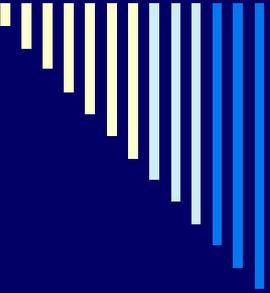
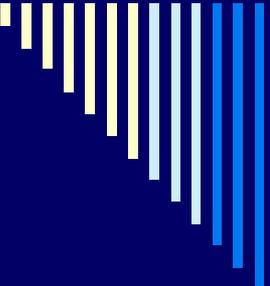


Writing Effective Development Letters



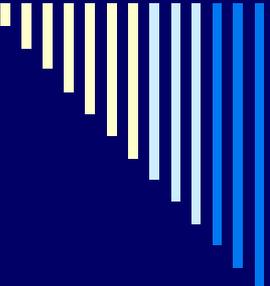
Culture

- Accepted values of this program
 - Workers were put at risk, without proper protection, sacrificed health and lives
 - Sick workers or families of deceased workers are entitled to any and all benefits we can provide
 - We will maximize benefits paid
 - Fair, consistent, and non-adversarial



First Impressions are VERY Important

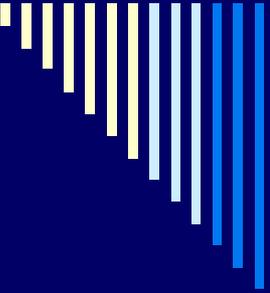
- Initial development = 1st CE contact
- Letter “tone” establishes what claimant can expect – must reflect DEEOIC desire to assist
- Counters negative public perceptions; reinforces our desire to help



Put Yourself in Claimant's Shoes

- Claimants are PEOPLE - treat with dignity and respect
 - Ill employees
 - Family of deceased

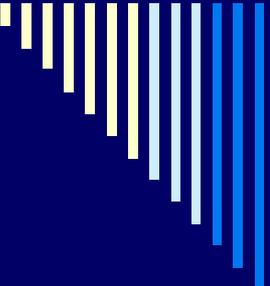
- Empathize – how would you feel?
 - Asking for old & unobtainable records
 - Reliving painful long past events
 - Complex process
 - No guarantee of payment



Know your Audience

- Ask for information the recipient is likely to possess –
 - Living employee vs. survivor
 - Doctor
 - DOE/DOJ

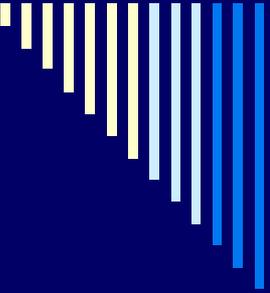
- Avoid confrontational statements



Before Writing - Strategize

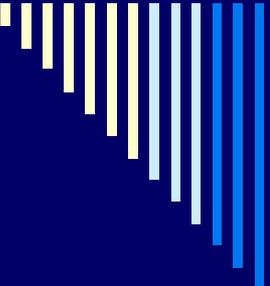
- Information already in the file?
 - Examine entire file

- Most efficient way to get the information
 - Available resources
 - Doctor vs. claimant
 - Telephone call?



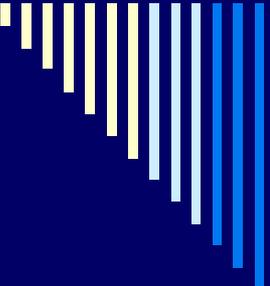
Development Letters

- Be specific and tailor questions to the facts
- Simplify – take out unnecessary jargon and overly technical language.
 - Pertinent and “on point” questions
 - Advise of available resources for help i.e. RC center – website
 - Contact Information
- Proofread – Proofread – Proofread



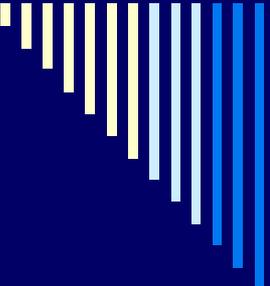
Context

- Answer the following questions for the claimant –
 - Why is this needed?
 - What did DEEOIC do to help?
- No case recitation necessary – remember keep it simple and on point
- 1st person



Clarity

- Plain English is important
- Avoid –
 - Technical jargon
 - Confusing language
 - Acronym overuse
 - Putting burden on claimant
 - Bad Spelling/Grammar
 - Confrontation

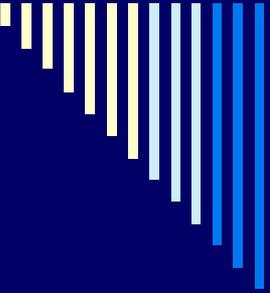


Conciseness

- Identify all deficiencies before you request information

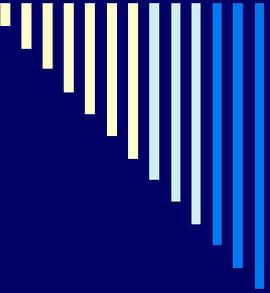
- Get to the point
 - What will move the claim forward efficiently?
 - Don't ask for what you don't need
 - Avoid redundancy

- Examine your letter for words, sentences, or phrases that don't contribute to the request.



Proofreading is Important

- Small Errors can add up to big headaches
 - Pronoun mixing
 - Run-on/compound/fragment sentences
 - Incorrect case history
 - Names/Addresses/facility/dates
 - PII



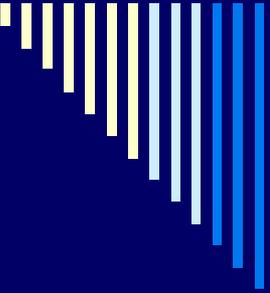
Medical Development

□ Illnesses Identified

- Clarify claimed illnesses up front
- Consolidate information requests

□ Efficient medical development

- Piece-meal recommended decisions leads to confusion, error, and frustration

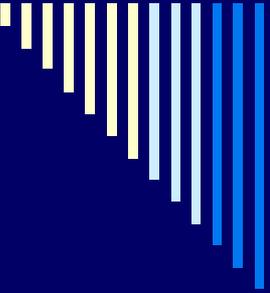


Exposure

- Use Site Exposure Matrix wisely
 - Search by different methods
 - Don't rely solely on job occupation

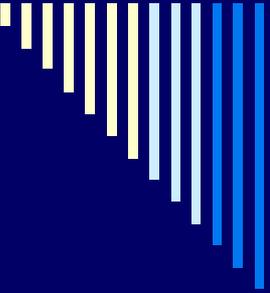
- Don't ignore claimant provided data
 - Statements/EE-3
 - OHQ
 - Affidavits

- Totality of evidence to make a reasoned CE judgment



Causation

- Treating physicians can respond to Part E causation question
 - DMC does not need to review every case
- Correct causation standard applied?
- SOAF lists CE findings
- Read the DMC report
 - Answer the question
 - Occupational context



THE

END!

