Workers' Comp

Importance of Early Intervention After Trauma

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3 MIN READ

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Traumatic events often have the most intense psychological impact when they occur without warning and in situations that are emotionally overwhelming and beyond one's control (Richens et al., 2020). These experiences can have significant psychological consequences especially when they are left unaddressed. Early psychological intervention is crucial in mitigating the impact of trauma as it helps people recover more quickly and can prevent long-term mental health challenges.

Prevalence of Trauma

According to research, an estimated 37% to 92% of all people will be exposed to a traumatic event at some point in their lives (Breslau et al., 1998). Studies indicate that many people develop symptoms including re-experiencing, avoidance, and hyperarousal shortly after a traumatic event (Kearns et al., 2012). While some people recover, others may develop more persistent symptoms leading to a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, or substance abuse.

Posttraumatic stress disorder can become a chronic condition, with 40% of individuals continuing to experience significant symptoms a decade after onset. It is also associated with higher rates of physical health problems and functional impairment (Kearns et al., 2012).

Economic Burden

According to research, PTSD is associated with higher healthcare costs and work impairments compared to other anxiety disorders (Greenberg et al., 1999). Traumatized workers often report decreased productivity, higher absenteeism, and increased workplace errors. Emergency workers, for example, perceive their work capability to be only 37% of their normal level after trauma (Tehrani, 2020).

Early Intervention

Early psychological interventions have been shown to:

- Reduce Symptom Severity (Richens et al., 2020)
- Prevent PTSD (Roberts et al., 2009)
- Improve Recovery (Meaghan et al., 2012)
- Minimize Workplace Absenteeism (McNally et al., 2003)

Providing timely psychological support is essential for promoting resilience and recovery after trauma. While not all individuals develop long-term conditions, early interventions can improve outcomes for those affected. Making early intervention a priority results in healthier individuals, workplaces, and communities.

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