

Driving Superior Outcomes with Expert-Driven, Family-Focused Behavioral Health Support

With the growing understanding that unaddressed behavioral health challenges can extend recovery and drive workplace injury costs as much as 75% higher,¹ the industry is paying closer attention to this critical aspect of care. In fact, claims professionals repeatedly cite untreated behavioral health as a primary obstacle to optimal claim outcomes.² Psychological challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and substance misuse that are common in catastrophic cases—as well as social factors that impact behavioral health, such as family and economic instability—significantly increase the risk of complications, hospitalizations, secondary injuries, and suboptimal healing.

Why do these psychological and social issues often go unaddressed? Among the contributors are lack of workers' compensation coverage for the behavioral health needs of families driving diminished caregiver support, challenges clarifying diagnoses, and difficulties identifying qualified providers utilizing evidence-based practice approaches. "Behavioral health and psychosocial issues affecting the home and family environment have a strong interrelationship. Understanding this correlation and overcoming these obstacles require the guidance of experienced behavioral and medical experts, combined with a whole-person approach that integrates families into recovery," says Deborah M. Benson, PhD, ABPP, Vice President of Clinical Solutions for Paradigm.

For decades, Paradigm has led the industry in promoting psychosocial support through a team-driven model that places injured workers and their families squarely at the center of care. Kathy Galia, Paradigm's Chief Clinical Solutions Officer, and a 2021 Business Insurance Woman to Watch honoree, recognizes that catastrophic injuries impact more than the injured worker—they devastate the entire family. "Superior outcomes are only possible through an evidence-based model incorporating behavioral health for the injured worker and family into every step of the care plan."

Established and integrated behavioral health expertise

Effective behavioral health care must treat the whole person and the whole family, while coordinating with ongoing medical treatment. Psychosocial factors such as home and family dynamics are deeply interconnected with recovery—yet are very often disrupted by the injury. "Injured workers and families need support from people who not only understand these complexities, but have experience implementing an effective and clinically cohesive response," explains Dr. Benson. This is why Paradigm HERO Catastrophic® Outcome Plans feature fully integrated behavioral health professionals collaborating with medical experts.

Paradigm Management Teams include Community Support Specialists, dedicated and specially trained behavioral health professionals who offer support, coping strategies, and resources. Teams also have access to a roster of board-certified psychiatrists and neuropsychiatrists, psychologists and neuropsychologists, rehabilitation counselors and applied behavior analysts who promote positive psychosocial adjustment and address potential barriers to recovery.

Because different catastrophic diagnoses have unique behavioral impacts, Paradigm assigns specialists based on their background and ability to solve the issues connected with each diagnosis. As just one example, brain injuries can seriously disrupt established family structures as they adjust to life with someone who is, in many ways, a new person. Dr. Benson highlights the expansive and diverse range of focused expertise that can be applied to different cases: "Clinicians such as Hassan Moinzadeh, MD, PhD, a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist and licensed clinical psychologist; and Steven Moskowitz, MD, a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist with significant pain and addiction expertise, are representative of the Paradigm Medical Directors we have working on catastrophic cases with significant behavioral health overlay."

Paradigm's commitment to behavioral expertise also includes a network of top providers. "The catastrophically injured workers we serve have access to behavioral health providers employing evidence-based methodologies and outcomes-driven treatment to address psychological disorders, cognitive disorders, substance use disorders, and chronic pain," explains Galia.

Hassan Moinzadeh, MD, PhD
Paradigm Medical Director



Expanding our impact

Even if a catastrophic diagnosis is not present, injured workers with primary and secondary behavioral health conditions, including chronic pain challenges, can benefit from an elevated level of support to achieve positive outcomes. Paradigm's Behavioral Health Clinical Management is a time-based, fixed-price, non-risk-bearing solution responding to market demand for broad expert-driven, goal-based behavioral health care management for acute diagnoses, as well as delayed recovery.

After a comprehensive assessment leveraging Paradigm's Systematic Care Management ModelSM, injured workers receive a structured plan containing key management milestones based on established guidelines. Through an interdisciplinary approach focused on improving function, self-management of symptoms, maximum medical improvement, and release to return to work (with less reliance on chronic pharmacologic treatment and professional interventions), Behavioral Health Clinical Management helps clients, injured workers, and families achieve optimal support and financial certainty.

Behavioral health management in action

Identifying and responding to psychosocial needs must account for issues existing prior to injury as well as new or ongoing challenges that may have become chronic. "From day one, we holistically assess behavioral, psychological, and social needs of the patient and family to develop a fully personalized Outcome Plan encompassing the entire recovery journey," says Dr. Benson.

Paradigm's HERO Catastrophic Outcome Plan incorporates the unique combination of biopsychosocial needs of each injured worker into every stage of recovery:



Identifying co-morbid conditions and vulnerabilities

Within the first two days of referral, a Paradigm Network Manager—an expertly trained catastrophic nurse case manager—conducts an on-site assessment with the injured worker and family to gather information on medical and psychosocial status. Prior comorbidities—including addictions, mental health, and medical conditions, as well as language barriers, support systems and socioeconomic factors—are identified and incorporated into the plan.



Strategizing the best approach

Information gathered from the on-site assessment and medical records, establishment of a trusting relationship with the patient/family, and outreach to treating providers, works to establish immediate needs and short- and longer-term goals. For acute cases, early intervention is critical to set the patient/family on a positive recovery trajectory. In addition to care management for injured workers, Paradigm offers Critical Incident Support for workers who may have witnessed a catastrophic incident or experienced a disruptive event. This can decrease the need for long-term psychological care and foster a focused work environment.



Active management throughout recovery

Unaddressed behavioral health challenges can completely derail recovery and outcomes. Managing this risk requires structured behavioral health monitoring for injured workers and families throughout their recovery. Initial evaluation and ongoing monitoring using structured interviews and standardized assessment tools provide baseline and periodic data points used to identify and respond to various factors, including mood, stress levels, pain, and vulnerability to substance misuse. When intervention is necessary, injured workers have access to Paradigm's extensive provider network, which utilizes evidence-based and outcomes-driven methods and strategies. Throughout the case, Community Support Specialists provide emotional support and respond to emerging recovery barriers, including housing needs, childcare, and financial pressures.



Adjusting to the 'new normal': ongoing support for long-term success

Paradigm's HERO Catastrophic Outcome Plans take a guaranteed, outcomes-driven approach with personalized milestone metrics. These are actively tracked through their individualized care plan and include both functional and behavioral health metrics. For an injured worker to achieve the targeted outcome, they must reach residential and/or community integration goals, have all required care protocols in place, and have a stable supportive care plan to promote long-term health and wellness.

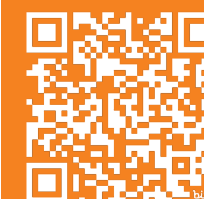
The behavioral health difference

Expert-driven, fully integrated, and proactive behavioral health support drives superior outcomes. Says Galia, "Analysis of Paradigm case data found that Community Support Specialist engagement was associated with lower-than-projected medical spend, higher release to return-to-work rates, less time to achieve targeted outcomes, and less utilization of professional mental health services over the course of recovery."

Sources:
¹ American Hospital Association (AHA) Market Insights Behavioral Health Integration, 2019
² Workers' Compensation Benchmarking Study, D. Z. Algire, Rising Medical Solutions, Dec. 2018

"I will say that the involvement of Paradigm helped so much, you feel that you are a person more than a patient."

Alexander Borges
Paradigm Injured Worker



Watch our newest HERO Video

Watch Alexander and his family's recovery story in Paradigm's newest HERO video to see how integrated behavioral support works alongside medical expertise to achieve the best possible outcomes for catastrophic injuries.

<https://info.paradigmcorp.com/AlexanderHERO>