

Same Workplace, Different Worlds: Managing Generations in Worker's Compensation

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Imagine This...

**One Unit.
Five Generations.
One Patient.
One Mission.**

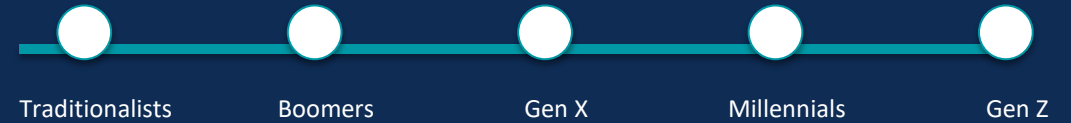
Different Expectations.
Different Communication.
Different Learning Styles.

Why This Matters

For the first time in history...

Today's healthcare workforce is experiencing unprecedented change.

- Five generations working side by side
- Aging workforce and delayed retirements
- Workforce shortages
- Increased burnout
- Rapid technological advancement
- Rising workers' compensation costs



Leadership Question: What happens when our workforce changes...but our leadership doesn't?

Audience Poll

Raise your hand if you've ever caught yourself saying...

"Why don't they just..."

- Pick up the phone?
- Send an email?
- Report the injury?
- Read the policy?
- Ask a question?



Understanding Generational Dynamics

It Isn't About Age.

It's About Experience.

What Shapes Us?

- Historical events
- Technology
- Education
- Parenting
- Leadership styles
- Healthcare evolution
- Economic conditions

**“Different experiences
create different expectations.”**

Different doesn't mean difficult. Different means we may need to lead differently.

Five Generations.

Five Different Starting Points.

For the first time in history, five generations may be working side by side in the same organization.

Generation	What Shaped Them?	Common Workplace Strengths
Traditionalists 1928–1945	WWII, structure, sacrifice	Dependability, institutional knowledge
Baby Boomers 1946–1964	Economic growth, loyalty, hierarchy	Commitment, work ethic, mentoring
Generation X 1965–1980	Independence, change, work-life balance	Adaptability, resourcefulness
Millennials 1981–1996	Technology, collaboration, purpose	Teamwork, innovation, feedback
Generation Z 1997–2012	Digital world, COVID, instant access	Agility, technology, curiosity

Different Experiences Create Different Values

It's Not About Age.

It's About Perspective.

What Shapes Perspective?

- Technology
 - Parenting
 - Education
- Economic conditions
- Healthcare environment
- Major historical events
 - Leadership styles

How Those Experiences Influence Work?

- Communication preferences
 - Trust in leadership
- Comfort questioning authority
 - Learning style
 - Perception of safety
 - Reporting behavior

People don't come to work with different values because they're difficult. They come with different values because they lived different experiences.

Myths vs. Reality

Let's Challenge Our Assumptions

MYTH

Baby Boomers don't like technology.

Gen Z doesn't want to work.

Older workers resist change.

Young workers don't care about safety.

REALITY

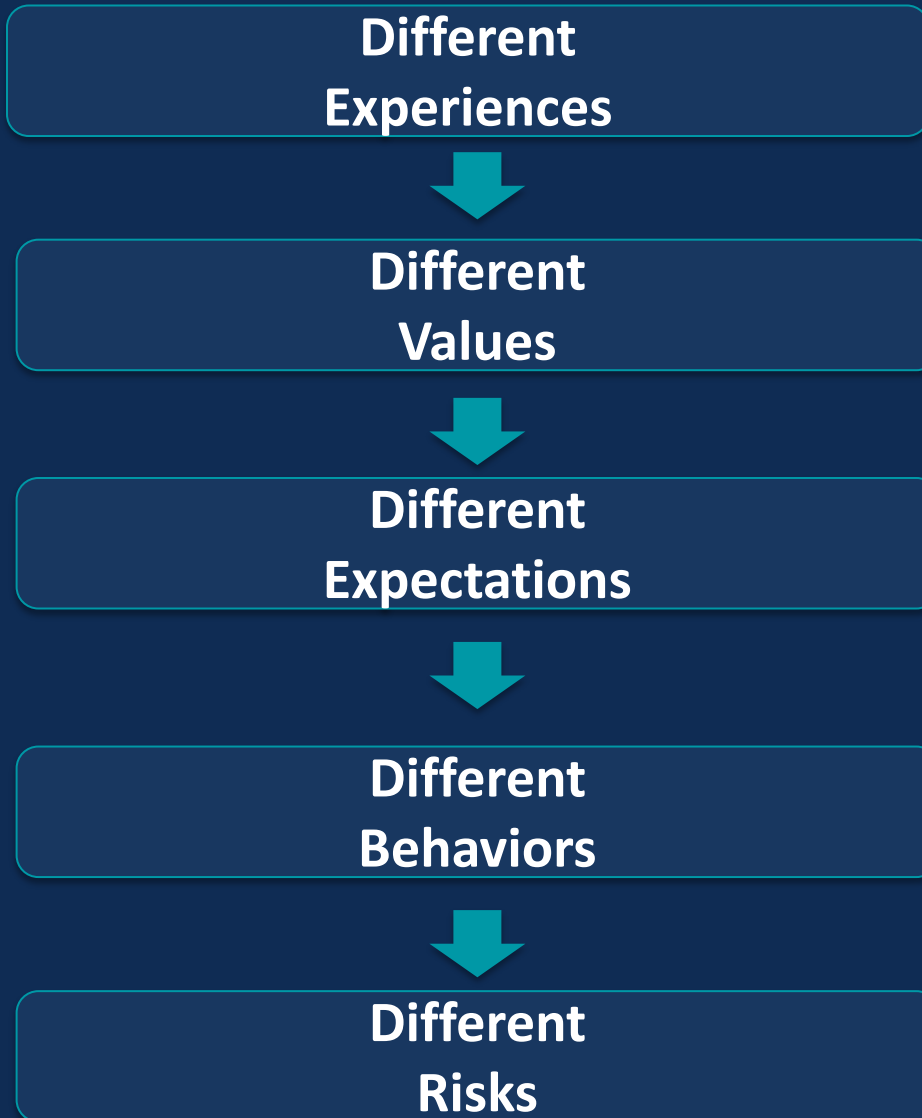
Many experienced healthcare professionals successfully adapted to electronic health records, barcode medication administration, telehealth, and countless technological changes over their careers.

Many younger employees value meaningful work, flexibility, and clear communication. They often ask why before they ask how.

Experienced employees often ask whether a change improves safety, efficiency, or patient care before embracing it.

Many newer employees simply express safety concerns differently and may expect more discussion and feedback.

Different Values Become Different Workplace Behaviors

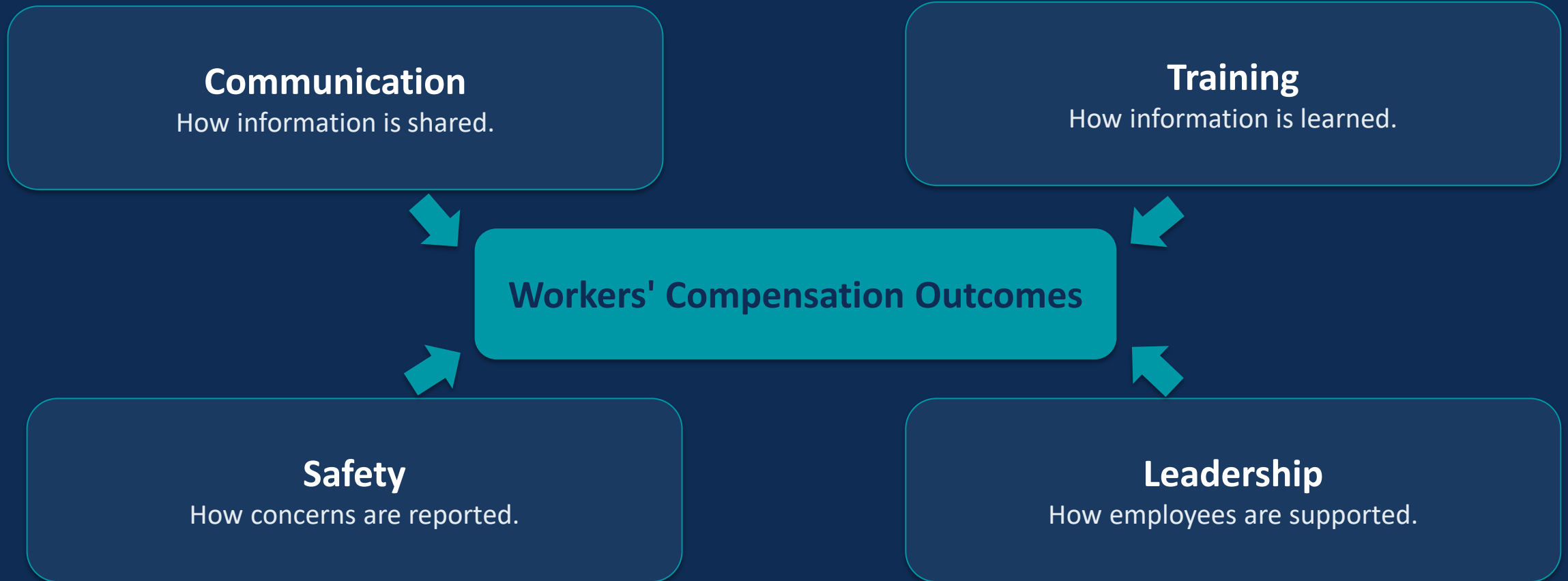


Examples:

Communication
Feedback
Technology
Reporting concerns
Learning
Conflict resolution
Teamwork

Different Worlds Create Different Risks

Why This Matters in Healthcare



The generational gap isn't the risk. Failing to adapt our leadership is.

Communication as a Risk Reduction Strategy

Communication influences safety. Safety influences workers' compensation outcomes.

Communication isn't just what we say.

It's also how, when, and whether people feel comfortable communicating at all.

Leadership Communication Strategies

- ✓ Use multiple communication methods (face-to-face, email, text, digital platforms)
- ✓ Reinforce important messages consistently
- ✓ Tailor training to different learning preferences
- ✓ Encourage two-way conversations
- ✓ Create an environment where questions are welcomed

Build communication systems that every generation can understand, trust, and use.

Training the Modern Healthcare Workforce

One training style no longer reaches every employee.

**Hands-on
Demonstrations**

**Scenario-based
Learning**

**Simulation
Exercises**

**Digital & Mobile
Learning**

**Peer
Mentoring**

**Micro-learning
& Refreshers**

Training should fit the learner—not expect every learner to fit the training.

Building a Speak-Up Culture

Psychological safety is one of the strongest predictors of organizational safety.

UNSAFE CULTURE

Fear

Silence

Delayed Reporting

More Severe Claims

HEALTHY CULTURE

Trust

Early Reporting

Early Intervention

Better Outcomes

Employees are more likely to report concerns when they:

- Believe leadership will listen
- Trust there won't be retaliation
- Understand the reporting process
- Receive feedback after reporting
- Feel respected regardless of role or experience

From Safety Culture to Workers' Compensation Outcomes

Small moments often determine large claim outcomes.



**Workers' Compensation
isn't just about managing
claims.**

It's about managing the employee experience
before, during, and after an injury.

What the Data Tell Us

Different Generations Experience Different Risks

Older Workers

- Lower injury frequency
- Higher injury severity
- Longer recovery periods
- Higher average claim costs

vs

Younger Workers

- Higher injury frequency
- Less job experience
- More exposure to new tasks
- Greater need for coaching and mentoring

The goal isn't to treat people differently.

The goal is to anticipate risk and provide the support each employee needs to succeed.

Recovery Doesn't Begin When Employees Return to Work. It Begins the Day They're Injured.

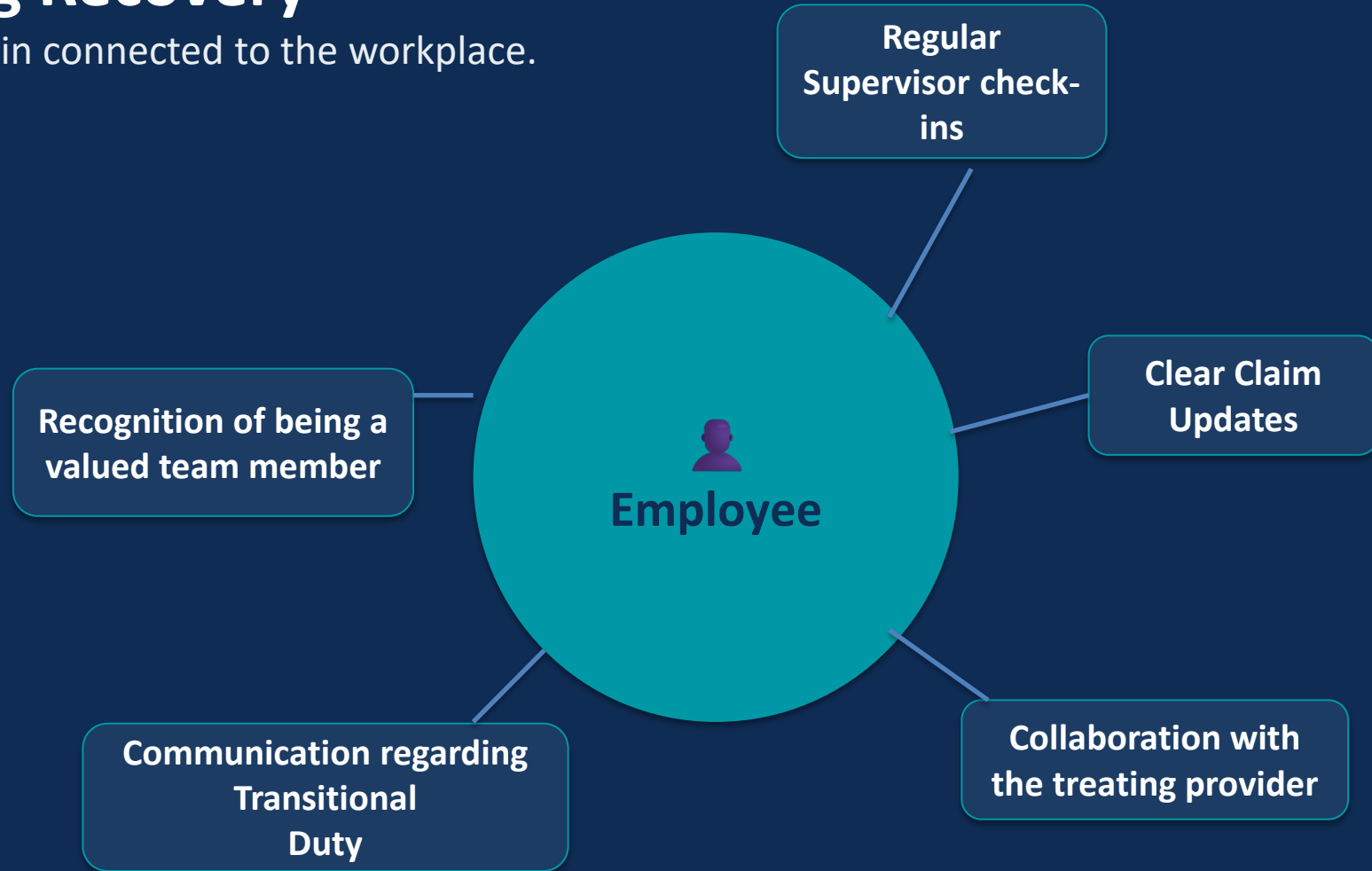


The first 24–48 hours after an injury often set the tone for the entire recovery process.

“Employees often remember how they were treated long after they forget exactly what was said.”

Staying Connected During Recovery

Employees recover better when they remain connected to the workplace.



Connection reduces uncertainty.

Uncertainty often increases anxiety.

Transitional Duty: More Than Light Duty

What Great Transitional Duty Does

- ✓ Maintains employee dignity
- ✓ Provides meaningful work
- ✓ Supports recovery
- ✓ Reduces lost time
- ✓ Keeps employees engaged
- ✓ Prevents social isolation



Administrative
Support



Patient
Education



Policy
Review



Quality
Improvement



Training
Assistance

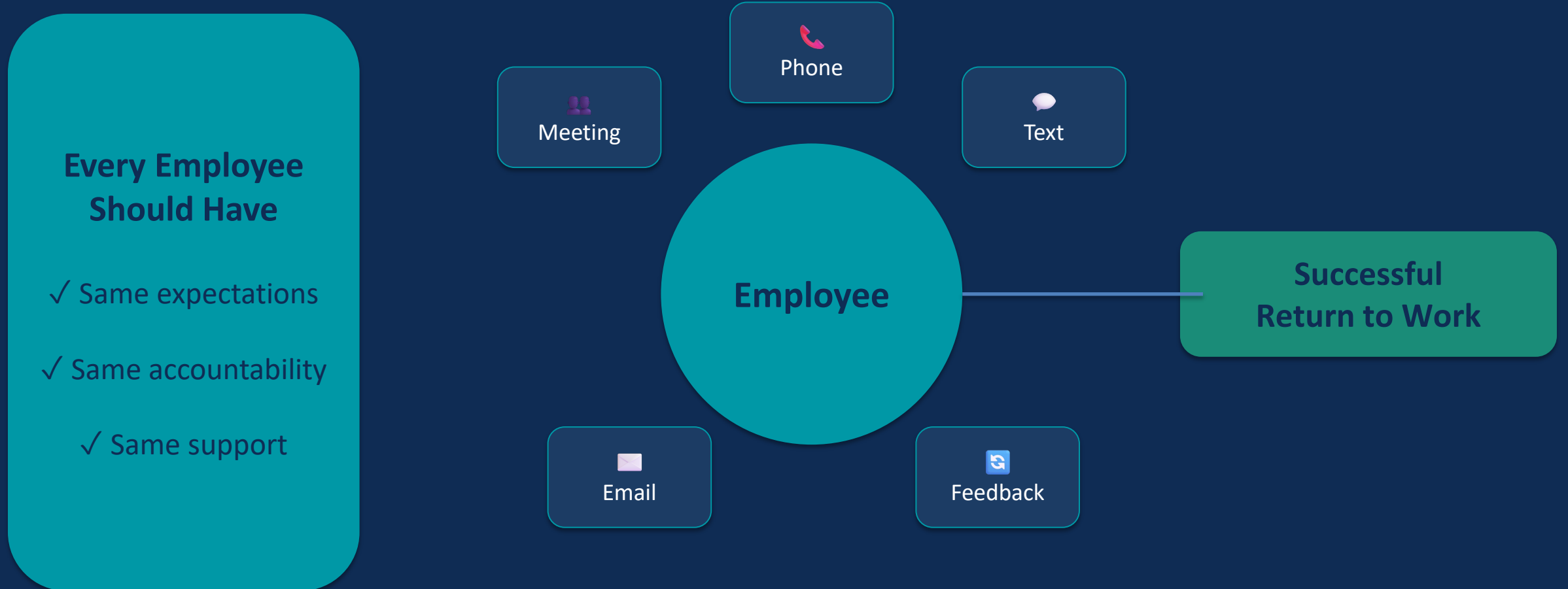


Scheduling
Support

Transitional duty should feel purposeful—not punitive.

Return-to-Work Isn't One-Size-Fits-All

Consistency creates fairness. Flexibility creates engagement.



Meet people where they are...without changing where you're trying to take them.

The Leadership Toolbox

Practical Strategies You Can Implement Tomorrow

- ✓ Replace assumptions with curiosity.
- ✓ Teach the reporting process—not just the expectation to report.
- ✓ Blend training methods to reach different learners.
- ✓ Encourage questions before injuries occur.
- ✓ Maintain meaningful contact after an injury.
- ✓ Use transitional duty to support recovery—not simply fill time.
- ✓ Focus on people first; claims improve as a result.

**Great leaders don't manage generations.
They create environments where every generation can succeed.**

What Every Generation Has in Common

Despite our differences...

Every generation wants...

- ✓ Go home safely
- ✓ Feel respected
- ✓ Understand expectations
- ✓ Feel valued
- ✓ Know their voice matters
- ✓ Recover after an injury
- ✓ Return to meaningful work

Our similarities will always outweigh our differences.

Leading Across Generations Without Lowering Standards

Great Leaders Maintain

- ✓ Safety expectations
- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Reporting standards
- ✓ Return-to-work expectations



Great Leaders Adapt

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Coaching
- ✓ Teaching
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Adapt a Follow-up

Meet people where they are...without changing where you're trying to take them.

Remember This Question...?

**Which generation creates the
greatest workers' compensation risk?**

None of them.

The greatest risk is assuming one leadership style works for everyone.

Different generations don't require different standards.

They require different understanding, leadership, and communication.

SAME WORKPLACE | DIFFERENT WORLDS | SHARED RESPONSIBILITY