

## **Perceived Injustice and Delayed Recovery: Treatment Implications and Applications**

Faculty:

Michael Sullivan

Heather Adams

Junie Carriere

Perceived injustice has become a powerful predictor of prolonged work disability associated with debilitating health and mental health conditions. High levels of perceived injustice have also contributed to delayed recovery from the mental consequences of injury, such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Traditional approaches to rehabilitation are ineffective in reducing perceptions of injustice. This symposium will summarise the results of recent studies examining 1) the health and mental health consequences of perceived injustice, 2) the physical and psychological determinants of perceived injustice in individuals with debilitating pain conditions, and 3) injured individuals' accounts of the factors that have led them to experience their post-injury life as unjust.

Approaches to developing community-based resources for targeting psychosocial risk factors for problematic recovery will also be addressed. It will be argued that a paradigm shift in approaches to evaluation and treatment might be required to yield meaningful reductions in perceived injustice. Such a paradigm shift might entail broadening the targets of assessment and intervention beyond the 'perceptions' of the injured individual to include potential external sources of injustice (e.g., employer, insurer, health care provider) in the 'treatment plan'.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Attendees will be familiarised with recent research on the causes and consequences of perceived injustice following a disabling work injury.
2. Attendees will be familiarised with assessment approaches to the assessment of perceived injustice.
3. Attendees will be familiarised with community-based and risk-targeted approaches to preventing or reducing perceptions of injury following work injury.

### **About Our Speakers:**

1. Michael Sullivan

Dr Michael Sullivan is a clinical psychologist currently a Professor of Psychology, Medicine, Neurology, and Physical and Occupational Therapy at McGill University. He holds a Canada Research Chair in Behavioural Health.

Over the past 30 years, Dr Sullivan has worked as an educator, clinician, clinic director, and department chair. He has consulted with numerous health and safety organisations, veterans' administration organisations, insurance groups, and social policy and research institutes. In 2011, he received the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology from the Canadian Psychological Association.

Dr Sullivan is best known for researching psychosocial risk factors for pain and disability and developing risk-targeted interventions to foster occupational re-engagement following injury. One such intervention, the Progressive Goal Attainment Program (PGAP), has been included in the Official Disability Guidelines (Work Loss Data Institute) as an evidenced-based approach to managing work disability.

## 2. Heather Adams

Heather Adams is a Social Worker who is currently Director and Research Manager at the University Centre for Research on Pain and Disability. Over the past 20 years, she has been involved in the coordination of large-scale studies addressing psychosocial risk-factors for delayed recovery following debilitating injury and illness. Ms. Adams is a co-developer of the Progressive Goal Attainment Program (PGAP), the first community-based program designed to target psychosocial risk factors for delayed recovery. She has conducted research examining the effectiveness of PGAP as an intervention to foster occupational re-engagement in work-disabled individuals with low back pain, whiplash injury, fibromyalgia, and depression. She has authored and co-authored more than 20 publications in peer reviewed journals and has presented at numerous national and international conferences.

## 3. Junie Carriere

Junie Carrière, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. She completed a PhD in Experimental Psychology at McGill University, a research internship in Pain Medicine at Stanford University, and a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Anaesthesiology and Pain Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Dr Carrière's program of research centres on the impact of biopsychosocial determinants of trajectories of recovery following musculoskeletal pain conditions.