**Transcript: Rehabilitation Counselling settings and types of work undertaken**

Core issues discussed:

* Variation and diversity in the role
* Opportunity for growth – creating your own pathway based on personal interests
* Employment prospects
* Core skills required to be a Rehabilitation Counsellor
* Importance of adopting a holistic approach

Some further useful sources of information related to settings where Rehabilitation Counsellors might work:

* Occupational Rehabilitation providers – for a list of agencies please search under <http://wwwarpa.org.au/> and *WorkSafe Victoria* list of approved providers.
* Disability Employment Support services/providers – for a list of agencies please search under <http://disabilityemployment.org.au/provider-search/vic/>
* Community-based chronic illness/chronic condition organisations related to conditions such as MS, heart disease, diabetes, spinal cord injury, mental health etc
* Community-based organisations related to drug and alcohol.

**Paul:** Just to the panel generally now, Rehabilitation Counselling has been viewed as quiet variable in terms of the clients, the issues they present with and the settings in which they operate. Can you please tell us a little bit about some of the core settings in which a Rehabilitation Counsellor might work?

**Janette:** There’s no limit. I don’t see a limit to the value of a Rehabilitation Counsellor. In my own background, as I’ve said, I have worked in Occupational Rehabilitation, I’ve had my own Occupational Rehabilitation business, I’ve worked in self-insurance, I’ve been the Rehabilitation Manager within an insurance company. I’ve worked for the ‘Regulator’ in terms of forming legislation, regulations and setting standards. From practice to academia to any setting that you can think of in terms of injury, illness, disease and disability there is a place for Rehabilitation Counsellors.

**Paul:** So it’s more than just *Return to Work*?

**Janette:** Absolutely. The difficult thing is you probably won’t hear us calling ourselves ‘Rehabilitation Counsellors’. That might be part of the core competency that we have. But, different settings have different terminology for describing the work, if you like.

**Michael:** The inherent skills and qualities that are required of a Rehabilitation Counsellor lend themselves to a variety of allied health kind of settings jurisdictions. Could be hospital public, public vs private, it could be *Commonwealth vs State*. I too have worked *within TAC(Transport Accident Commission)* as a Regulator for compulsory third party claims and I’ve worked in DES which is what Greg referred to earlier which is *Disability Employment Services, JSA(Jobs Services Australia)* model, so working with the *Commonwealth, Centrelink* clients. I also do mediation, I also do conflict resolution and I’ve done some training. I work in private practice, so I guess the skills and confidence that I have picked up as a Rehabilitation Counsellor have given me that confidence to be able to jump into different things and get qualifications in related areas to be able to work in those areas. And again, informs and feeds my knowledge and understanding. I take a very holistic approach to injury and a social individual and their recovery.

**Paul:** So it sounds incredibly varied in terms of I guess the setting and an opportunity for people to create their own pathways?

**Michael:** Exactly.

**Janette:** Absolutely. I think that has been a huge attraction for many of us over many years because you evolve in your practice and your interests and move into different sectors and there is always opportunities opening. So the people that I know, that have been in the field for a very long time, continue to build on qualification and knowledge and learning and therefore expands opportunity again. You find we are in institutional settings or community based settings or industrial or occupational settings. We are everywhere really.

**Michael:** One of the key things I think you learn and experience and hewn as a Rehabilitation Counsellor is the ability to negotiate and problem solve. Whether it’s with a doctor, whether it’s with an insurance claims person, an OT or a Physio, allied professionals are involved with that particular client. It’s that ability to have oversight over all the modalities and treatment modalities that are involved and be able to coordinate those and negotiate successful outcomes. Whether it is *Return to Health* or *Return to Work* or it could be non-work related, a-vocational goals, training, volunteer work if it’s not possible for that person to return to paid employment. These are all very important things you learn as a Rehabilitation Counsellor which you then apply to different settings - Career Counselling - you do Vocational Assessments. With the budget that was released last night, where they are looking at transitioning *Welfare to Work* model for the DSP recipients (I think they are under 30’s) that’s going to present a really good opportunity for Rehab to put their stamp on things in terms of being able to assess and assist people in making that transition. It’s very exciting times.