**Transcript: Rehabilitation Counselling in action: Most recent work settings and roles of the panel members**

Core issues discussed:

* Specific examples of what a rehabilitation Counsellor might do
* Important skills: building trust and rapport etc

**Paul:** So what I am hearing is there are so many settings in which a Rehabilitation Counsellor can work and I just thought it would be useful for the audience to hear a little bit about your most recent work setting and what role that you had and what partners you interacted with etc. So can we start off with you Michael?

**Michael:** The example that comes to mind most recently for me is I was called on a *WorkCover* case and what happened is that the previous Occupational Rehab provider had not followed through on a number of things and so I was called in to fix things. This was in the *WorkCover* jurisdiction. So immediately what I had to was establish a rapport and restore trust and faith with the individual client, because they had been let down, the Occupational Rehab Consultant (They were a ‘Consultant’ as appose to a ‘Counsellor’) they let them down, they promised things they couldn’t deliver. So my role was to come in, restore that trust and then basically work with their Psychologist and their Doctor to try and facilitate a *Return to Work.* The person was at work(but because of what had happened), the person was at 20-30 hours, almost back to full time work when something went wrong with the relationship with the Occupational Rehab provider which set them right back. So when I came on, they had started at 30 and then were back to 15. So it was kind of like - having to rebuild that faith, that trust. Then slowly increment their time working with the allied health professionals and with the Psychologist and claims person(that was jumping up and down to get things moving because they have time lines they have to follow) to be settled or back to work within a year and a half in Victoria. So anyways, having taken on that case over a period of 2 – 3 months, a *Return to Work* was put in place, regular meetings and schedules - the client’s faith and trust were restored and that was basically by being in touch more regularly, doing what I said I was going to do, when it was going to be delivered. Setting expectations that are realistic and then delivering on the expectations is another key thing that I have learnt through my career of counselling work. So, not just saying something and then not following it through. So, by doing that and liaising with the claims people, negotiating things with the Claims Manager, we were able to expedite or facilitate a return to full employment within 3 months.

**Paul:** So very successful outcome?

**Michael:** Successful outcome and I only contacted the woman involved last week and she is really happy at work and was very grateful, so it was a win/win.

**Janette:** I have had a really exciting year. About 12 months ago a client came and asked me would I assist them with addressing psychological injury in the workplace. So over the last year, my organisation has partnered with this particular organisation – they are a large disability service provider in Victoria. So a very highly complex and challenging working environments. Lots of occupational assault and other types of psychological stresses. So we have, for the last year, developed and implemented a work well. So I have worked from the bottom up. In terms of working directly with individuals experiencing issues and concerns related to their work that have impacts on their health and well-being. In a very, I call it – *First Response*. Dealing with issues at their source, whether it be workplace stress or injury or chronic health conditions that are impacting their ability to remain productive in the workplace. And from the top, down. So, utilising all of the information, the themes and the trends from what we are working with on the ground. So the real effects of what see are current policies and procedures and leadership skills and the culture of the organisation to impact the transformation of their management systems. So we’ve had about 60 of their people go through this program. We have also worked with teams. So teams experiencing dysfunction that impact the teams productivity and in some circumstances lead to injury. So the whole emphasis is about preventing injury but if there is injury – preventing disability. So not letting incapacity or impairment lead to disability. Keeping people at work while their issues and concerns or health concerns are dealt with. So it’s been a really exciting year, because it’s working with people on the ground but also influencing the organisations from a systems perspective. We are just evaluating our program at the moment and over the last year we can see that over 550 less, lost time, work days which is a significant impact in an organisation with low margin who can’t afford anyone to be away from the workplace really. And, about 1.2 million dollars in claims costs – *Workers Compensation* claims costs. So this is what is going to excite the organisation because their insurance premiums are lowering, productivity is increasing and they are not spending as much money on replacing staff and dealing with the impact of lost time. Importantly, the way that the workforce is being supported in the workplace is being transformed. And, that’s where the real impact is in a professional sense that the workforce is actually being better supported, that injury is prevented from a psychological perspective and where somebody is injured because the work is complex and highly challenging that disability is being prevented. So, that’s been a really exciting year for me and we are moving into phase 2 of this program, so it’s fantastic.

**Paul:** So you are delivering tangible results?

**Janette:** Absolutely. You really have to demonstrate the value of what you are doing. Not just for the individual that you are working with, but for the organisation to keep them invested in the whole program. They can see the value for their workforce, but also the bottom line.