initiated through contact with BCTF SIP Teacher Rehabilitation Program at 604-871-2283 or toll free at 1-800-663-9163.

## What happens after being referred?

a) **Initial contact:** A BCTF Referral Coordinator contacts teacher to introduce the program, to obtain the necessary voluntary consent to participate, and to gather initial information to process the referral.

b) **Assessment:** A BCTF Rehabilitation Manager assesses and approves participation, informs local rehabilitation service provider who assigns a local rehabilitation consultant who completes initial assessment and medical interviews with teacher and medical practitioner.

c) **Planning:** Consultant and teacher together with medical practitioners develop rehabilitation plan. Consultant explains plan to district rehabilitation committee (district HR person, local association rep, and consultant) for implementation.

d) **Implementation and Follow-up:** Teacher commences return to work as per the plan with ongoing support.

## SIP Teacher Rehabilitation Program staff:

- provide education on the Teacher Rehabilitation Program and effective return to work strategies
- determine if rehabilitation services are indicated
- ensure services are delivered
- monitor and provide direction to rehabilitation consultants
- oversee the service providers to ensure adherence to program policy and procedure
- counsel and provide information to members, as required

## District Rehabilitation Committee

In each participating district, consists of a district HR rep, local association rep and the consultant:

- provides a forum for information sharing
- plans and provides necessary work accommodation, work hardening placements, graduated return to work opportunities
- monitors return to work programs for teachers

The information shared is only for the purposes of planning workplace accommodations and return to work and is kept separate from any personnel file.

**Confidential medical information will not be shared with the employer.**

## Income Protection

Income is maintained through:

- normal sick leave entitlement and, when entitlement ends
- BCTF's short term and long term disability plans (upon application)

# BCTF Teacher's Rehabilitation Program

## Process Model

### Access criteria

If you are:

Absent for 20 consecutive days

Working reduced time due to disability

Using sick days to manage symptoms

On SIP short or long term leave

### Access method

How you get on the program:

Self referral

Local President

School district HR

SIP ST/LT claims officer /case manager

### Rehabilitation process

What happens:

Initial contact

- Referral coordinator contacts teacher to introduce the program, and obtain teacher's voluntary consent to participate

Assessment

- Rehabilitation manager assesses and approves participation, informs local rehabilitation service provider who assigns...
- Local rehabilitation consultant who completes initial assessment and medical interviews with teacher and medical practitioner

Planning

- Consultant and teacher together with medical practitioners develop rehabilitation plan
- Consultant explains plan to district rehabilitation committee (district HR person, local association rep, and consultant) for implementation

Implementation and follow up

- Teacher commences return to work as per the rehabilitation plan with ongoing support



## **DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE**

- Constitutionally and legislatively required for any employee in Canada who suffers from an illness, disease, or mental or physical disability
- Applies to all health problems, not just those arising from workplace injuries
- Includes those health problems the employer did not originally know about
- Involves the employer, the employee, and the union who are all expected to co-operate
- Creative and common sense adjustments made to support the functional capabilities of an employee.

## **WORK ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES**

Equipment accommodation examples:

chairs	paper holders	modified desks/ tables
foot rests	scooter stools	non-skid mats
white boards	overhead projectors	laptop computers
computer stations	voice amplification systems	podiums

Classroom accommodation examples:

- removal / addition of carpeting
- windows that open
- replacement of lighting or of air filters
- providing parking space nearer to school entrance
- changing classroom location in order:
  - to allow the teacher to be nearer washrooms
  - to avoid the need for stair climbing
  - to decrease the walking distance, etc.
- providing extra cleaning services for teacher with dust allergies
- providing advance notification of the use of any potentially noxious substances (e.g. cleaning supplies, paint, insecticides), with provision of TOC if necessary.
- loaning equipment to teachers by the school district, if purchase is not feasible.

### Teaching assignment accommodation examples :

- Implementation of flexible, part-time schedules to facilitate a graduated return to work may involve a number of different changes to an existing assignment. Examples such as work alternate days, mornings or afternoons only, or certain subjects only.
- Utilization of a TOC to facilitate a teacher's graduated return to work. (TOC gradually decreases time as the returning teacher gradually increases.)
- Allowing teacher to perform a period of unpaid work hardening (in own or other's classroom) to prepare for graduated return to work.
- Re-assignment to different grade levels, subjects, or even schools or to a non-teaching position, or a non-enrolling position.
- Performance of select TOC assignments to allow for graduated return, in familiar subjects.
- Allowing teacher to "job shadow" with other teachers, to provide exposure to different teaching situations.
- Continuing reduced hours of work. For example, a formerly 1.0 F.T.E. teacher resumes only a percentage of his or her former position, on a permanent basis. This may require a "job share" arrangement.
- Allowing "release time" for attendance of appointments, training, or mentoring programs.
- Provision of a classroom assistant (CEA, TA, or SEA).
- Re-assignment of a student to another classroom (e.g. special needs student that required lifting, where original teacher could not perform lifting duties).
- Assignment of indoor, more sedentary recess/noon supervision duties, rather than playground supervision.

### **District Rehabilitation Committee composition**

- The *rehabilitation consultant* who chairs the monthly meetings, and has had direct contact with teachers and their medical service providers so is fully informed
- The *representative from the school district* with authority to approve accommodations including both resources and assignment modifications
- The *local president or his/her designate* who offers information and advocates for members
- *On occasion, the assigned BCTF rehabilitation manager and/or the program co-ordinator may attend.*

### **District Rehabilitation Committee meetings**

- consultant chairs the monthly meetings with union, management representatives only
- consultant presents information regarding a teacher including:
  - current teaching assignment
  - functional abilities but not diagnosis
  - needed accommodations as per medical certificates from medical service providers
- discussion of needed accommodations ensues - who is to do what and when is determined
- consultant summarizes results, reviews each committee member's task relating to rehab plan for teacher
- at end of meeting, the next meeting date is set.

### **District Committee meeting conduct**

The Rehabilitation Committee is a pivotal component of the Rehabilitation program. Given the sensitive nature of the information exchanged, the following guidelines will assist with the effective handling of disability related matters.

#### ***"Check your guns at the door"***

It is acknowledged that teachers with disabling conditions often have other employment issues – performance difficulties, interpersonal challenges, and discipline concerns. It is not the role of this committee to attempt to resolve these problems. Furthermore, it is not the function of this committee to provide a venue for resolution of outstanding issues between committee members, unless this directly affects teacher rehabilitation in the District.

***"Come prepared to do business"***

All parties should have "done their homework" before the meeting and come prepared to focus on solutions and to build consensus. This is a co-operative endeavour designed to provide the teacher a safe and durable return to work.

***"Nothing leaves the room"***

Protection of this sensitive information is fundamental. The success of the program hinges on the establishment of relationships built on trust. Information shared in this venue is not to be used for any purpose other than return to work planning.

***"Focus on function not diagnosis"***

Often when teachers are off work there is considerable speculation regarding their medical status, prognosis, etc. Committee members may have heard rumours from a variety of sources. The rehabilitation consultant is the best resource for accurate, substantiated data. She/he has met with the teachers and their health care professionals and has concrete information on the functional limitations that may impact their return to work. With the permission of the teachers, their functional status will be discussed to determine what accommodations are necessary. Diagnosis, medication regimes or other personal details are not required as part of this planning and should not be discussed by the committee. Respect for the privacy of teachers is essential.



## **Frequently asked questions**

### ***What is the Rehabilitation Program?***

The Rehabilitation Program supports and empowers members recovering from illness or injury to regain their optimum state of wellness, health, and productivity by providing rehabilitation services and promoting self-care. It is funded by the membership of the BCTF.

### ***How do members find out more about the Rehabilitation Program?***

Pamphlets and posters are sent to every school staffroom. Members may call their local presidents for information or call the BCTF directly (604-871-2283, or toll-free 1-800-663-9163) and ask to speak with someone from the Rehabilitation Program.

### ***Who can access the Rehabilitation Program?***

Any member of the BCTF contributing to the Salary Indemnity Plan is entitled to request rehabilitation services if they are in one of the districts covered by the Rehabilitation Program. Currently 55 of 60 districts are part of the Rehabilitation Program. To find out if your district is part of the program, you can ask your Local President.

### ***Do I have to be off work or on disability benefits in order to initiate services?***

No, you do not need to be off work or on disability benefits in order to participate in the program. A referral for services can be made on the basis that the member is struggling with an issue that could result in disability if not addressed.

### ***How are members referred to the Rehabilitation Program?***

A member may call the BCTF directly (604-871-2283, or toll-free 1-800-663-9163) and ask to speak with someone from the Rehabilitation Program to self-refer.

If a member applies for short-term disability benefits through the Salary Indemnity Plan, an automatic referral is made to determine whether participation with the program might enhance the member's medical recovery or quality of life.

A member may be referred to the Rehabilitation Program through the LTD case manager, if rehabilitation assistance is indicated through medical reports.

The employer or Local President may refer a member if there have been absences that would suggest the member might need some support.

### ***How do I know if I've been referred to the Rehabilitation Program?***

If a referral has been received and approved by the BCTF, you will receive a telephone call from a referral co-ordinator at the BCTF to give you general information about the Rehabilitation Program and ask you whether you would like to participate.



***If I am referred to the Rehabilitation Program, am I required to participate?***

No, participation in the program is completely voluntary. You can opt out of the rehabilitation process at any time, even if you have begun to receive rehabilitation services.

***If I decide to opt out of the Rehabilitation Program and I am receiving short term or long term disability benefits, will it jeopardize my benefits?***

No, the program is entirely voluntary. Your disability benefits will not be affected by your choice not to participate. However, you may miss out on supports that likely would have enhanced your quality of life, your recovery, or the quality of your return-to-work.

***After I indicate that I would like to participate in the Rehabilitation Program, what happens next?***

You will then be referred to a community-based rehabilitation consultant, who will call you at home, generally within a few days, to make an appointment with you for an in-person meeting to tell you more about the services available to you through the Rehabilitation Program.

***Can you tell me more about the rehabilitation consultants?***

The rehabilitation consultants are credentialed rehabilitation professionals who are contracted by the BCTF to provide services to its members. Each school district has a designated rehabilitation provider with one or more rehabilitation consultants serving that district. The rehabilitation consultants are trained in developing rehabilitation programs suited to the needs of BCTF members and are familiar with the challenges of the teaching profession.

***Where does the rehabilitation meeting take place?***

Meetings with your rehabilitation consultant take place in your own home, or another location that is agreeable to you. If other services such as physiotherapy, psychological counseling, or a fitness assessment are involved in your rehabilitation, they will take place in their community locations.

***Once I am participating in the program, will my local president and employer be informed?***

Yes, your employer and your local president will be informed that you are accessing the Rehabilitation Program, but none of your medical or personal information will be shared with them. Only the information that is pertinent to your return-to-work, such as the accommodations that you will require, will be shared with your employer.

***Is there a cost for involvement in the Rehabilitation Program?***

The program covers costs associated with the involvement of your rehabilitation consultant. There may be a cost for additional services that your rehabilitation consultant recommends, but the Rehabilitation Program may offset them. For example, if your physician recommends that physiotherapy would assist in your recovery and you have exhausted all of your extended health benefits through your employer, the Rehabilitation Program will cost-share your sessions while you are involved with the Rehabilitation Program.

***What services might be cost-shared by the Rehabilitation Program?***

Your rehabilitation consultant may recommend a number of services to assist you which may be cost-shared, including psychological services, physical therapies, occupational therapy services, speech therapy, and naturopathic services to name a few.

***Who decides which services will be offered?***

You and your rehabilitation consultant will develop a rehabilitation plan in conjunction with your medical practitioners. It will detail specific activities and services designed to enhance your medical recovery, quality of life, and/or return-to-work experience. The BCTF Rehabilitation Manager for your district will approve this plan.

***Who can I call at the BCTF if I have questions about my rehabilitation plan?***

The rehabilitation managers at the BCTF are experienced rehabilitation professionals that oversee all of the activities undertaken by the rehabilitation consultants. The name of your rehabilitation manager at the BCTF is included in your initial acceptance letter. You may call your rehabilitation manager at the BCTF anytime you have questions regarding your rehabilitation involvement.

***Who else can I call at the BCTF if I have questions about the operation of the Rehabilitation Program?***

You may also call the Teacher Rehabilitation Program Co-ordinator, Michael Kimmis; the Salary Indemnity Plan Administrator, Chris Arcari; or the Income Security Director, Arnie Lambert. These people are teachers and share with you a teacher's perspective, as well as having an additional wealth of information on other programs through the Income Security Division. Call 604-871-1921 Income Security Division.

DS:cep/mh/tfeu