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- Patient empathy in workers' comp programs
- COVID-19 healthcare and pharmacy trends
- Claims applications for Natural Language Processing (NLP)

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NATIONAL WORKERS
COMPENSATION
AND DISABILITY
CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 21, 2020

Empathy & Engagement: **The Process of Putting Patients First in Workers' Comp**

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Overview

- **Empathy Perspectives**
- **Empathy in Healthcare**
- **Empathy in Worker's Comp**
- **The Patient Journey**
- **Case Studies**
- **Empathy Impact**
- **How to Apply Empathy in Workers' Comp Programs**

Defining Empathy

3 Perspectives



Traditional

the ability to understand and share the feelings of another



Healthcare

the act of correctly acknowledging the emotional state of another without experiencing that state oneself



Workers' Comp

The act of correctly acknowledging and addressing the emotional state and practical needs of an injured worker without experiencing that state oneself

The Need for **Empathy in Healthcare**



81%

of US consumers are unhappy with their healthcare experience ¹



36%

of patients agree that their healthcare providers have empathetic medical and administrative staff ²



34%

of patients agree that their providers take the time to understand needs and explain options ²

1. GE Healthcare, 2020

2. Gallup, 2019

COVID-19 Pandemic Underscores Need for Empathy

Problems

Easier access to
medications
including high-
risk drugs



Rx monitoring
Patient
engagement
Pharmacist
counseling

Psychosocial
pressures



Patient
engagement
Mental/behavior
al health
therapies

Reduced/
delayed
access to care



Telemedicine
Tele-rehab

Comorbid conditions
and social
determinants of
health put some
patients at higher risk
for sever cases



Education
Return to work
programs
Wellness programs

Solutions

Social Determinants of Health

- + Ethnicity
- + Household Density
- + Education
- + Income Level

Social determinants of
health have more
impact on health than
clinical interventions ³

The Need for **Empathy in Workers' Comp**

A Recent Healthesystems
Study Revealed →



50%

of patients experienced a
delay in reporting injuries ⁴



25%

of patients faced complications
with initial paperwork ⁴



60%

of WC patients who had initial
medical exams reported a negative
provider experience ⁴

4. Healthesystems, 2020

“

It's a lot of paperwork to fill out while being in pain. Having someone do it for you over the telephone would take the load off.

It took at least that whole week until I saw someone, and they sent me about 25 miles away from my house to a clinic with who I call the voodoo doctor.

”

The WC Patient Experience

In Their Own Words

“

If they had been more personable, and explained the process, that would have helped because I had no idea. . . So, there was no rapport or empathy with the whole thing; so, I think that would've been important.

Patient Journey Map

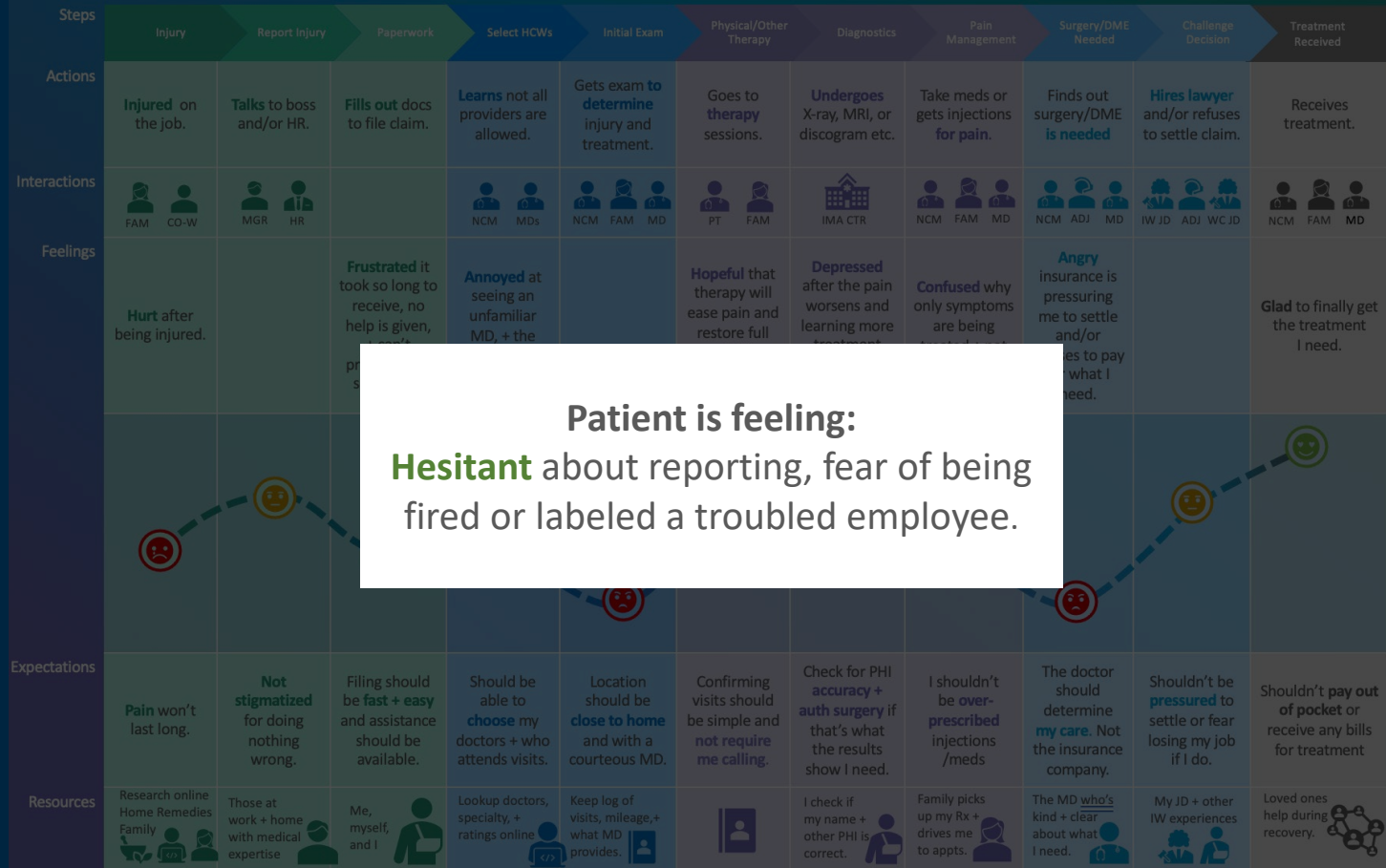
Empathy can improve the patient experience at many steps along the patient journey

Workers' Compensation Patient Journey Map

Steps	Injury	Report Injury	Paperwork	Select HCWs	Initial Exam	Physical/Other Therapy	Diagnostics	Pain Management	Surgery/DME Needed	Challenge Decision	Treatment Received
Actions	Injured on the job.	Talks to boss and/or HR.	Fills out docs to file claim.	Learns not all providers are allowed.	Gets exam to determine injury and treatment.	Goes to therapy sessions.	Undergoes X-ray, MRI, or discogram etc.	Take meds or gets injections for pain.	Finds out surgery/DME is needed	Hires lawyer and/or refuses to settle claim.	Receives treatment.
Interactions	FAM CO-W	MGR HR		NCM MDs	NCM FAM MD	PT FAM	IMA CTR	NCM FAM MD	NCM ADJ MD	IW JD ADJ WC JD	NCM FAM MD
Feelings	Hurt after being injured.	Hesitant about reporting, + being fired or labeled a troubled employee.	Frustrated it took so long to receive, no help is given, + can't print/scan to send back.	Annoyed at seeing an unfamiliar MD, + the NCM sitting in on the visit.	Upset the MD is far away, inappropriate, or doing the exam in a sketchy location.	Hopeful that therapy will ease pain and restore full mobility.	Depressed after the pain worsens and learning more treatment may be required.	Confused why only symptoms are being treated + not the root cause.	Angry insurance is pressuring me to settle and/or refuses to pay for what I need.	Eager to receive what I need and get back to my life.	Glad to finally get the treatment I need.
Expectations	Pain won't last long.	Not stigmatized for doing nothing wrong.	Filing should be fast + easy and assistance should be available.	Should be able to choose my doctors + who attends visits.	Location should be close to home and with a courteous MD.	Confirming visits should be simple and not require me calling.	Check for PHI accuracy + auth surgery if that's what the results show I need.	I shouldn't be over-prescribed injections / meds	The doctor should determine my care. Not the insurance company.	Shouldn't be pressured to settle or fear losing my job if I do.	Shouldn't pay out of pocket or receive any bills for treatment
Resources	Research online Home Remedies Family	Those at work + home with medical expertise	Me, myself, and I	Lookup doctors, specialty, + ratings online	Keep log of visits, mileage, + what MD provides.		I check if my name + other PHI is correct.	Family picks up my Rx + drives me to appts.	The MD who's kind + clear about what I need.	My JD + other IW experiences	Loved ones help during recovery.

Patient Journey Map

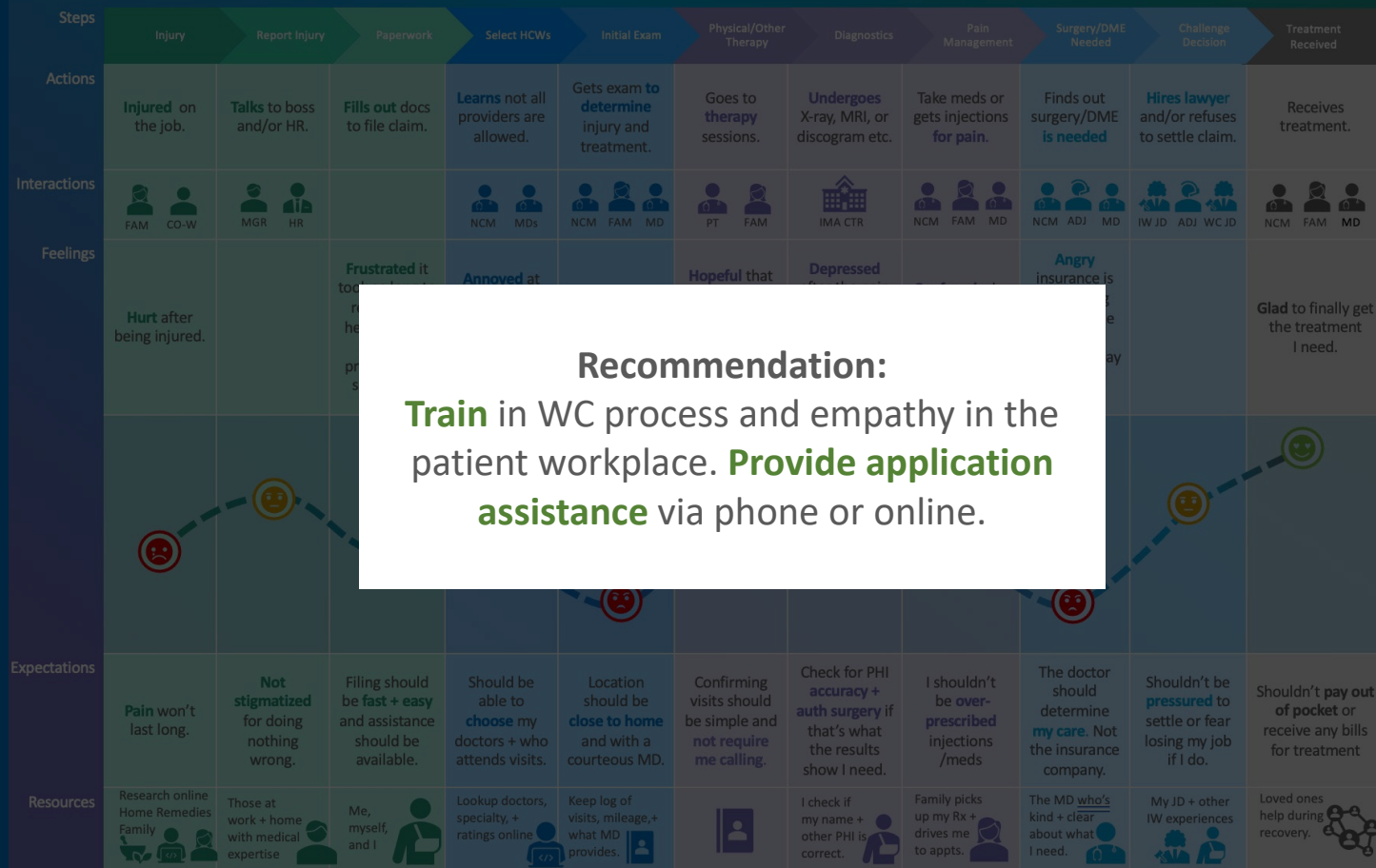
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Patient Journey Map

Empathy can improve the patient experience at many steps along the patient journey

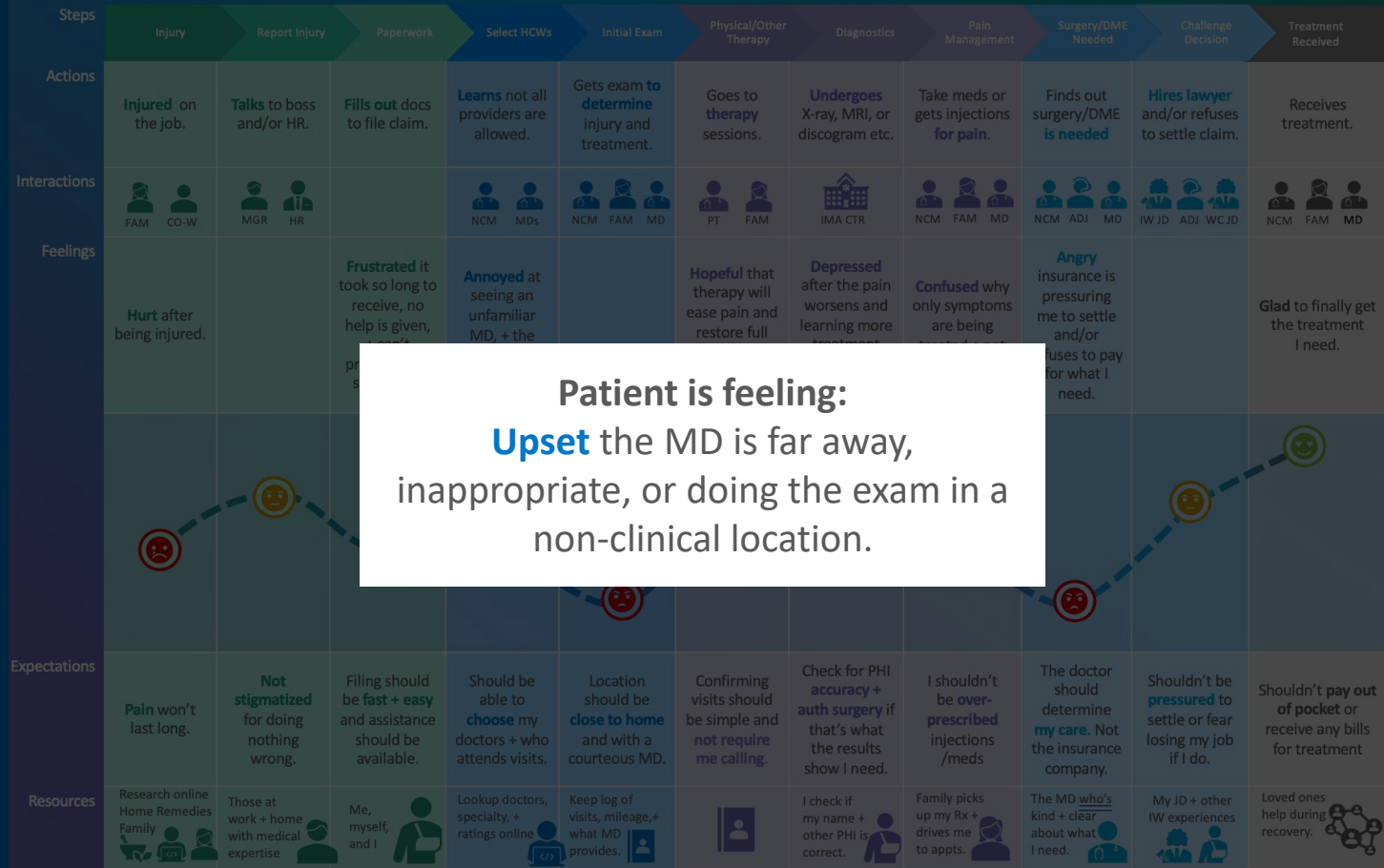
Workers' Compensation Patient Journey Map



Recommendation:
Train in WC process and empathy in the patient workplace. **Provide application assistance** via phone or online.

Patient Journey Map

Empathy can improve the patient experience at many steps along the patient journey



Patient is feeling:
Upset the MD is far away,
inappropriate, or doing the exam in a
non-clinical location.

Patient Journey Map

Empathy can improve the patient experience at many steps along the patient journey

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Feelings	Hurt after being injured.		Frustrated it took so long to receive, no help is given, no one is listening.	Annoyed at seeing an unfamiliar MD, + the process is slow.		Hopeful that therapy will ease pain and restore full function.	Depressed after the pain worsens and learning more about the injury.	Confused why only symptoms are being treated.	Angry insurance is pressuring me to settle and/or surgery is not covered.		Glad to finally get the treatment I need.
Expectations	Pain won't last long.	Not stigmatized for doing nothing wrong.	Filing should be fast + easy and assistance should be available.	Should be able to choose my doctors + who attends visits.	Location should be close to home and with a courteous MD.	Confirming visits should be simple and not require me calling.	Check for PHI accuracy + auth surgery if that's what the results show I need.	I shouldn't be over-prescribed injections / meds.	The doctor should determine my care. Not the insurance company.	Shouldn't be pressured to settle or fear losing my job if I do.	Shouldn't pay out of pocket or receive any bills for treatment.
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Recommendation:
Offer doctor lookup and selection, including telemedicine options with specialty and rating.

Patient Journey Map

Empathy can improve the patient experience at many steps along the patient journey

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Patient expectation:
I shouldn't be over-prescribed medications and injections

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Recommendation:
Reach out to patients with multiple and/or high-risk medications to discuss and counsel. Also reach out to prescribers to ensure that appropriate treatment guidelines are followed.

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Patient is feeling:
Eager to receive what I need and get back to my life.

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Recommendation: Facilitate a return to work for those who are eager. Address issues, such as fear avoidance and catastrophic thinking for those who are not eager.

Empathetic Engagement in Workers' Comp

Case Study #1

- 49-year-old male
- High-risk/chronic opioid use to treat pain for 2016 injury



Back Injury

Empathetic Engagement in Workers' Comp

Case Study #2

- 40-year-old female
- Jet engine manufacturing
- Main complaint about returning to work is she will reinjure herself and she also has been having difficulty sleeping

A blue-tinted silhouette of a woman's head and shoulders, facing left. A white circle highlights the shoulder area, with the text "Shoulder Injury" centered within it.

Shoulder Injury

Empathy Impact

Absence durations reduced
3.6 weeks with empathetic
RTW programs ⁶

Better clinical outcomes and
decreased morbidity for pain
management patients ⁵

Claims costs 69% higher
duration 58% longer with
negative response to injury ⁶

Increased immune function,
shorter hospital stays, controlled
blood sugar, decreased asthma ⁷

5. Irish Journal of Medical Science, 2019

6. Rand Institute, 2012

7. Academic Medicine, 2011

How to Apply Empathy

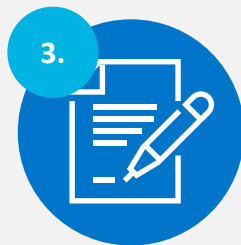
to WC Medical/Pharmacy Programs



1.

Education

For all employees about the value of demonstrating empathy



3.

Policies

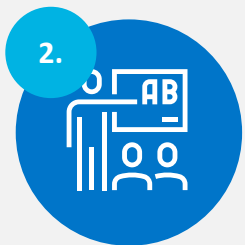
Establish, review, and revise with patient as first priority



5.

Partners

Vet and select for empathetic values and evidence of patient-centric approach



2.

Culture

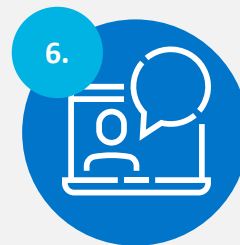
Clearly articulate purpose that puts injured works first with example from the top



4.

Processes

Design with empathetic approach and goal of making things easy for patients



6.

Resources

Share help available, especially during catastrophic events

Questions?

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<https://news.gallup.com/poll/248333/americans-largely-satisfied-personal-life-aspects.aspx>
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7. Hojat M, et. al. "[Physicians' Empathy and Clinical Outcomes for Diabetic Patients](#)." Academic Medicine. 2011; 86:359–364