

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL: RETURN TO WORK PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

KEY INSIGHTS

Public Safety Personnel (PSP), including police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and correctional officers, face high-risk environments that can lead to psychological injuries such as PTSD. Effective Return-to-Work (RTW) processes are crucial for their recovery and reintegration into their life roles.

STUDY METHODS

- Chart review of available **occupational therapy client records of PSP** with work-related psychological injuries from two Ontario companies
31 Charts Reviewed (2016-20)
- **Web-based self-report survey** of Ontario occupational therapists providing RTW services to this same population
49 Surveys Completed (2021-22)

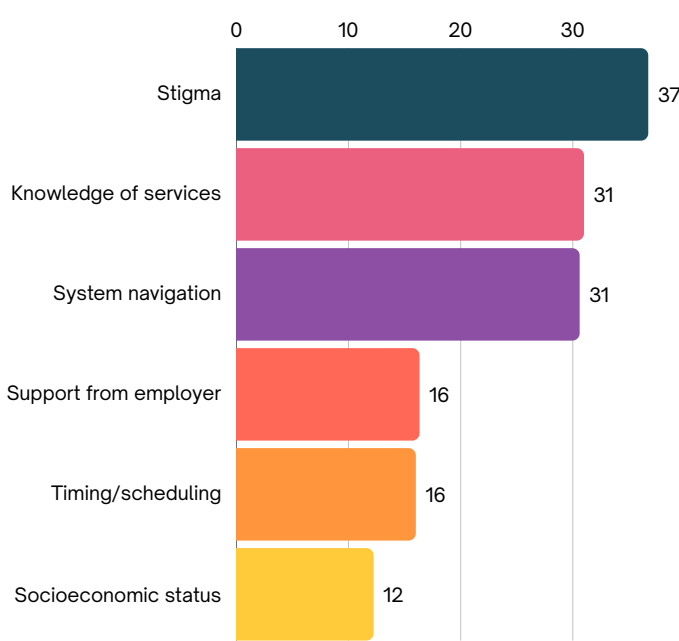
STUDY PURPOSE

To explore the **therapeutic practices and personal experiences of occupational therapists** working on RTW with PSP who have work-related psychological injuries.

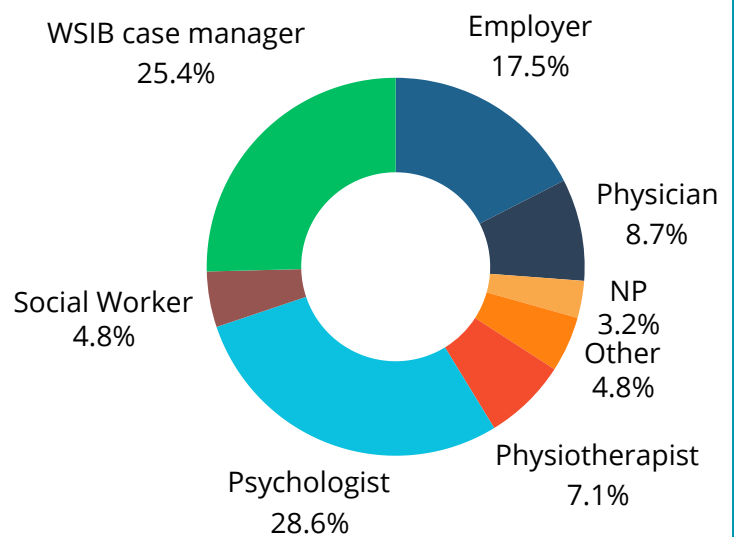
Occupational therapists used:

- **Symptom-based and occupational assessments**
- **Occupational, psychological, and coping-focused treatments**

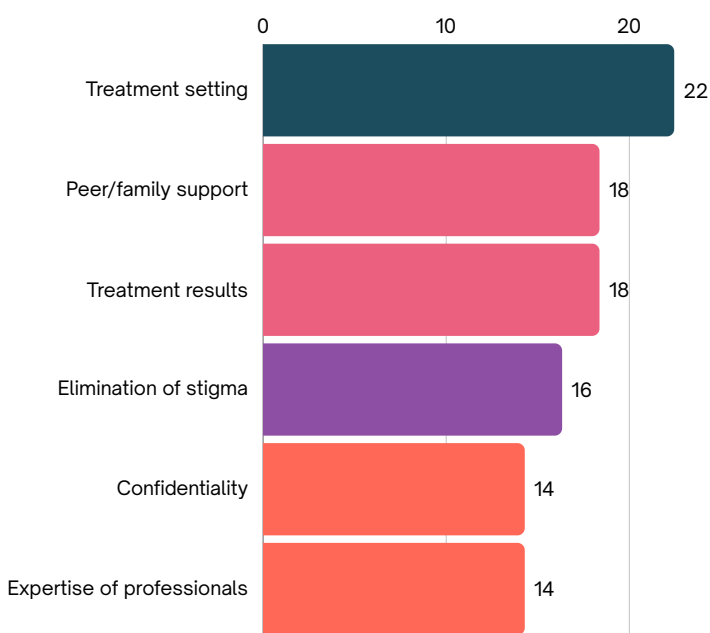
BIGGEST BARRIERS TO RTW (%)



INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATORS



BIGGEST FACILITATORS OF RTW (%)



KEY MESSAGES

Occupational therapy assessments and treatments for PSP with work-related psychological injuries should ensure a focus on clients' occupational performance and participation.

Occupational therapists can bring a unique occupation focused and community-based approach that may be especially useful to this population in their RTW journeys.

Further research needs to be conducted exploring effective occupational therapy interventions for PSP returning to work after psychological injuries.

CONCLUSIONS

- Use occupational approaches to both **assessment and treatment**, and **document and study** these approaches
- Barriers to RTW included challenges with **interprofessional collaboration** as well as **stigma in PSP workplaces**
- Respondents expressed a desire for **more published research** surrounding occupational therapy-specific RTW interventions to **facilitate evidence-based practice**

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Further explore use of occupation-focused interventions and their outcomes.

Study effectiveness of RTW programs for PSPs with work-related psychological injuries.