

PREFACE

Act Corporation has had strong safety and risk management components in place for quite some time. As a result of their monitoring processes, several issues came to light, which caught the attention of the Vocational Services' leadership team. These included an increase in Workers Comp rates, a greater number of incidents reported, and feedback from Act's Safety/Risk Management Committee. As a result a full-fledged safety campaign was started as outlined in this application. This campaign has improved the ability of Vocational Services clients to safely perform their jobs, and has significantly reduced the incidence of on-the-job injuries.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

Safety Training

- When a person is admitted to Vocational Services, safety is an integral part of their orientation process.

The orientation handbook contains information relative to safety in the workplace. Job-specific safety training is provided as they move from one type of job to another.

- Very specific training programs were developed for the off-site lawn crews and janitorial crews. These crews operate commercial mowers, trimmers, blowers, buffers, vacuums, and other potentially hazardous equipment. Training materials were designed to meet the varied educational levels of clients joining these crews, even with illustrative cues for clients who are unable to read. It is a progressive series of trainings clients must demonstrate competency at each level before progressing to the next. Once completed, the clients receive a framed certificate stating that they are, for example, a "Lawn Care Specialist." (See training materials included as attachments to this application.)
- All clients receive the same Lifting Techniques training provided to Act employees during New Employee Orientation. It is then reinforced at the specific job sites, utilizing the actual equipment and challenges to which they are exposed.

- Before being able to use power tools, clients must receive training and demonstrate their proficiency at safely operating each tool.
- Safety is now an everyday concern. As training needs are identified they are immediately addressed with the clients on that job at that time, and then reviewed with other employees as soon as possible to ensure the lessons are learned by all.

Job-Specific Safety Concerns

- The leadership team evaluates potential safety issues inherent in particular jobs before agreeing to accept a

job. Adaptations and special accommodations are made to ensure disabled workers can do the job safely.
- Supervisors attempt to match a client as best as is possible to each particular job. At times, the ways in which job tasks are performed are changed in order to accommodate the disabled worker.

Working Environment

- Visual safety cues abound throughout all the vocational workshops. Huge safety banners herald Act's motto "Safety Comes First", as do the faces of the clocks hung in a variety of locations. No matter where you are, just look around and you'll find some sort of safety-related message.
- The Daytona Beach workshop maintains a large amount of product inventory. The workshop was rearranged to accommodate the inventory on one side, and the remaining side was designated for workspace only. This resulted in a decrease in the amount of clutter that could potentially create safety hazards.
- Ergonomic issues were taken into consideration and appropriately addressed. Table heights were adjusted and edges and corners of worktables were rounded.
- Act utilizes a nationally recognized client satisfaction survey developed by Mental Healthcare America. Each Act program has selected questions from the survey to focus on as potential opportunities for improvement. The Vocational programs selected "Safety of the environment" as their program-specific satisfaction dimension. It was hoped that if effective action plans were put into place, these plans would be drivers of improved client satisfaction in this safety-related area.

Communication

- "Safety" became a standing agenda item at the Vocational program's monthly meetings. Satellite work site programs were drawn into the fold .at all contract work sites they address a "hot" safety topic each month. For example, they began to ask outside vendors to assist us in observing for safety concerns, and providing us with feedback in this area.
- Each and every injury report triggers a Supervisor's Review, no matter how minor the injury. Supervisors are charged with the responsibility to determine what happened and how to prevent reoccurrence. All Reviews are submitted to the Vice President of Vocational Services for his evaluation of the appropriateness of the actions

taken before they are forwarded to the Safety Officer. The incidents reported each month are aggregated and analyzed in order to determine trends in potentially problematic areas.

- The Vocational Program networks with nearly twenty (20) similar organizations in the central Florida area to share information and find safer ways to perform comparable tasks and job functions. For example,
- adaptive devices to assist workers who are visually impaired or who cannot count have been devised for specific jobs.
- In addition to information collected internally, we welcome feedback regarding safety issues from such funding and accrediting associations as NISH, RESPECT, JCAHO, and CARE.

Culture

The Vocational Services' leadership team delegated the responsibility for ensuring the safety of all individual work environments to each work area supervisor.

- The importance of investigation following all injuries, no matter how minor, has demonstrated management's commitment and concern regarding the safety of all clients and employees.
- Clients are strongly encouraged to take pride in the way they perform their jobs and the quality of their work. The emphasis on taking personal pride in their work has directly translated to safer work practices and safer work environments.

RESULTS

A tremendous amount of effort was dedicated to ensure clients and employees a safe and healthy place to work. But what was the end result? Let's let the numbers speak for themselves as presented below.

Culture

All injuries are documented on Occurrence Reports and then coded and tracked through Act Corporation's

Performance Improvement Department. Those coded as "Serious" are injuries that require medical attention. Figure 1 indicates that there has been a steady and substantial decline in serious injuries reported between 1999 and 2002.

(GO TO SOURCE DOCUMENT AND PICK UP FIGURE #1)

(Note: 2002 data is year-to-date projections based upon 10 injuries between 01/01/02 and 10/31/02.)

Culture

All Act programs utilize the MHCA Client Satisfaction Survey to assess client satisfaction with services provided.

One question specifically asks clients to rate the question “Safety of the environment” on a scale from 1-5, with

1=Poor and 5=Excellent. Figure 2 shows results taken from Act Corporation’s Annual Performance Improvement

Report. The data presented indicates that our clients perceive the workshops to be a safer work environment.

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(GO TO SOURCE DOCUMENT AND PICK UP FIGURE #3)

Culture

In addition, Act Corporation did not receive any recommendations related to environment of care standards during our February 2001 CARF survey and our April 2001 JCAHO survey (see attached survey reports provided as verification of this information.)

CONCLUSION

It should be noted that the results provided demonstrate significant improvements in safety performance during a period when exposure to risk has increased. Each of our workshops has grown in size and the nature of sub-contract work has constantly changed, providing extraordinary training challenges to front line supervisors. Similarly, our off-site grounds maintenance and custodial contracts have expanded significantly, and we now employ approximately one hundred and thirty (130) people who are exposed to risk 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. In all, Vocational Services has over three hundred (300) employees, approximately 75% of whom are severely disabled. They have not only fulfilled their mission of creating employment opportunities for this segment of our community, but have evolved their safety program to provide the safest possible work environment for their especially vulnerable workers.

Program Description

Act Corporation (Act), headquartered in Daytona Beach, Florida, is a community mental health center serving Volusia and Flagler counties. Incorporated in 1965 as a 50 1(C) 3 not-for-profit corporation, Act received the third grant issued by the National Institute of Mental Health under the Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963 to establish comprehensive mental health services. Act employs nearly 400 full time staff, and facilitates employment for 360 disabled adults in sheltered work, supported employment, and affirmative business ventures. Act has three major lines of services —services to adults with serious mental illnesses, services to adults with addictions and criminal involvement, and services for children, those at risk for delinquency and those with serious emotional disturbances. With an annual operating budget of \$19.6 million, Act is one of the largest community mental health centers in Florida. Act is governed by a seventeen-member Board of Directors, who are volunteers representing all geographic areas served by Act and the community's racial, ethnic, and occupational diversity.