

Connect & Care

Leadership Support for Vulnerable Workers

- Program Development,
Testing and Scaling Report

October 2021

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Connect & Care

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Program Development, Testing and Scaling Report

September 2021

Acknowledgements

The *Connect & Care: Leadership for Vulnerable Workers: Program Development, Testing and Scaling Report* was produced by icare NSW Insurance for the NSW Agency Engagement team in collaboration with QBE Insurance, and the Department of Communities and Justice.

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Connect & Care Forewords

I am pleased to present the *Connect and Care: Leadership Support for Vulnerable Workers Report*. The report is the culmination of extensive work undertaken by a team of driven, compassionate individuals that represents the caring, customer focused approach.

When Maddi Bailes first informed me about a project she was collaborating on with QBE Insurance Australia (QBE) and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) that was yielding tremendous results, I was both intrigued and unsurprised. Intrigued because the bare bones of the concept sounded simple and I was keen to understand the nuance in execution that had generated the positive outcomes. And unsurprised because for as long as I've worked with those involved, I've found them to be focused, caring and outcome driven for those involved in our scheme. Maddi herself has often taking a lead role in icare projects that have a direct impact on the wellbeing of the people we care for.

Upon finding out more, what resonated most was how the positive outcomes were driven by the people involved. To bring Connect and Care to life, Maddi (icare) and Farah (QBE) enlisted a group of inquisitive individuals from across icare and QBE who were willing to lend their respective expertise and collective determination to attain success. The group didn't need a big dollar budget to accomplish their goals, instead they brought care, concern, skill and innovation to tackle the issue of psychological injuries in the workplace.

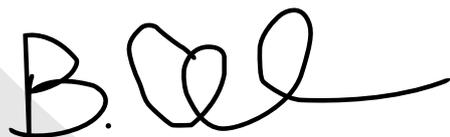
Psychological injuries account for a material amount of all NSW government workers compensation claims, having grown over the last decade. There are numerous interventions in motion to address this issue in line with [Safe Work's mentally healthy workplaces strategy](#). Connect and Care is one part of icare's mental health strategy, and it is available to all NSW Government agencies with plans to scale it in time.

Each step taken is vitally important when you consider that nearly one in six Australian workers experience a significant level of mental ill-health in a four-week period. If left unaddressed, the long-term impacts on an individual's mental health and quality of life can be serious and in turn affect their families and the community.

We need to address these challenges to safeguard and ensure the continued mental health of our State's workforce. Connect and Care aims to deliver on this, particularly in some of the higher risk occupations within NSW Government.

Connect and Care represents icare's commitment to care for the people of NSW so our community can thrive.

I'm proud to present to you this report and I look forward to witnessing the growing impact Connect and Care has on our community and scheme.



Britt Coombe
General Manager, Agency Engagement
IfNSW, icare NSW



As icare's Client Engagement Manager for the Department of Communities and Justice, I welcome the opportunity to introduce this report detailing the development process, testing, and scaling of our 'Connect & Care: Leadership Support for Vulnerable Workers' program.

The prevalence of psychological injuries within the public sector caused by exposure to traumatic events, interpersonal conflict and work stress has driven the need for such interventions.

It was an absolute pleasure to work with the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre leadership team, Kempsey hospital, John Morony Correctional Centre and South West Community Corrections, whose industry expertise were instrumental to the development of a support program tailored to the complex risk exposures NSW front line workers face.

This report demonstrates the numerous benefits for leaders and organisations in developing their skills to support vulnerable workers in industries with high exposure to psychological injuries. It also provides details about the content of the program offering, its objectives and evaluation framework.

The Connect & Care program aims to assist leadership groups create and embed their own contextualised and integrated support framework whilst developing the individual leader's capability to support vulnerable workers. The program is designed to be comprehensive yet flexible to enable employers to easily adopt it.

Connect & Care acknowledges that leaders have a big part to play in creating and preserving a psychologically safe, healthy and supportive workplace. I encourage our stakeholders to consider the findings and recommendations contained in this report to ensure continued scaling of the program.



Maddi Bailes
Client Engagement Manager, icare

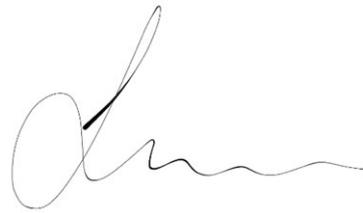


As QBE's Risk and Innovation Manager, I am delighted to present and contribute to this report on behalf of QBE Insurance which outlines our development process, testing and scaling of our 'Connect & Care: Leadership Support for Vulnerable Workers' program.

Following the success of the initial pilot run at Frank Baxter Youth Justice centre, we conducted additional pilots across various locations within the Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Health and NSW Police. Each built on the last by addressing recommendations to strengthen the pilot's findings, which you will learn more about in this report.

We have shaped Connect & Care into a comprehensive learning and development program that is available face-to-face and virtually. The program aims to assist leadership groups create and embed their own contextualised and integrated support framework whilst developing the individual leader's capability to support vulnerable workers.

The report findings and early results are showing that the framework created is transferable across numerous NSW government agencies and can be easily adapted to suit the unique work environment of frontline workers.



Farah Shams
Risk and Innovation Manager, QBE Insurance



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1 Executive summary

This document was written for icare customers, employers, services providers, and health practitioners, operating in industries with high risks of complex workplace injuries. It provides an overview of the development, testing and scaling, and the role of the *Connect & Care* program in seeking to improve line managers relationships and vulnerable workers in the workplace.

This document addresses the recommendations previously reported in the *Connect & Care: Leadership Support for Vulnerable Worker Preliminary report* ('the preliminary report') including:

- Further development and wider implementation of the *Connect & Care* Program.
- Development of a self-training package.
- Continued scaling and evaluation of the program across government agencies.

This document should be read in conjunction with the preliminary report.

What is a complex workplace injury?

A psychological or physical injury requiring greater than two weeks of incapacity. This includes complex mechanisms of injury, such as a violent incident and interpersonal conflicts or an accident that results in multiple injured workers.

What is a vulnerable worker?

When we refer to 'vulnerable' in the context of *Connect & Care*, this is someone who may be potentially moving down the mental health continuum towards illness.

This could be due suffering a complex physical injury, being involved in a workplace incident, or an incident outside of work, or having a mental health condition.

The person may be showing signs and symptoms that they are not doing well, and that they may need support.



Risk

Complex workplace injuries relate to an individual's physical and/or psychological health. The effect often extends to the individual's social network including family, friends, work colleagues. If not well managed, the individual's recovery and capacity to sustainably return to work can be compromised. Complex workplace injuries can also have many direct and indirect costs to employers including increases in workers' compensation costs, absenteeism rates, workplace culture and service delivery.

Remedy

Connect & Care is a co-developed program aimed at building leaders' capability to respond to complex workplace injuries. The program includes:

1. Experiential six-hour education intervention (consisting of three two-hour workshops) based on adult learning principles.
2. Tailored best practice checklist to support an injured worker validated by research and empirical evidence.
3. Adaptable implementation plan template with prompt questions for guidance on embedding in an agency.

A program adoption evaluation is incorporated to provide empirical evidence as to the impact.

Risks and challenges

Due to the nature of their work, some participants could be required to respond to emergency situations. They often had to remain connected to a communication device such as radios or mobile phones during each workshop. At times they were not always able to provide their full attention.

It was also important to consider participants' previous training and skills. The testing stages of the program enabled the program development team to quickly adapt and ensure that learning was completely relevant to participants needs.

Some participants performed shift work or had other leadership commitments and therefore were not available to participate in all sessions. The responsibility to disseminate information outside of the workshops was allocated to the injury management team.

We also took into account that the sensitive nature of the information contained in the program had the potential to trigger past traumas experienced and/or cause participants to feel discomfort. It was critical for facilitators to acknowledge this potential risk and put systems into place to support participants who may experience psychological difficulties during or after the workshop sessions.

And in recent years, there has been an oversaturation of programs and resources about mental health, which could result in some agencies being reluctant to take on yet another mental health initiative. It was important for Connect & Care to differentiate itself by showing that it filled a gap in the market and why the program works.

Results

Connect & Care was piloted within the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre. The positive outcomes from the program included:

- A reduction in the incidence rate of physical and psychological Injuries by 57 per cent in 2019 Q4 and 2020 Q1 compared to Q2 and Q3 of 2019 when the young offenders' riot of July 2019 occurred. Further analysis of comparing the 2019 Q4 and 2020 Q1 to the incidence rate of the year before 2018 Q4 and 2019 Q1 there is a 28 per cent reduction in incidence rates.
- A reduction of approximately \$60,000 in overall spend of psychological Injury claims costs in 2020 Q1 when comparing to 2019 Q4.

- Further analysis shows the overall reduction of psychological injury claim costs in 2020 Q1 is mainly due to the reduction of weekly benefits paid, as injured workers were recovering and getting back to their jobs quicker.
- Improvement in injured workers' customer experience scores since the first Workshop in November 2019. Frank Baxter is receiving a customer experience scores of seven and above. Evenly split between passive and promoters with no detractors. The detailed analysis is contained in the preliminary report.

Key recommendations

- Continued scaling and evaluation of the program across government agencies and large private employers.
- Establishment of a *Connect & Care* continuous improvement group.
- Continued monitoring and reporting on program impact.

Key Findings

Key findings from the *Connect & Care* program are presented below. The findings were obtained using both quantitative (monitoring of workplace injury rate, return to work rate and employee questionnaires) and qualitative (workshop feedback and interview) methods.

1	Complex workplace injuries are prevalent.
2	Leaders struggle to understand the needs of workers who suffered workplace injuries.
3	Leaders do not always understand the support framework and stakeholder framework that support recovery and return to work particularly when a workers' compensation claim is lodged.
4	<i>Connect & Care</i> seemingly reduced the frequency of complex workplace injuries.
5	<i>Connect & Care</i> seemingly improved return to health outcomes for injured workers.
6	<i>Connect & Care</i> was positively evaluated by participants, with participants reporting the skills and knowledge provided was useful to the requirement of their work.
7	<i>Connect & Care</i> seemingly is transferable across a range of NSW Government agencies.

Recommendations

Based on the evidence collected in the testing stages of *Connect & Care*, the following recommendations are proposed:

- *Connect & Care* should first be scaled within NSW Government agencies that have high exposure to psychological injuries. As a second stage it should be adapted for effective use in large private organisations and industries.
- A *Connect & Care* continuous improvement steering committee should be created. The committee should develop terms of references. The aim of the committee should be to ensure that the program remains effective, relevant, up to date with best practice and cost effective.
- Future implementation of *Connect & Care* should be evaluated yearly based on the evaluation framework contained in this report. The framework includes the collection of program participant feedback as well as impacts on injury rates, return to work outcomes and injured workers sentiment. Continuous evaluation will enable comprehensive study of the program's effect in the medium and long-term on workers who have suffered a complex workplace injury. The findings should be reported to the *Connect & Care* continuous improvement steering committee.
- *Connect & Care* should be continually revised and improved with ongoing feedback from program participants and stakeholders.
- Investigate how the findings of *Connect & Care* can be incorporated into the employer's wider organisational policies, with the objective of developing and applying best-practice guidelines regarding leadership capability to support vulnerable workers.
- Investigate how *Connect & Care* can be modified to prevent complex workplace injuries.



Introduction

Exposure to hazards, complex relationships and job demand in the workplace can have an adverse impact on employees' mental health. Factors such as inadequate support can lead to or exacerbate mental health conditions within the workplace.

Work-related stress has been linked with high levels of:

- unplanned absences including sick leave,
- staff turnover,
- withdrawal and presenteeism, and
- poor work and poor product quality.

According to Safe Work Australia, claims involving mental health conditions are usually associated with an above average time off work and higher than average claim costs. Most mental health claims are caused by work pressure (31 per cent), harassment and/or bullying (27 per cent) or exposure to workplace violence (14 per cent) and exposure to a traumatic event (7 per cent). For more information including data and statistics, go to the Safe Work Australia's mental health in the workplace website [here](#).

The quality of the relationship between a worker and their direct line manager can have a range of positive consequences. Research has shown that strengthening relationships and engagement between direct line managers and psychologically injured workers can improve return to work outcomes.

The Connect & Care project was established in 2019 as a collaborative initiative involving the Agency Engagement Team at icare New South Wales (icare), QBE Insurance (QBE) and the Department of Community and Justice (DCJ). The project aimed to improve leader capability to support and optimise the recovery and return to work of employees who have suffered a psychological injury, identify potential interventions and solutions, devise and deliver a comprehensive co-designed intervention program, and evaluate this intervention.

From the recommendations contained in the preliminary report, icare, QBE and DCJ created a fully developed learning and development program together with pre-intervention materials that aims to develop the necessary skills to ensure an organisation is ready to deliver and implement their own programs. This guide enables employers to self-service and supporting guides, a detailed program delivery package learning tool kit and an evaluation kit.

Connect & Care was developed by industry, technical, and learning and development experts using the findings of the project and academic research. The Connect & Care program was then tested with various industry groups and refined and scaled to all NSW government agencies.

This report provides details of the program – its background, testing, implementation, and evaluation.

Recommendations are provided to guide future best practice in this important sphere of worker and organisational performance and wellbeing.

Definition of terms

Complex workplace injury

A psychological or physical injury requiring greater than two weeks of incapacity. Includes complex mechanisms of injury, such as a violent incident or an accident that results in multiple injured workers.

Claims frequency

How often a claim occurs.

Sensitive claims/behaviours

When a worker exhibits suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation or has indicated an intent to harm others.

Claims cost

The total cost of a claim to an organisation including the investigation, treatment, and wage loss costs resulting from a workplace injury.

Customer Experience Measurement (CXM) CXM is a survey issued to our Injured Workers by icare which asks a series of questions in relation to their claims experience. At the end of the survey the Injured Worker will provide a rating out of 10.

Promoters

Parties in the CXM system that score their experience 9-10 out of 10. They include those that would recommend the agency/claims managers to others.

Detractors

Parties in the CXM system that score the experience from 0 - 6 out of 10. They are unhappy and can damage your brand/reputation through negative word-of-mouth.

Passives

Parties in the CXM system that score the experience 7-8 out of 10. They are satisfied but unenthusiastic and neither hinder nor help your offering/product.



Why we created Connect & Care

Psychological injury claims are amongst those with the highest growth rate and increasing expenditure in the NSW Workers Compensation scheme. To understand the multi-faceted causes for this position, icare conducts quarterly health checks covering claims management practices, medical management, low-value care, portfolio management and customer behaviour.

Customer behaviour was assessed to determine any relationship between workers who have had less than 13 weeks off work due to a workplace injury and employers' behaviours that positively impacted claims outcomes, with a focus on 'return to wellness' and 'return to work'.

During this health check there was early evidence that employers who actively engaged with their workers immediately following the date of incapacity and maintained contact throughout the liability determination period, had lower rates of worker dissatisfaction, higher perceived positive engagement and increased interest and participation in recovery and return to work.

In response to this evidence, icare consulted with numerous employers to understand why some were not engaging with workers who sustained psychological injury. This engagement revealed the following themes:

- Employers were scared that further contact with workers would aggravate symptoms.
- Employers did not feel confident in how to respond to or manage complex behaviours over the phone (crying, aggression, self-harm etc).
- Employers felt sceptical the psychological injury occurred during employment because there is a lack of tangible evidence available with such injuries.
- Employers felt disempowered to influence return to work on psychological injury claims.

Understanding the reasons behind an employer's reluctance to engage workers with psychological injury was the catalyst for designing a practical tool that provides employers knowledge on when and how to positively engage workers with psychological injuries during the challenging acute injury phase and/or liability determination period, to increase successful and sustained return to work.

The 'Checklist for Employers - Engaging Workers after Psychological Injury' was designed to be interactive, offering employers the opportunity to document early positive interactions with workers covering connection, engagement, support and return to work.

Systematic literature review

The checklist was designed based on claims management trends, return to work patterns and employer feedback. Before the checklist was formally released to employers, icare had the checklist independently reviewed including a systematic literature review undertaken in January 2019 by the RISE team at Griffith University.

The findings by Griffith University supported the *Checklist for Employers – Engaging Workers after Psychological Injury* as a best practice document. Following recommendations from the university the document was edited to include references to literature under each instruction to demonstrate that these behaviours are evidenced-based and further provides employers with the opportunity to build additional competence responding to psychological injury claims.

Overview of Connect & Care

On 22 July 2019, approximately 20 Youth Justice employees at the Frank Baxter Centre suffered both physical and psychological injuries as the result of an inmate riot. Realising the need to address recovery and return-to-work strategies, icare subsequently teamed up with QBE and Youth Justice to strengthen the pilot findings into a comprehensive learning and development program to upskill managers with the necessary tools to manage complex injuries in the workplace. This program is available to be delivered face-to-face and virtually.

Purpose

The purpose of Connect & Care is to reduce the incidence and intensity of complex workplace injuries and aid recovery by building the capabilities of line managers to support vulnerable and injured workers.

Priority is given to industries or agencies with workers most at risk of complex injuries/high numbers of complex WC claims.

Target Audience

The target audience for Connect & Care are line managers in operational roles managing front line workers. These are typically team leaders such as unit managers in correctional facilities, area commands in emergency services, nurse unit managers in health, managers of case workers in community services, host or lead teachers and principals in education.

The program is designed to run with a team of line managers of 10-20 people from an agency location/business unit/department. Another version of the program has been developed for line managers to attend from different agencies to cater for smaller agencies who may not have the numbers for their own program.

Outcomes

Connect & Care is intended to deliver outcomes on three levels:

For the worker: Receiving best practice support from their line manager if at risk of injury or should a complex injury occur (psychological or physical).



For the Line manager: Endowed with the willingness, confidence, and competence to provide best practice support to vulnerable workers to prevent injury. To facilitate recovery and return to work if an injury occurs, and to apply appropriate self-care.

For the organisation: Reduction in complex workplace injury claims, and increased productivity and positive workplace engagement.

Target capabilities

The program is designed to build and reinforce these capabilities in line managers:

Mindset: Take on accountability for the welfare of a vulnerable worker and the critical role they play in prevention and recovery through proactive, best practice interventions.

Empathy: Appreciate the needs of a vulnerable worker.

Self-awareness: Emotional intelligence and bias to understand their perceptions and the impact of their behaviour.

Transfer of skills: Apply their positive people skills to the vulnerable worker and for self-care.

Technical Workers Compensation: Understanding basics of workers compensation ecosystem relevant to vulnerable workers and their managers.



Five key components of Connect & Care

Pre-work

Participants are provided with information on Connect & Care including a video which outlines the purpose and benefits of the program. They are asked to complete a questionnaire to reflect on the experience of an injured worker if they themselves experienced a workplace injury. They bring this to the workshop, and it is integrated into an activity.

Workshop 1 CONNECT

Purpose

To connect the learner with key people, concepts and drivers of the program.

Learning outcomes

Validate that this program is critical to the welfare of a vulnerable worker, my team and the organisation

Describe the workplace needs of a vulnerable or injured worker and impacts if not met.

Refresh or explain the signs, symptoms, and treatments of complex injury.

Describe the parts of the WC process relevant to me and the roles in the organisation they can support me.

Workshop agenda

Connecting (30 minutes)

Welcome, program overview and ice breaker to connect with each other, the facilitator, and the program.

World of the vulnerable worker (30 minutes)

This is a facilitated activity to explore the world of the vulnerable worker – what they may experience, think, feel, behave and need as well as impacts if needs not met by the workplace when an injury – potential and actual – occurs. Reflect on their pre-work which explored if they were the injured worker.

What you need to know (50 minutes)

Presentation and facilitated discussion on complex injuries and trauma, explore claims data and impact, overview of the workers compensation process.

Program approach

Connect & Care consists of three two-hour workshops with activities before the first workshop to prepare the learner, and after the third workshop to embed the program into the organisation. The workshops may be held close together or within two-to-four weeks of each other.

A virtual and face to face version of the program have been developed to enable flexibility and geographic reach in its delivery.



The workshops are designed to enable learning self-discovery by participants. The focus is on ‘facilitating’ participant’s own learning through discussion and activities, and role modelling target capabilities and behaviours.

It is about engaging and asking rather than telling or informing. It is the facilitator’s role to create a safe and non-judgemental learning environment where participants feel comfortable to be open and honest, and to share their views freely without judgement.

Workshop 1 wrap up (10 minutes)

Learners share key take-aways from workshop and look forward to what to expect for workshop 2. They are provided with homework to observe themselves / reflect on interactions with workers.

Workshop 2 CARE

Purpose

To explore processes, skills, and behaviours that deliver best practice care as line manager to a vulnerable worker and balance that with appropriate self-care.

Learning Outcomes

Explain a best practice process and activities to connect, support and engage with a vulnerable/ injured worker.

Describe and leverage skills and behaviours for positive and proactive interactions with a vulnerable / injured worker.

Explore self-care strategies and develop a personal action plan.

Workshop Agenda

Re-Connecting (15 minutes)

Welcome and ice breaker to re-connect with the program and each other again, and to create a safe learning environment.

Best practice care for a vulnerable/ injured worker (80 minutes)

Introduce the Connect & Care checklist with a presentation, a facilitated discussion and experiential activities to understand each of the steps and what is required to deliver on this.

Self-care strategies (15 minutes)

Exploration of self-care strategies through brainstorming and the facilitator providing tips and options. Developing a personal action plan to choose which they would apply to themselves.

Workshop 2 wrap up (10 minutes)

Learners share key take-aways from workshop 2, look forward to what to expect for workshop 3, and are given homework on self-care.

Workshop 3 CONNECT & CARE

Purpose

To brainstorm, agree and commit to apply the Connect & Care Implementation Plan and related skills and behaviours in their team, business unit,

or location.

Learning outcomes

Brainstorm how they will apply and embed the Connect & Care Checklist in their team, department, and location by developing their Implementation Plan.

Describe their individual commitment to support vulnerable workers and the actions they will take.

Workshop agenda

Bringing it together (30 minutes)

Facilitated logo and slogan ice breaker to explore what has been covered so far in the program and ideas on bringing it together in a vision statement for their organisation.

Applying the Connect & Care checklist in their team, business unit, or location (70 minutes)

Explanation of the two checklist actions on workers compensation payments and suitable duties.

Group work activity to brainstorm practical application of the Connect & Care checklist in their organisation to develop their Implementation Plan - who does what and when. Roving brainstorm to come up with ideas and facilitated discussion to draft the Implementation Plan for their team, business unit, location.

Program wrap-up and next steps (20 minutes)

Learners share key take-aways from the program and their personal commitment to act, be accountable, and champion the change required. Discuss next steps. Complete the program evaluation.

The Connect & Care program is supported by several resources which include:

- **Connect & Care Checklist:** for engaging a worker following an injury
- **Connect & Care Implementation Plan:** for guidance through prompt questions to develop an action plan to implement the Connect & Care Checklist and the program's teachings in an organisation.
- **Connect & Care Workbook:** to take notes during participation in Connect & Care for future reference.
- **Trauma video series:** three-part video series where a psychologist provides fundamental information on workplace trauma and best practice trauma informed care that can be leveraged by a line manager.

Evaluation of Connect & Care

Connect & Care has been designed to include a formal evaluation process to measure the success of the program following its delivery to each organisation.

This is split into two evaluation components: participant feedback and impact of the program.

Participant feedback

The first evaluation component is to understand the overall experience of participants via an online or written end-of-program survey.

This is to demonstrate that the program was relevant to the role frontline team leaders have in supporting workers who are at risk of, or experiencing a complex injury by building their understanding of vulnerable worker's experience, their capabilities to support these workers and embedding into their organisation tailored practices for leaders to support vulnerable workers. There are two surveys of participants.

The first survey is completed immediately post-program to evaluate the delivery and relevance for participants.

A second survey is completed by participants six months post-program to measure its impact on participants and evaluates the ongoing application of skills learnt from the program.

Impact of program

The second evaluation component measures the impact of the program on the agency and analyses the impact on the claim's performance and customer experience measures.

Evaluations tools created include the Connect & Care Scorecard, custom Connect & Care Qlik Sense worksheets and Customer Experience Measure (CXM) reports.

These tools allow an agency to evaluate the impact of the program using claims data, financial performance and CXM data.





Connect & Care development, testing, refining, and scaling

Aims

Connect & Care aims to reduce the incidence (frequency), intensity (severity), and improve return to work outcomes of an injured worker with a complex workplace injury.

It achieves this by enhancing line managers' capabilities to effectively connect, engage and support vulnerable workers by developing the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to effectively use the Connect & Care Checklist. It does this by building knowledge and skills in:

- Complex workplace injuries
- Social and emotional support
- Perspective taking and empathy
- Rapport and relationship building
- Best practice support for vulnerable workers
- Emotional recognition and regulation
- Effective and assertive communication
- Staff empowerment and customer-oriented control
- Coping skills and strategies

Co-design is a core principle of the program which enables participants to tailor the Connect & Care Checklist to organisational needs and create a sustainable and bespoke Implementation Plan.

Background engagement and development of Connect & Care

The initial pilot program comprised of three two-hours sessions originally developed through a co-design process at the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre facilitated by Maddi Bailes and Farah Shams supported by a trauma expert.

The initial development, co-design, testing and evaluation of the pilot took place between September 2019 and May 2020 with all findings incorporated in the preliminary report.

Learnings from the Frank Baxter pilot were used and strengthened to develop the 2021 Connect & Care program.

Designing the 2021 Connect & Care (May 2020 – February 2021)

Following the initial pilot, a diverse project team from icare, QBE and agencies was put together to design, develop and further pilot the program.

See Appendix 3 for the bios of the project team.

Design and development approach

In designing the program, the team followed three key guidelines:

- Base the program on the research and empirical evidence which resulted in the Connect & Care Checklist.
- Leverage design thinking and co-design principles.
- Ensure the program is relevant, practicable and sustainable in the organisational context of participants (time and resource constraints), and adapted to demographic, educational and occupational profile of participants.

The development of the program followed the ADDIE instructional design methodology: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation.

Analysis

As input into the design of the program, the team undertook the following analysis activities:

- Consideration and further development of existing icare resources and research including the Employer Checklist to support an injured worker.
- Analysis of the theories and research used to develop the Checklist in the fields of social, health, organisational and counselling psychology,
- Paper, online, and in-person sources of information and advice regarding practices, culture, and industry knowledge specific to front line team managers.
- Discussions in, and outcomes from regular project group meetings conducted by icare and QBE Insurance.
- Review of key learnings from the initial pilot at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre.

Design

The design process started with a facilitated instructional design workshop.

This workshop focused on drawing out the experience from the initial pilot. It was built on with a deep dive brainstorm into the purpose, target audience, current and desired capabilities as well as an initial view on the education intervention that could deliver on this.

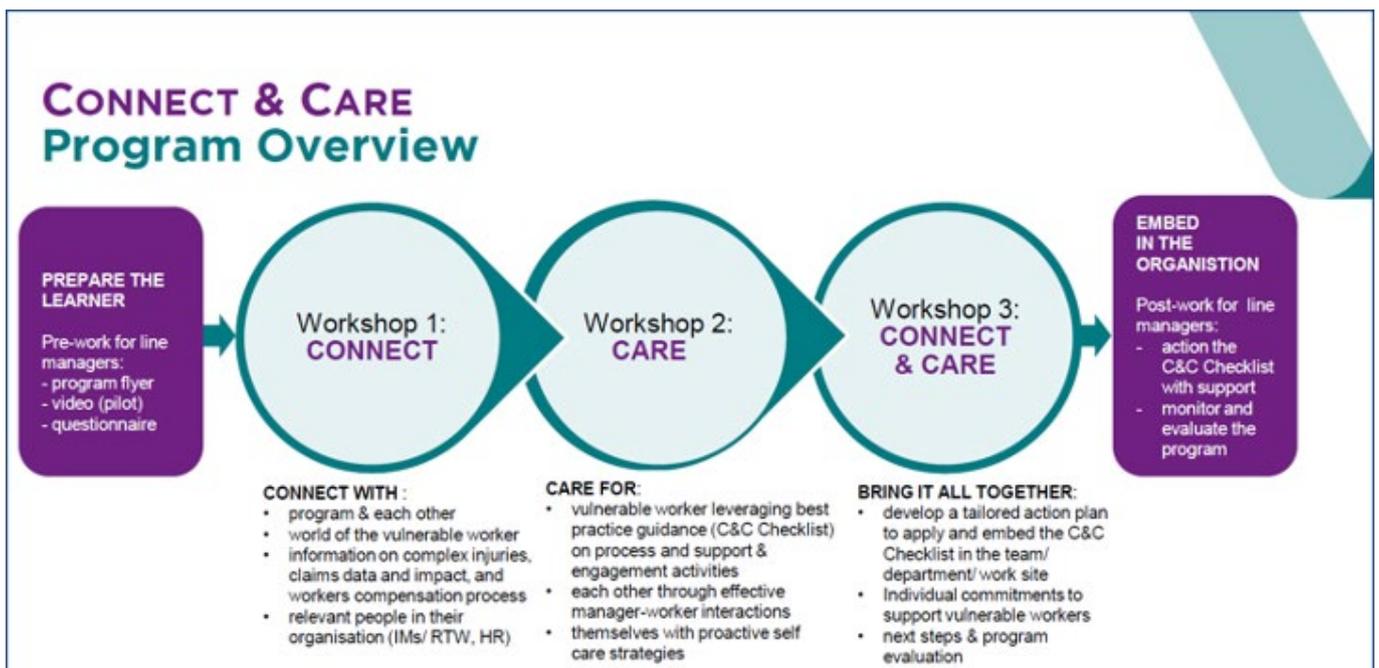
Step 1: Building capabilities to support line managers to strengthen relationships and improve engagement with their psychologically injured worker/s							
1. Purpose of Education	2. Target Audience/s	3. DESIRED capabilities	4. CURRENT capabilities	5. Capability GAPS	6. Education Solutions	7. Preferred Channels	8. Other Considerations
<p>Clarify the BUSINESS NEED Connect & Care will address.</p> <p><i>What problem/s are we trying to solve?</i></p>	<p>Identify the target AUDIENCE (roles) Connect & Care would focus on.</p> <p><i>Describe audience characteristics - role, level, location, size of target audience, turnover in roles (new starter population and frequency). differences between agencies</i></p> <p>Note - Step 2: Building capabilities to roll out Connect & Care in an agency. Who would champion and roll out in an agency? Describe the roles etc?</p>	<p>Identify the DESIRED capabilities - <i>Knowledge, Skills, Mindset, and Behaviours for the target audience/s identified.</i></p> <p><i>What will learners be able to 'do on-the-job' as a result of completing/ participating in education intervention/s?</i></p> <p><i>What does 'good' look like?</i></p>	<p>Identify the CURRENT capabilities - <i>Knowledge, Skills, Mindset, and Behaviours for the target audience/s identified.</i></p> <p><i>What is the target audience currently doing well on the job in relation to this?</i></p>	<p>Identify the GAPS capabilities - <i>Knowledge, Skills, Mindset, and Behaviours for the target audience/s identified.</i></p> <p><i>What is new that they need to learn and where are the performance gaps?</i></p> <p><i>Confirm that performance gaps could be addressed through 'education' solution/s. What other solutions need to be in place to support this?</i></p> <p><i>Prioritise these gaps in relation to the business need.</i></p>	<p>Brainstorm potential EDUCATION solution/s to address identified capability GAPS for the target audience/s.</p> <p>Review and leverage the education solutions run in the first pilot for match to need.</p> <p>Identify other solutions that may be required e.g. process improvements</p> <p>Identify specific KNOWLEDGE - information, topics, theories that would need to be covered, SKILLS - to be developed and practiced, and BEHAVIOURS and MINDSETS to be reinforced determine activities, facilitators etc</p>	<p>Identify the preferred CHANNELS for the education solutions to maximise learner development, engagement and completion.</p> <p><i>Workshop seminar webinar interactive virtual classroom elearning module video interactive video podcast fact sheet performance support tool</i></p>	<p>Identify any CONSIDERATIONS that need to be taken into account in developing and deploying these interventions.</p> <p><i>This could include timing, IT, duplication of effort, getting buy in, communication Lerner limitation dues to work etc.</i></p> <p><i>Consider how this solution may link to other education programs and learning activities in the agency.</i></p>

Following this workshop, a detailed design brief was created for review by the team and other key stakeholders.

The design incorporated adult learning principals to create an intervention that was experiential and allowed for discovery learning.



The design brief included the proposed overall program purpose and outcomes, specific information on the target audience, and a high level schematic supported by more detailed overviews on the intervention that would be created and considerations for the resources, channels and people required to support this.



Development

Two experienced instructional designers from icare and QBE Insurance partnered to develop the pre-work questionnaire and the content for the three two-hour workshops, which are at the core of the Connect & Care program.

They were supported by subject matter experts in workers compensation and trauma from both icare and QBE. Other members of the project team played a critical role in reviewing the content and recommending any changes required to ensure a quality program that meets the approved design brief.

To ensure a professional and visually engaging program, an external graphic design agency was appointed to develop templates for the various program documents, create videos and develop the overall Connect & Care visual identity.



A range of resources were produced to support the delivery of three workshops of the program as well as pre and post activities.

These include:

- Facilitators guides – virtual and face-to-face versions
- Slide decks
- Participant workbook
- Trauma video series – three parts (QBE Insurance Psychologist)
- Connect & Care promotional video
- Connect & Care flyer
- Key points guides on trauma and workers compensation for facilitator support
- Pre-work survey
- Participant evaluation form
- Connect & Care checklist handout
- Connect & Care implementation plan Handout

Implementation

The next step was to re-pilot both the face-to-face and virtual versions of the program, using the new designed and developed resources, with the NSW Department of Health and DCJ:

Face-to face: Two cohorts at Kempsey Hospital and one cohort at John Morony Correctional Centre in Nov/ Dec 2020.

Virtually: One cohort at South West Community Corrections in Dec 2020.

These four pilots were facilitated by two of the team from icare and QBE, who delivered the initial pilot at Frank Baxter, supported by a Workers Compensation expert from icare.

To ensure they were fully prepared and that the program design was robust, the delivery team had several rehearsals and final changes were made to the program before it went live. Minor changes were made after each pilot for ongoing improvement.

Evaluation

The final step was evaluation of the four pilots against program objectives.

NOTE: Information on the evaluation of the Frank Baxter Pilot can be found in the preliminary report.

The purpose of evaluating these pilots was to:

- Inform decision making aimed at improving, adapting, and refining the program.
- Justify further investment in the program scaling and demonstrate achievements and improvement areas.
- Ensure the content delivered is relevant to frontline managers across the NSW Public sector.
- Ensure the program can be successfully delivered virtually.

The evaluation was done via two activities: (1) feedback from participants and their leaders (2) debrief of the deliver team and observers of the pilots.

Feedback from participants

Feedback requested aimed at validating whether the program was relevant and beneficial to frontline team leaders in supporting workers at risk of or experiencing a complex injury.

The evaluation also sought to ascertain if by building their understanding of vulnerable worker's experience, their capabilities to support these workers and embedding tailored practices for leaders into their organisation, the support for vulnerable workers would be greatly enhanced.

At the end of workshop 3 of each pilot, Participants were asked to complete an online or paper survey asking six questions as outlined below. This was supported by verbal feedback gathered from each cohort.


Insurance for NSW


Have your say

Program Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Facilitator:* _____

Agency: _____

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with this program?

Poor Excellent

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. On a scale of 1-10, how likely are you to recommend this program to your colleagues?

Not at all Extremely likely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. The program content was relevant to me and will support me in my role moving forward:

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

4. The program facilitator/s were engaging and helped me to learn:

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

5. What impact will your participation at this program have on your role/ Agency?

6. Please share any other comments or feedback you may have:

Thank you for your valuable feedback!

The four pilots achieved great results as evidenced by the net promoter score (NPS) for each.

Agency	Version/Date	NPS
DCJ - Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre	Face to Face Setp-Nov 2019 (initial trial run)	Qualitative feedback used to fully design & develop education intervention for further pilots
NSW Health - MNCLHD Kempsey Hospital	Face to Face Nov 2020 2 cohorts	+86 +100
DCJ - John Morony Correctional Centre	Face to Face Nov/Dec 2020	+89
DCJ - South West Community Corrections	Virtual Dec 2020	+100

Participant comments include:

‘Improved knowledge of process but also buddies and engagement options.’

‘Putting together a universal toolkit that we can all use as managers will ensure clear process and understanding throughout the organisation.’

‘I am a new manager and it helped me with the current workers compensation staff and also will impact on how I treat staff in the future’

‘Ability to think differently around certain situations’

‘Implementing selfcare program’

‘Ensuring contact and empathy with injured workers’

‘Will provide better structures to support out injured workers.’

‘Improving manager’s knowledge on workers compensation injuries.’

‘Better informed of process of workers compensation. Will be able to better support my staff. Also networking at the event was helpful.’

Debrief of the delivery team and observers of the pilots

The pilots allowed the retesting of program in the new format. It was observed that at each of the pilot sites the design of the program met the needs of the audience from the different audience types. It was clear to see some agencies have a great maturity in certain areas within their organisation compared to others. The program allowed us to identify the maturity gaps and offer solutions through the implementation plan.

As a result of the feedback gathered from participants and the delivery team, final changes were made to the program and supporting materials ready for the next stage of development which was to scale Connect & Care through a Train the Trainer approach.

Scaling Connect & Care

The results of the original pilot resulted in the recommendation Connect & Care should be scaled to NSW Government agencies who are exposed to high risks of psychological injuries.

In addition, the project team developed a train the trainer delivery approach to optimise program scaling. This was done by drawing on a skill trainer pool in icare and QBE.

Overview of Connect & Care Train the Trainer

Purpose

The purpose of the Connect & Care Train the Trainer is to provide NSW Government agencies with the information, resources, skills and guidance to implement and embed Connect & Care in their agency, including facilitating the three two-hour workshops.

Access to the Train the Trainer

Access to the Connect & Care Train the Trainer is by application only. Interested agencies need to assess their agency's appetite, readiness and capacity to rollout Connect & Care with guidance from the Connect & Care Train the Trainer Application Form.



The form is titled "Connect & Care Train the Trainer Application Form" and features the logos for icare (Insurance and Care NSW) and QBE. A graphic on the right side consists of overlapping purple and teal circles with the text "RISK EDUCATION EXPRESS".

Application Form

NSW Government agencies interested in rolling out the Connect & Care program via the Train the Trainer method need to complete this form and submit it to rex@icare.nsw.gov.au. Refer to the *Connect & Care Agency Briefing* document for more information about the program.

Applications are assessed and places allocated on a Train the Trainer program based on validation of readiness to implement and prioritisation as to the criticality of need (i.e. employees' high exposure to risk/trauma). Information provided in this form will also be used to ensure that adequate support is provided for successful program delivery in an agency.

If you need any assistance completing this form, speak to your icare Client Engagement Manager or Claims Manager.

For queries, contact rex@icare.nsw.gov.au or call Sharon Johnson, Client Education Lead, icare REX on 0438 427 376.

Agency

Department **Location**

Main contact person **Role**

Email **Phone number**

Train the Trainer participants:
(Aim for 2-4 participants at a Train the Trainer workshop)

Name	Role	Email
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

It is recommended that between three and five people from an agency attend the train the trainer course together to ensure they are sufficiently resourced to plan, deliver and embed Connect & Care. This ideally should include one person from HR, WHS, and RTW/injury or WC claims management and from Learning & Development who is an experienced facilitator/educator. The Train the Trainer course does not include developing facilitation skills. This capability is assumed.

Train the Trainer learning outcomes

This one-day workshop is designed to minimise time away from the office whilst providing the best opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills to implement Connect & Care.

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Explain the purpose and outcomes of Connect & Care
- Demonstrate the knowledge and confidence to facilitate the three two-hour Connect & Care Line Manager Workshops:
 - Workshop 1 - CONNECT
 - Workshop 2 - CARE
 - Workshop 3 - CONNECT & CARE
- Create a Connect & Care implementation plan for your agency
- Set up a methodology to monitor and report on Connect & Care's impact and results

The Train the Train methodology used is to learn by experiencing the program. By observing the facilitators role model the delivery and by following the content in the detailed Facilitators Guides and other resource material, participants will be able to facilitate the program within their organisation.

The Train the Trainer is facilitated by two experienced educators, with mental health knowledge and experience, from icare's Risk Education eXpress and QBE supported by a Workers Compensation specialist.

Participants experience the activities of the three two-hour workshops as a line manager would. After each segment, there is the opportunity to debrief the segment through the facilitator lens, ask questions and get tips and options on delivering the segment themselves. They are also provided with guidance in planning their implementation, preparing their line managers before the workshops, and embedding the agreed Connect & Care Implementation Plan into their agency. There is also an option of a 1.5 hour follow up meeting to Train the Trainer with a Connect & Care advisor to further assist their implementation planning and delivery.

Train the trainer participants are encouraged to 'facilitate' participants own learning through discussion and activities, and role modelling target capabilities and behaviours. It is about engaging and asking rather than telling or informing. It is the facilitator's role to create a safe and non-judgemental learning environment where participants feel comfortable to be open and honest, and to share their views freely without judgement. This approach is also role modelled by the train the trainer facilitators.

Train the Trainer Agenda

The agenda follows the logical flow of the program including pre and post workshop activities.



Train the Trainer Support Resources

A comprehensive library of resources has been developed to support every aspect of an agency's implementation, delivery, and measurement of the program. After attending the Train the Trainer course, participants are provided with exclusive access to a secure website on icare's Risk Education eXpress website to download the resources. There are 36 resources catering to both face to face and virtual formats. This includes a number of referencing and promotional documents.

Evaluation of Train the Trainer

At the conclusion of the Train the Trainer, participants are asked to complete an anonymous survey to provide feedback on their learning experience and whether the workshop has prepared them sufficiently to deliver Connect & Care in their agency.

As at May 2021, four Train the Trainer workshops have been held with an overall net promoter score of +89:

Two workshops were delivered to 28 icare Client Engagement Managers and our workers compensation claims managers Allianz, EML and QBE to provide them with information and guidance to promote Connect & Care and to support their agency implementation.

Two workshops were delivered to nine agencies with total of 31 participants:

- Central Coast Local Health District
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
- Mid North Coast Local Health District
- Western Sydney Local Health District
- NSW Health Pathology
- DCJ – Illawarra Shoalhaven
- DCJ – Courts & Tribunals
- NSW Trustee and Guardians
- Taronga Zoo

Some participant comments include:

“My rolling out the program to my District should assist with our overall claims management and the variety of positives that come with that.”

“Was an absolutely resourceful program very well presented by a great team. Will be a great tool for line managers.”

“Basic simple solution to a big problem in the workers compensation industry. Very thought provoking and creative”.

Next steps for Train the Trainer

The roll out to NSW Government agencies continues in 2021 with three further Train the Trainers scheduled between Jun – Dec 2021. This provides up to 15 agencies with access to Connect & Care.

Agencies need to be ready with their business case, leadership buy in and having identified appropriate trainers before they apply to participate in Train the Trainer. It is less about the quantity of agencies implementing Connect & Care and more about the right agencies, at the right time with the right planning and resources to ensure they are set up for success, and that Connect & Care achieves its intended outcomes for the injured workers, the line managers and their agencies.

Workshop feedback

Workshop 1, 2 and 3 and evaluations were completed by 68 participants across the pilot groups.

Results

Connect & Care Train the Trainers (March to June 2021)

3 Train the Trainer workshops for agencies

11 agencies with total of 47 participants

Agencies

- Central Coast Local Health District
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
- Mid North Coast Local Health District
- Western Sydney Local Health District
- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District
- NSW Health Pathology
- HealthShare
- Department of Communities & Justice – Illawarra Shoalhaven
- Department of Communities & Justice – Courts & Tribunals
- NSW Trustee and Guardians
- Taronga Zoo

Overall NPS +80

Participant comments

“This will help training the managers and change their attitude towards injured employees.”

“Training will enable managers to own their roles more and in turn will improve culture and staff experience.”

Facilitators were so engaging and knowledgeable, what a great team, thank you for your team!

“Basic simple solution to a big problem in the WC industry. Very thought provoking and creative. Thank you.”

“My rolling out the program to my District (DCJ - Illawarra - old FACS) it should assist with our overall claims management and the variety of positives that come with that.”

“Was an absolutely resourceful program very well presented by a great team. Will be a great tool for line managers.”

Evidence of program adoption

Frank Baxter – Youth Justice Centre

The Connect & Care Program is fully embedded into Frank Baxter YJC operations with all Managers trained in the program, this includes Unit Managers, Assistant Managers, and the Frank Baxter Centre Manager.

The centre has processes in place to identify and review who will benefit by the Connect & Care program (e.g., a support person). This commences soon after the initial injury. The injured worker also has input on which manager will be nominated as the support person.

Frank Baxter have introduced the Connect and Care Program as part of their onboarding process for new managers.

Kempsey Hospital - Mid North Coast Local Health District

The Connect and Care program is fully embedded into Kempsey Hospital with most line managers being trained in the program. The Mid North Coast Local Health District have incorporated the program into their Early Stakeholder Conversations with the Case Manager at QBE. This is to allow the Case Manager to have visibility over what the line managers are doing to support the injured and for the Case Manager to provide an added layer of support when understanding the payment process and celebrating milestones.

The program now forms part of their wellbeing and safety strategy at Mid North Coast Local Health District. Since the pilot have rolled out the program to line managers and Port Macquarie Hospital and have had two representatives from their organisation complete the Train the Trainer Program.



Program Evaluation Framework

Connect & Care has been designed to include a formal evaluation process to allow agencies and claims managers to measure the success of the program following its delivery to their organisations.

The evaluations tools include the Connect & Care Scorecard, custom Connect & Care Qlik Sense worksheets and Customer Experience Measure (CXM) reports.

The Connect & Care Scorecard was designed to allow an agency to input baseline and monthly data to see what the impact of the program was on the agency. Three easy steps were created for an agency to complete the score card:

Step 1: Report to icare: Complete baseline figures for Connect and Care Scorecard by obtaining data through Qlik Sense Portal from the Connect and Care worksheets and send back to icare. Baseline figures should be entered for the current month, in which the training was conducted.

Step 2: Complete scorecard monthly to insert Claims Data figures. The data can be retrieved from the icare Qlik Sense Portal from the Connect and Care worksheets.

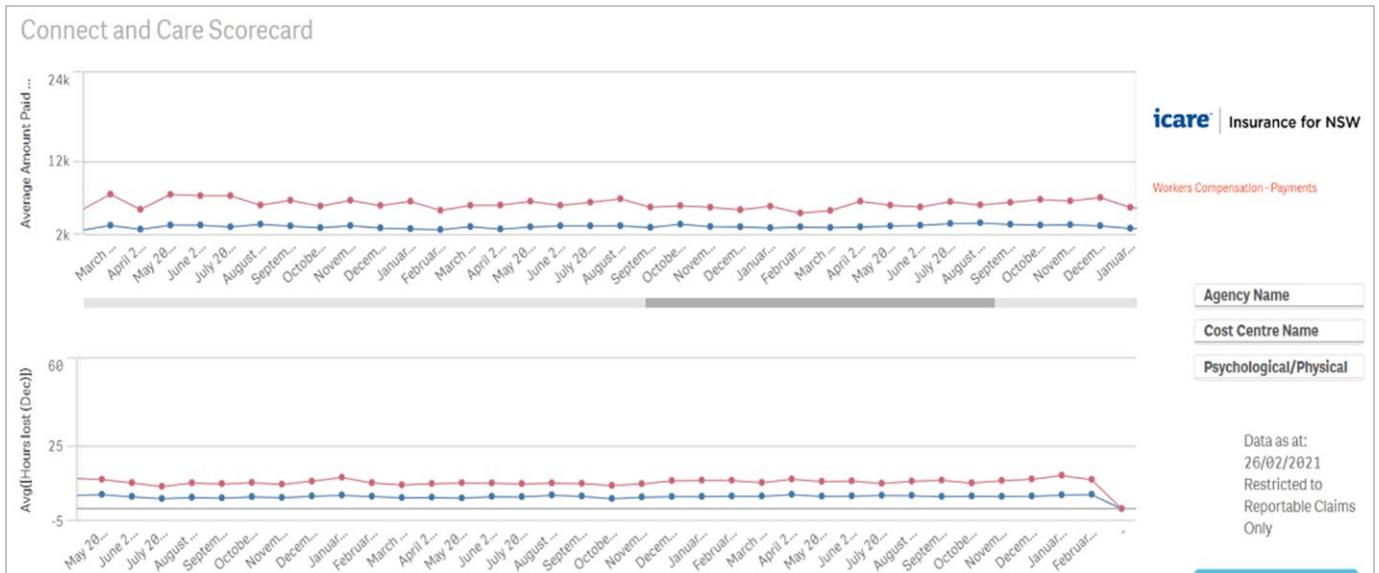
Step 3: Send completed scorecard post 12 months of program to icare and Claims manager.

Instructions for completion of the scorecard is contained within the excel document and agencies have the support of their icare client engagement manager to complete the scorecard. In addition to this, agencies have 1.5 hours of additional support they can access to support them in completing the evaluation.

Connect and Care Scorecard

Connect and Care Scorecard								
Claims Data								
	Baseline		1 Month Post Program		2 Month Post Program		3 Months Post Program	
Injury Breakdown	Psych	Physical	Psych	Physical	Psych	Physical	Psych	Physical
Reportable claims								
Claims per 100 FTE								
Working/Not Working as % 0-4 wks								
Working/Not Working as % 5-13 wks								
Working/Not Working as % 14-26 wks								
Working/Not Working as % >26 weeks								

Connect and Care Qlik Sense Worksheets



Connect and Care Scorecard

3. Work Status
(Reportable Only)

icare Insurance and Care NSW
Workers Compensation

Working Not-W...
Weeks Ago Repo...

	0-4	5-13	14-26	26+
Totals	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Working	68.57%	78.38%	84.87%	91.53%
Not Working	31.43%	21.62%	15.13%	8.47%

Agency Name
Policy Name
Physical/Psychological

Reportable Claims per 100 FTE

Last 10 FY Reported	Financial Month Reported	FTE	Reportable Claims	Reportable Claims per 100 FTE Annualised
FY 20-21	July 2020	353,1...	1,319	0.3735
FY 20-21	August 2020	353,1...	1,429	0.4047
FY 20-21	September 2020	353,1...	1,518	0.4299
FY 20-21	October 2020	353,1...	1,274	0.3608
FY 20-21	November 2020	353,1...	1,481	0.4194
FY 20-21	December 2020	353,1...	1,293	0.3662
FY 20-21	January 2021	353,1...	980	0.2775

CXM is an important measure in understanding how an injured worker is travelling whilst being injured. Therefore, having an understanding on how an agency is tracking in this space is crucial to include in the evaluation framework. Following the program delivery, once an agency has had more than 80% of their leaders go through the program icare can provide a 12 month report on findings listed. The report will include:

- Injured Worker advocacy scores (CXM):
 - Differences pre and post implementation of the Connect & Care program
 - Including any relevant agency/cluster specific insights where applicable.
- Agreement ratings among IWs on how connected they feel to the workplace
 - Any differences pre and post the implementation of Connect & Care,
 - Any differences between those who have taken up training and those who did not
- Impact of “connected to the workplace” statement rating on advocacy scores (NPS), where sample size permits
- Any specific verbatims, with references to the Connect & Care program or its impact will be provided to support the insights provided

Conclusion

The Connect & Care program suggests that upskilling leaders with their understanding of injured workers experience and the workers compensation process can lead to positive outcomes for workers' recovery and their ability to return to work.

Connect & Care aims to improve leaders capability to support and optimise the recovery and return to work of employees who have suffered a workplace injury, identify potential interventions and solutions, devise and deliver a comprehensive co-designed intervention program, and evaluate this intervention.

Developed by industry, technical, and learning and development experts, Connect & Care is a tailored program designed for organisations that are exposed to high risk of workplace injuries.

The feedback obtained by participants indicates the knowledge gained through the program is practical and applicable to their role and the embedding of the practices learn improves their capacity to provide support to vulnerable workers.

The Connect & Care program is now available to all NSW government agencies as part of icare's Rex curriculum.

Appendices

Appendix A: Employer's Checklist

Appendix 2: Preliminary Report

Appendix 3: Bios



Maddi Bailes

Maddi is an insurance engagement leader who thrives in opening the lines of communication between clients, customers, and organisations to solve complex business problems.

The unique insights Maddi gathered from her close relationships with icare stakeholders inspired her to conceive of the Connect & Care program. These insights have empowered her to acquire significant industry knowledge and support at operational, management and executive levels that have been critical to the testing, design, implementation and scaling of the program. With over 15 years in both public and private sectors, Maddi has experience in personal injury litigation working with both injured workers and employers, executive relationship management, stakeholder collaboration, program design and strategic implementation. Maddi holds a Bachelor of Law and is completing a Bachelor of Arts majoring in public relations.



Farah Shams

Farah Shams is the Risk & Innovation Manager for QBE's Managed Fund Team. She is also a qualified and practicing Chiropractor with formal qualifications in Personal

Injury Management. Farah has been in the injury management industry for over five years and has developed a strong passion for assisting people to better their health and quality of life.

Farah played an integral role for the Connect and Care program and was the QBE lead for the project from inception to scaling. Farah was able to bring all key stakeholders together for the project, monitored and evaluated the program to ensure the desired outcomes were achieved to scale across the NSW public sector.

Farah continues to work closely with multiple NSW Government agencies and employers to promote and implement innovative programs and research to continually improve and refine how vulnerable individuals can be supported to recovery and work.



Sharon Johnson

Sharon is client education leader with a depth and breadth of experience in adult education in the workplace. She combines this with a passion for supporting mental health enabled

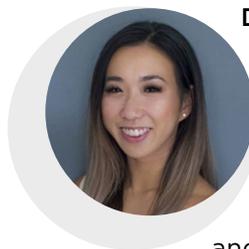
by qualifications in counselling and mental health first aid. Sharon led the instructional design of Connect & Care which has at its core an education intervention. With over 30 years in education roles in the public and private sector, Sharon developed a program that is relevant, engaging and designed to lead to sustained behaviour change. Sharon holds a Masters in Adult Education and a Post Grad Dip in Psychotherapy and Counselling.



Poorvaja Raman

Poorvaja is a senior insights and research professional who has progressive experience in project management and research across various sectors.

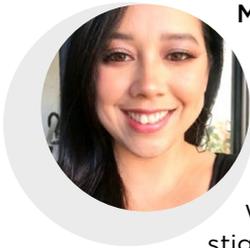
With over 10 years' experience in market research, Poorvaja's ability to analyse and interpret data and apply research principles and knowledge has helped feed into designing the measurement framework for Connect & Care. Poorvaja has considerable experience working on CXM and customer advocacy programs across different organisations - research, not for profit and public sector and is passionate about unravelling the hidden stories behind data. Poorvaja holds a Masters in International Relations and Bachelor with Honours in Economics.



Delora Chi

Delora is an underwriter for the Nominal Insurer with a background in delivering marketing and communication projects. Her ability to navigate and nurture complex relationships

through establishing meaningful message exchanges has carried over in application to Connect & Care. In promoting the program, Delora has drawn upon her exposure to claims and the factors impacting return to work in order to develop authentic and accurate communications.



Mindy Nguyen

Mindy is a HR/Injury Management Advisor who is passionate about creating supportive, mentally healthy workplaces and reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness and workers compensation. With 13 years' experience in people-facing roles, and eight years in leadership, Mindy is known for her empathetic, customer centric approach. Working closely with the DCJ, Mindy encourages collaboration and builds rewarding relationships to support recovery at work and enhance the health outcomes of those injured. During Connect & Care, Mindy's insight to the role of the employer in a worker's recovery journey was crucial in addressing the disconnect that arises between management and workers following injury.



Andrew Gooley

Andrew is a portfolio lead for psychological claims. He is passionate in identifying target areas and driving performance improvement initiatives for claims management services to workers who have sustained mental health work injuries. The insights gathered through monitoring scheme wide psychological claim performance has inspired his contribution to the development and roll out of Connect & Care. Andrew thrives in building effective relationships and values the opportunity to work with internal and external stakeholders to achieve prevention and effective management of psychological claims. Andrew has extensive clinical experience as a physiotherapist, particularly in occupational rehabilitation and chronic disability, and past roles in mental health claims and complex medical claim injury management. He holds a Master in Physiotherapy and currently completing a Master of Business Administration.



Mel Hole

Mel is the Agency Learning & Development Manager for QBE's Managed Fund Team. Mel is a qualified trainer and assessor with more than 18 years' experience in learning & development. Mel has developed and delivered training education programs for frontline customer service teams, IT professionals and school students in her previous role working with multiple NSW government organisations.

In 2020, Mel moved into the workers compensation space and has since led training in technical development on topics related to workers compensation, risk management, leadership, and personal development for NSW Government agencies and national customers. Mel was the Learning and Development lead from QBE who supported the development of the Connect & Care training collateral and is a lead facilitator and champion of the program.

Mel's goal is to empower others through providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to be able to truly comprehend why they are doing what they are doing, and she continues to seek new and interesting ways to engage participants in the learning journey..



Francoise Coirier

Francoise is a senior customer experience professional who spent the last 10 years building voice of the customer programs that provide customer-led insights that can be leveraged for continuous improvement of customer experience initiatives. Francoise's passion for understanding customer needs and measuring impact of initiatives was leveraged to ensure the impact of Connect & Care is able to be quantified and feedback provided as input into potential improvements.

With over 20 years across private and public sector as an insights specialist, Francoise holds a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Marketing and Consumer Behaviour and an HND in Business and Finance.



Todd Kirchner

Todd is a technical claims leader who has over 15 years in the workers compensation industry. Todd has experience in personal injury litigation and extensive experience in the claims operations area, working with insurers, employers and brokers in best practice. Todd utilised his experience in the Mental Health arena to provide technical guidance in Connect & Care and operationalise the key goals of the program.



Bilal Demirci

Bilal Demirci is the Client Relationship Manager for QBE's IfNSW Claims team and manages the relationship between QBE and the Department of Communities and Justice. Bill has worked in the insurance industry for over 12 years and holds qualifications in Personal Injury Management, Diploma in Work Health Safety and has a demonstrated capacity to provide proactive and high-level support. Bill has an eye for detail to prioritise, identify critical issues and exercise initiatives.

Bill played a crucial role in the Connect and Care Program to bring all the best of QBE resources for the project and ensure the needs of the Department of Communities and Justice were met. Bill is determined to support customers by ensuring a person-centred approach, working collaboratively and to exceed customer expectations.

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