

# Workplace Rehabilitation Consultant interview questions

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## What to expect

Workplace Rehabilitation Consultant interviews focus on your ability to coordinate return-to-work plans, manage stakeholders and handle sensitive situations with injured workers. You will need to show both technical knowledge of injury management and strong interpersonal skills.

- **Process:** Questions that ask you to walk through your step-by-step approach to developing a return-to-work plan or managing a case.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a specific example from your past experience, often using STAR to structure your answer.
- **Scenario:** Questions that present a realistic situation, such as a disagreement between stakeholders, and ask how you would respond.
- **Technical:** Questions that probe your knowledge of functional capacity assessment, suitable duties or injury management frameworks.
- **Client-facing:** Questions that assess how you communicate with injured workers, particularly when they are distressed or frustrated.

The interview typically starts with a phone screen with a recruiter, then moves to a face-to-face or video interview with a hiring manager. You may also meet a senior consultant or rehabilitation counsellor on a panel. Some employers include a written case study or a scenario exercise where you review a file and explain your approach.

## 1. Walk me through how you develop a return-to-work plan for an injured worker.

### Why they ask

This question assesses your understanding of the return-to-work process and your ability to structure a plan around medical advice, worker goals and workplace demands.

### How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through. Start with the initial assessment, then explain how you gather information from the worker, treating practitioners and employer. Describe how you identify suitable duties, set goals and timeframes, and how you monitor and adjust the plan.

### Example answer

*"First, I conduct an initial assessment with the injured worker to understand their injury, current capacity and return-to-work goals. I review medical information from the treating doctor and any allied health reports. Then I liaise with the employer to identify suitable duties that match the worker's capacity and restrictions. I develop a plan with clear goals, such as a gradual increase in hours or a transition to different tasks. I document the plan and share it with all parties. Throughout, I monitor progress through regular check-ins and adjust the plan as the worker's capacity changes. If there are setbacks, I coordinate with the treating practitioners and employer to find solutions."*

## 2. Tell me about a time you had to manage a disagreement between an employer and a treating doctor about suitable duties.

### Why they ask

This question explores your stakeholder management and conflict resolution skills, which are central to the role.

### How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Describe the situation, the task you had to achieve, the action you took to resolve the disagreement, and the result.

#### Example answer

*"A worker had a back injury and the treating doctor recommended light duties with no lifting over five kilograms. The employer said they could not accommodate that restriction in the worker's usual area. I arranged a meeting with both parties to understand their concerns. I explained the medical restrictions clearly and asked the employer to consider temporary duties in another area, such as administration or quality checking. I also spoke with the doctor to confirm whether any flexibility was possible as the worker improved. We agreed on a four-week plan with a gradual increase in duties. The worker returned to work safely and the employer was satisfied with the outcome."*

### **3. A worker's recovery has stalled and they are reluctant to return to work. How would you handle this?**

#### Why they ask

This scenario tests your judgement under pressure, your empathy and your ability to problem-solve when progress is difficult.

#### How to structure your answer

Use a judgement under pressure structure. Acknowledge the worker's perspective, assess the reasons for reluctance, explore options, and escalate if needed.

#### Example answer

*"I would start by having a private conversation with the worker to understand why they are reluctant. It might be fear of reinjury, lack of confidence, or a workplace issue. I would listen without judgement and validate their concerns. Then I would explore what would make a return to work feel safe, such as a gradual start, different duties or additional support. I would also check with the treating doctor to see if there are any medical barriers or adjustments needed. If the reluctance continued, I would discuss the case with my manager and consider a case conference with the insurer and other stakeholders. My goal is always to find a way forward that supports the worker's recovery and respects their needs."*

### **4. How do you assess a worker's functional capacity and match it to suitable duties?**

#### Why they ask

This question checks your technical knowledge of functional capacity assessment and how you translate that into practical return-to-work plans.

#### How to structure your answer

Use a technical explanation structure. Describe the methods you use, such as standardised assessments, observation and worksite analysis. Explain how you match the results to job demands.

#### Example answer

*"I use a combination of methods. I might conduct a functional capacity evaluation using standardised tests that measure lifting, carrying, sitting, standing and other physical demands. I also observe the worker performing simulated tasks. I review medical reports for any restrictions. Then I conduct a worksite assessment to understand the physical and psychological demands of the job. I compare the worker's current capacity with the job demands and identify any gaps. From there, I recommend suitable duties, modifications or aids that allow the worker to return safely. I document everything clearly so the employer and insurer can see the rationale."*

### **5. How do you communicate with an injured worker who is frustrated with the rehabilitation process?**

#### Why they ask

This question assesses your empathy, communication style and ability to de-escalate a difficult conversation.

**How to structure your answer**

Use an empathy and communication structure. Start by listening and acknowledging their feelings, then explain the process clearly, and collaborate on next steps.

**Example answer**

*"I would start by giving the worker my full attention and letting them vent without interruption. I would acknowledge their frustration and thank them for sharing it. Then I would explain the parts of the process they might find confusing, using plain language and avoiding jargon. I would ask what would help them feel more in control, such as more frequent updates or a different contact person. I would work with them to set small, achievable steps and confirm that I am on their side. If needed, I would follow up with a written summary of what we discussed and agreed. My aim is to rebuild trust and keep the rehabilitation on track."*

**6. What do you do when an insurer requests a progress report and you have conflicting information from stakeholders?**

**Why they ask**

This question probes your problem-solving, attention to detail and ability to manage conflicting information in a report.

**How to structure your answer**

Use a problem-solving and reporting structure. Describe how you gather facts, reconcile differences, and write a clear report.

**Example answer**

*"I would first gather all the information I have, including medical reports, my case notes and any communications from the employer or worker. If there are conflicting opinions, I would contact each party separately to clarify their position and check if there has been a misunderstanding. I might arrange a case conference to bring everyone together. I would then write a balanced report that sets out the different views and explains how I have weighed them. I would focus on the worker's functional capacity and the goals of the return-to-work plan. If I still cannot reconcile the information, I would flag it to my manager and the insurer, and recommend a way forward, such as an independent medical examination."*