



A LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

Madam Zaleha's vibrant personality and energy make her perfect for her role as a Resident Care Associate at the Salvation Army. Her regular work activities involve taking care of the residents, going on excursions and participating in outdoor recreational activities with the residents.

All this changed on 31 December 2017. During a routine fire drill at work, she slipped and fell. The fall caused a fracture of her right hip and she immediately felt the pain when she tried to get up. Her road to recovery was equally painful — Madam Zaleha underwent hip surgery and subsequently went through nine months of rehabilitation at the hospital.

Thankfully, Madam Zaleha found a friend in her occupational therapist — who is also a coordinator for the Return To Work (RTW) programme at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, where she sought treatment after her surgery.

An initiative by the Ministry of Manpower and Workplace Safety and Health Council, the RTW programme helps workers who suffer from traumatic work injuries and work-related musculoskeletal injuries to make a smooth transition back into their workplaces. The programme provides early intervention to help injured workers retain their long-term employability and continue to be productive in their jobs. The RTW programme is available in seven public hospitals in Singapore.

The RTW coordinator worked with Madam Zaleha and other healthcare professionals in setting goals to help Madam Zaleha regain her mobility and carry out daily activities at home. At the same time, the coordinator had constant discussions with Madam Zaleha's doctor and employers on how she could get back to work safely, proposing readjustments to her work duties. When Madam Zaleha returned to work in November 2018, she was given light administrative duties and exempted from outdoor physical activities with the residents.

Despite the changes in her work duties, Madam Zaleha still works selflessly to take care of the residents' well-being. She teaches the residents arts and crafts, as well as gardening, and keeps a watchful eye on them while they engage in outdoor activities.

Today, Madam Zaleha is still on her road to recovery but is slowly gaining more self-confidence. She credits the RTW programme for her progress and for granting her a smooth transition back to a fulfilling life at work. She is very appreciative of the programme and how it can help to boost workers' spirits, giving them assurance on returning to work after an injury.

She shares this advice with fellow workers, "Be mindful of your environment and take extra measures to ensure safety at all times. Do not be afraid to approach your supervisor on any issues relating to your safety and health at work."

THE RETURN TO WORK (RTW) JOURNEY

Helping Workers Return to Work after Injury

1 Injured worker signs up for RTW programme with Hospital RTW Coordinator



2 Coordinator will introduce RTW programme and seek support from employer to facilitate worker's return to work



4 Doctor will review worker's ability to return to work



3 Coordinator will find out worker's job scope and duties



5 Supervisor will review with Coordinator on potential job changes to help worker return to work safely



8 Worker discharged from RTW programme



7 Worker returns to work and update Coordinator on progress where needed



6 Coordinator to check on worker's recovery



Approach your doctor if you need help. To find out the list of participating hospitals, visit www.wshc.sg/returntowork

HAPPY TO BE BACK AT WORK

Mr Peh Chee Beng is a cleaner with Summer Pond & Landscaping Pte Ltd. In January 2018, Mr. Peh's big toe was crushed by a drain cover. There was a deep cut diagonally across his toe and he suffered a fracture. After going through surgery and physiotherapy at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, his doctor recommended him to undergo the Return To Work (RTW) programme.

As part of the RTW programme, the RTW coordinator conducted a workplace visit with Mr Peh and his supervisor. During the visit, the coordinator went through Mr Peh's work environment and identified potential safety risks. Mr. Peh was given modified work duties, advice on correct body postures and wore proper footwear. Mr Peh returned to work six weeks after his injury.

"The RTW programme played an important part in my recovery journey. The RTW coordinator helped me greatly by checking with my doctor on my condition, liaising with my employer on my job scope, (and) identifying the potential risks or barriers for me to return to work. With these interventions, I was assigned light duties when I first went back to work. My supervisor was supportive and urged me to pace out my work, so that I have sufficient breaks throughout my shift. I'm happy to be able to go back to my job and continue working after I have recovered," shared Mr. Peh.

