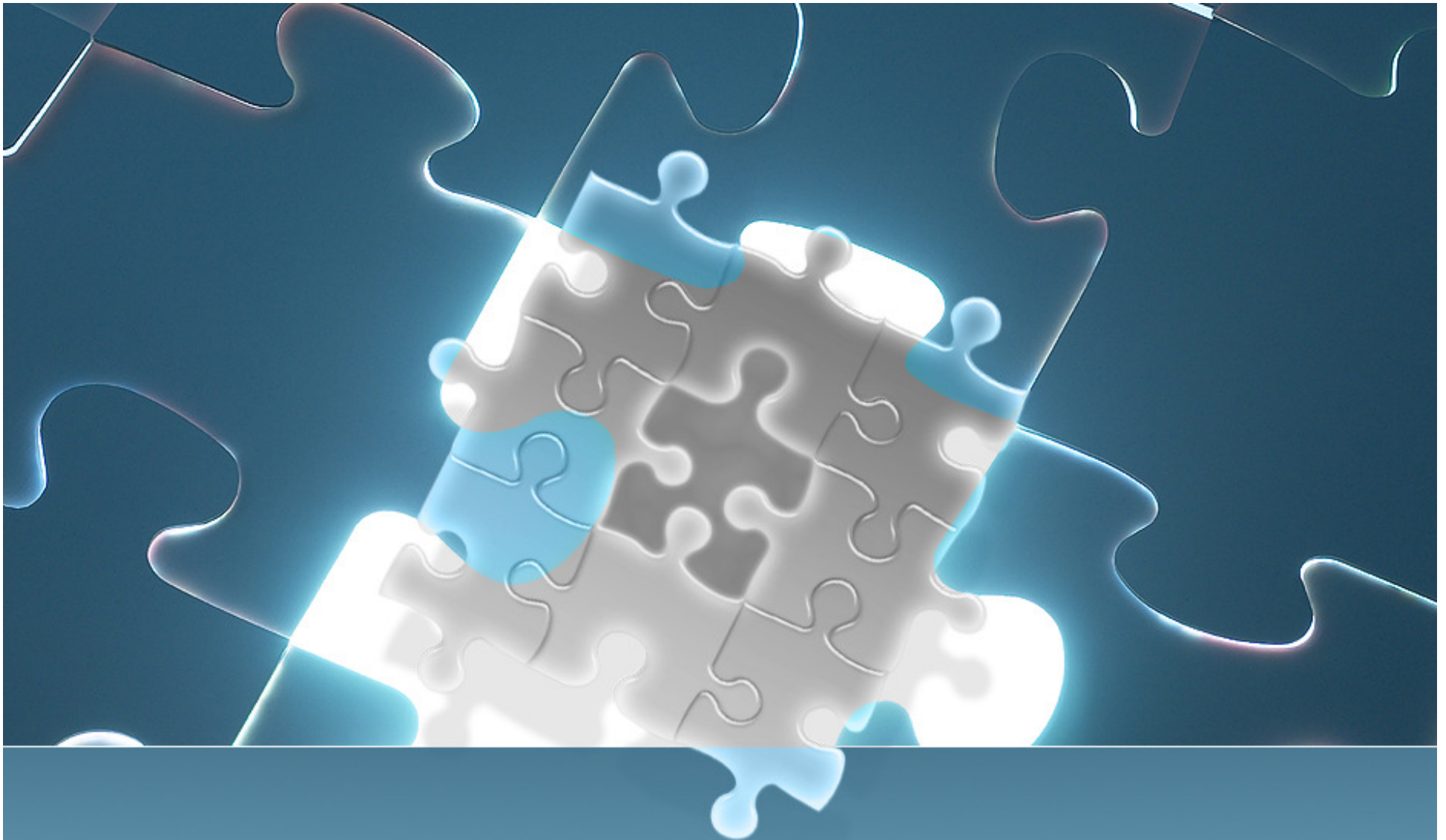


THE BENEFITS OF EARLY INTERVENTION OF MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES AT THE WORKPLACE

Lorraine Mischuk, O.T. Reg.(MB) C.W.C.E.
Maximize Human Capabilities (MHC)



**What are the costs of
Musculoskeletal (MSI) Injuries?**



Employer Costs

- WCB costs
- Cost of sick days
- Cost of temporary employees to fill position
- Alternatively, cost of redistributing the tasks to other employees
- Training costs for temporary employees or other employees



Employer Costs

- Decreased productivity
- Recruitment and retention issue
- Workplace culture





Employee Costs

- Injury effects – physical, psychosocial or emotional in the workplace and outside of work
- Productivity
- Workplace culture





Manitoba Legislation

- Workplace Safety & Health Act and Regulations Part 8 – Musculoskeletal Injuries
- www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety

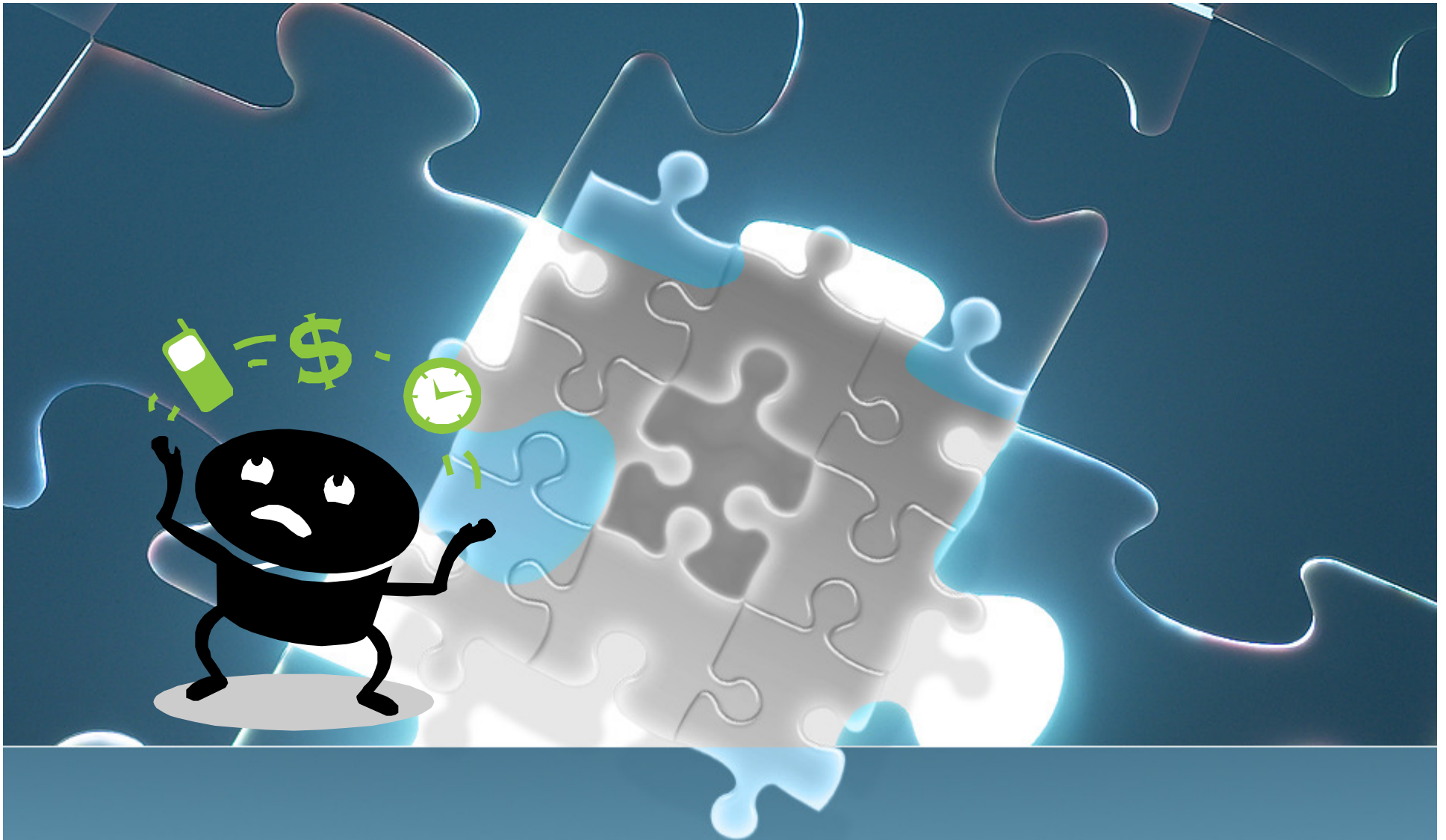




Manitoba Legislation

- Workers Compensation Act: Obligation to Re-employ
- www.wcb.mb.ca





What to do?

How do I manage all of these factors?



New Flyer's Decision

"Our 1st priority was to our employees. We want them to go home at the end of the day, uninjured and able to enjoy life. If we could prevent a small injury from becoming big it was a 'win'. Of course costs can play a role in a project like this. Based on our analysis it was determined that this would initially cost us more in the short term (with OT consultation and possible treatment billed through WCB). However due to early treatment, the expectation was that we could reduce the number of days 'out of the building' if an injury worsened."

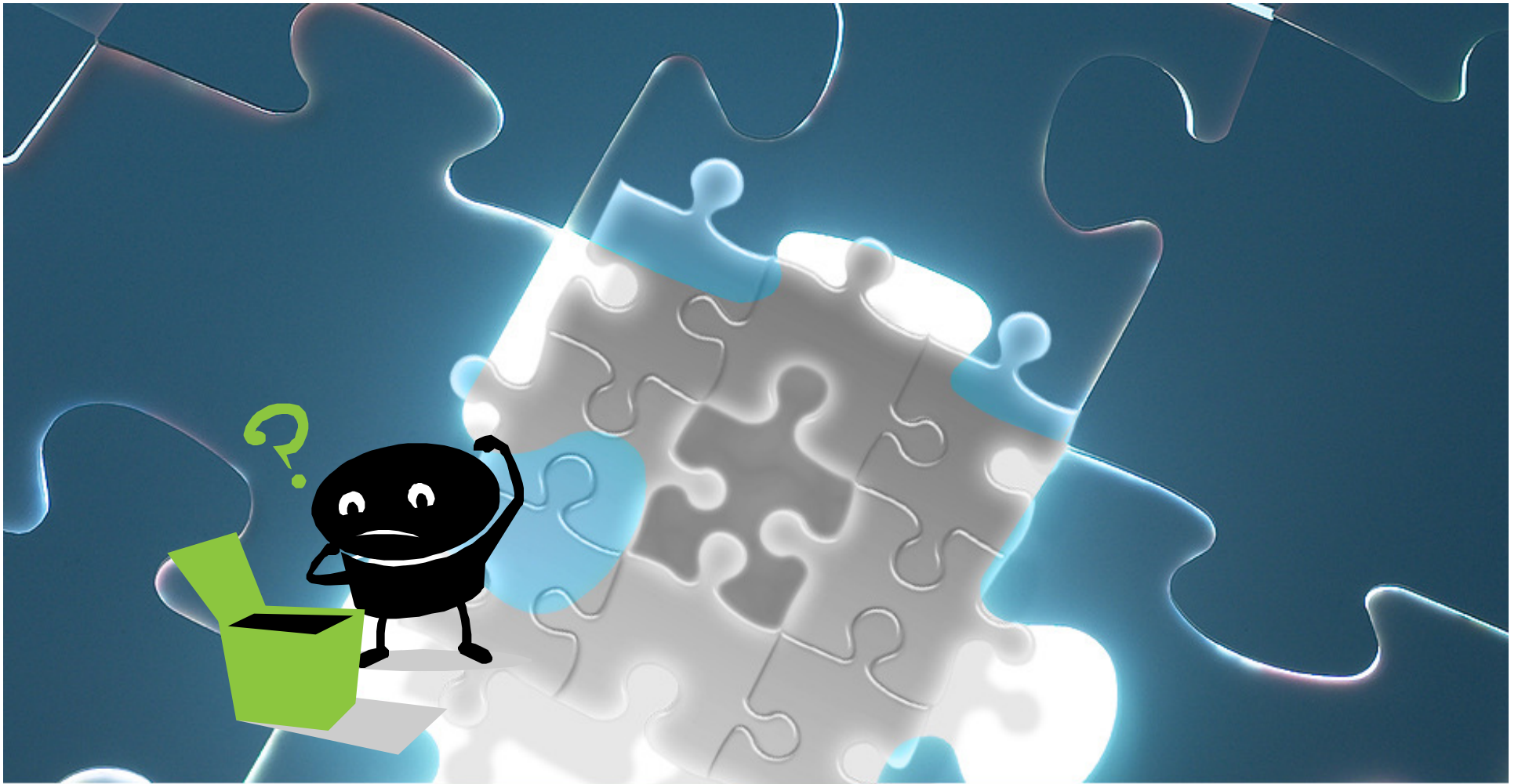
Ryan Harder, Occupational Health & Safety Specialist
New Flyer Industries Canada ULC



Where do I begin?

- Have a process by which MSI injuries are identified early and acted upon early





What does an Early Intervention Program look like?



Components

- Early reporting of MSI issues, whether they are work related or not
- Employee confidentiality respected
- Awareness and marketing of Early Intervention e.g., Posters in lunch room





Occupational Therapist



- OT contacted by Employer - central contact
- Attends workplace within a short time period (few days)
- Brief clinical assessment of individual
- Ergonomic assessment of workstation or problem job tasks





Occupational Therapist



- Early management of symptoms such as use of ice or heat, stretching exercises, light strengthening exercises
- If more advanced problem, then recommend to see physician and/or physiotherapist if the individual has not already done so
- Communication with the community treatment providers by the OT



Occupational Therapist

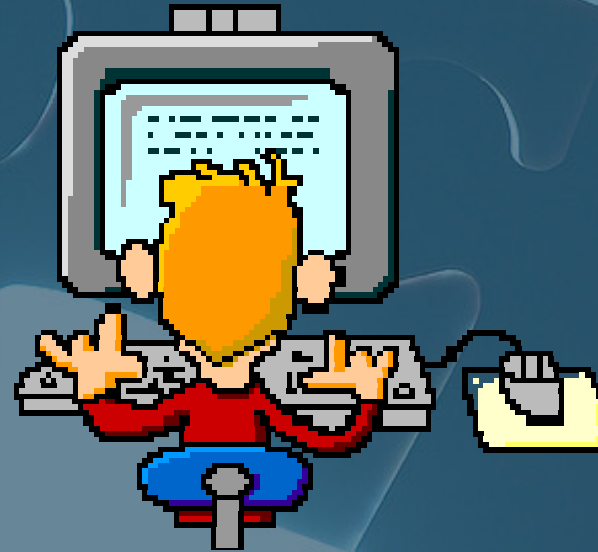
- Workstation/Workplace Ergonomic Changes:
 - Work method, placement of items
 - Equipment
 - Job task rotation
 - Communication with the Employer, Employee, and Union (if applicable)





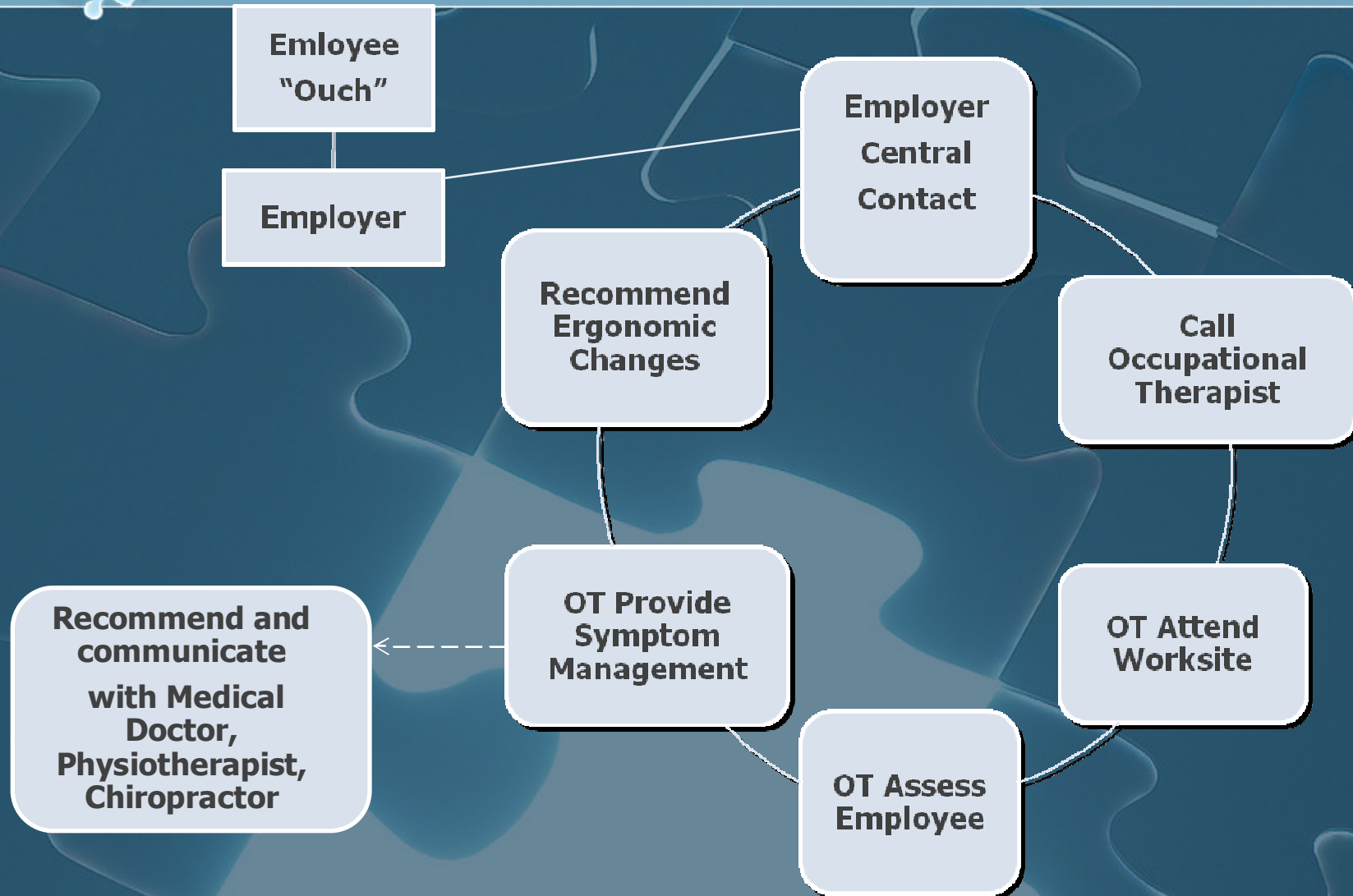
Occupational Therapist

- Follow up with the employee as applicable





Occupational Therapy





Occupational Therapist and Employer

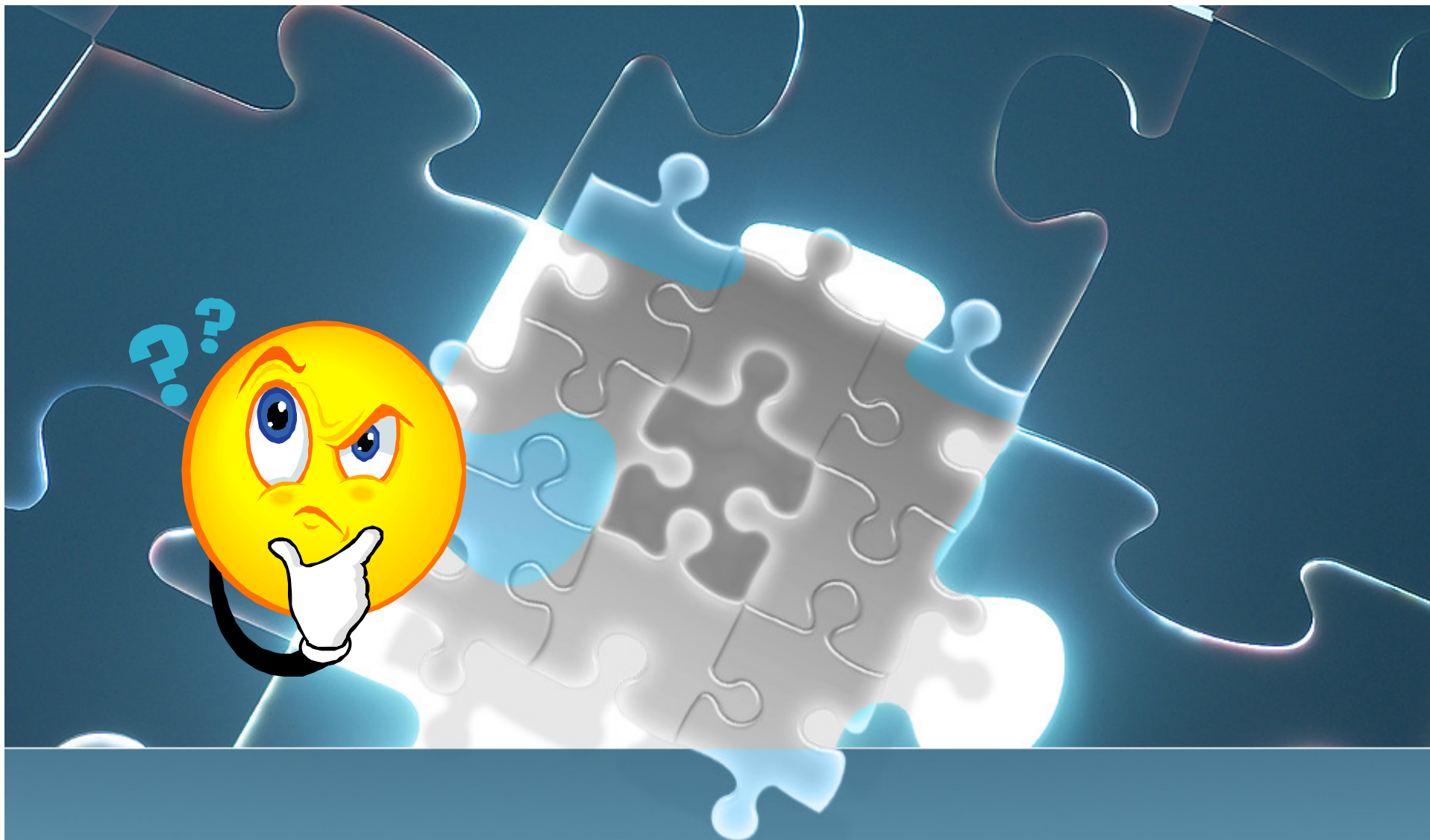
- Review claims or injury reports
- Identify “hot spots”
- Conduct Ergonomic assessments for the work areas
- Collaboration with the Occupational Therapist, Employer, Employees, and Union (if applicable)



Occupational Therapist and Employer

- Collaboration at planning stage for new processes or equipment/
furniture purchases
- To ensure maximum benefit to reduce MSI





Does **Early Intervention** Work?



Disability Benefits Plan of the Manitoba Teachers' Society

- Self managed plan
- Within the plan have “Early Intervention” for all injury and illness
- Criteria: working full time
- Criteria: Medical condition and are at risk of going off work in the near future



Disability Benefits Plan of the Manitoba Teachers' Society

- Offer to the Employee, Occupational Therapy consultation at work, and if applicable also at home
- Implement the OT recommendations of ergonomic equipment, modification of work method
- When Employee's group benefit insurance is exhausted for treatment provider, cover the additional treatment costs



Disability Benefits Plan of the Manitoba Teachers' Society

“Actuary and Demographer reviewed all of the early intervention files. The results show that the plan saved \$3.50 for every \$1.00 spent. I am confident with the accuracy of the analysis.”

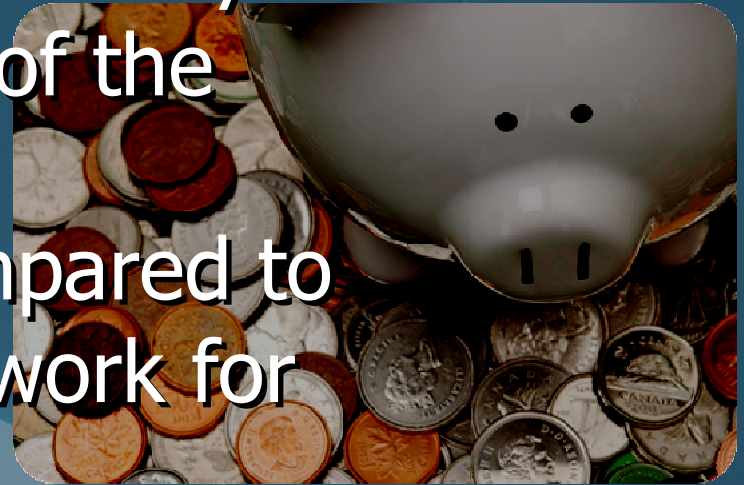
Ralph Ramore, Disability Claims and Rehabilitation
Administrator

Disability Benefits Plan of the Manitoba Teachers' Society



Lorraine's Quotes from Employers

- “Do you know how much money you saved me? The cost of the OT consultation and the equipment is minimal compared to having this employee off work for 1 week.”
- “Just deal with this issue quickly, I need the Employee's full attention and skills.”





Large Multi-National Employer

- 24 hour centre for arranging the pick up and delivery of goods, and for billing; computer based tasks
- During the 10 year period of Early Intervention, only 2 Employees were off work for a brief period of time. It is noted that these Employees first worked in a heavy shop environment for many years and were already experiencing the MSI



Large Multi-National Employer

- During the 10 year period of Early Intervention, 1 employee was placed temporarily on modified duties





Literature Highlights

- Durand, M-J., Vachon, B., Loisel, P., Berthelette, D. (2003). Constructing the program impact theory for an evidence-based work rehabilitation program for workers with low back pain. *Work*, 21, 233-242.
- Demonstrates effectiveness of early intervention and workplace accommodation



Literature Highlights

- Cost benefit analysis in a 6 year follow up: cost savings related to “disease” were substantially lower than in a standard care program
- (\$545 compared to \$16,384)

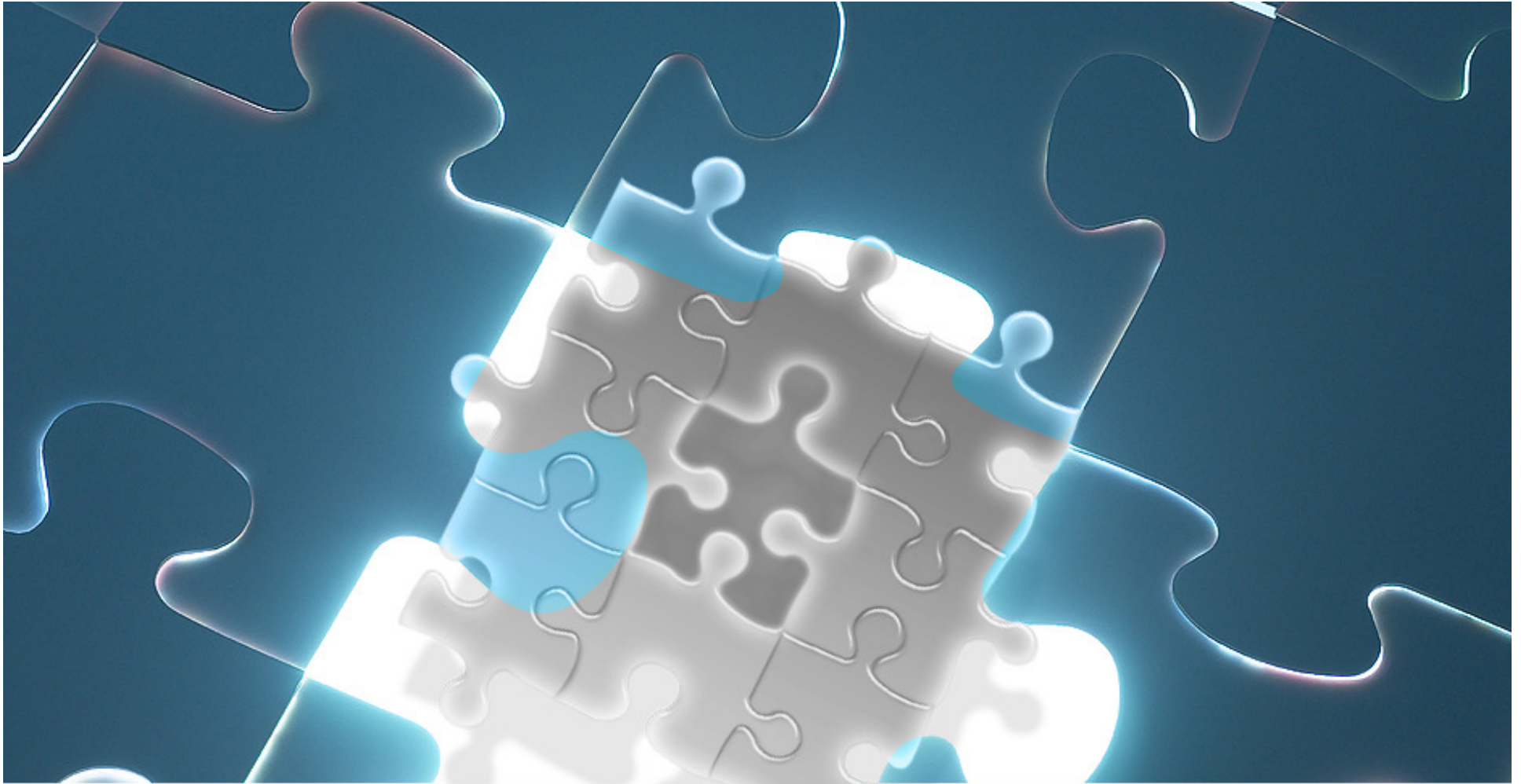




How do I find an Occupational Therapist

- www.msot.mb.ca Private Practice directory on the website
- Yellow pages





Questions?
Discussion