

TIPS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND WORKING WITH A BRAIN INJURY

Getting back to work after a brain injury can be exciting and nerve wracking. Common concerns include:

- Additional stress and difficulty managing stress
- Communication challenges and risk of miscommunication
- Changes in functioning (cognitive or physical) can impact your role at work

WORKING WITH A BRAIN INJURY

Over time, you will be the expert on working with a brain injury. For now, here are some successful ways to get back to work:

- It's helpful to start small. Start part-time and increase your work schedule as you feel more comfortable in your role.
- Use the accommodations that you need. It's tempting to work through breaks and take on extra projects, but it's better to take breaks, start slow and focus on success not quantity of work.
- If a conflict comes up, take a moment to think things through before you react.
- If there is something you need to address, talk to someone you trust and plan for how to address it.
- Pay attention to how you are doing through the day. After a brain injury, being tired or fatigued can make mistakes more likely. You might need breaks during the day or shorter days. Ask for what you need to be successful.
- Make sure you eat and drink enough water during the day. Set alarms to remind you to take care of yourself.
- During non-work hours, make sure you take care of yourself (i.e. sleeping and staying active) and have a routine at home.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress isn't unique to brain injury, but it can be more challenging to manage.

Strategies to help with stress:

- Take time-oriented breaks.
- Regularly check how you're doing. Learn your 'stress signs' and if you're starting to feel stressed use what works for you. Listen to a favorite song, take a quick walk, get a drink or get out of the situations. Taking these regular breaks can prevent extra stress.
- Have something at work to remind you to smile and feel calm. This can be a picture or a note in your wallet or something on your desk. When you see that it take a slow breath, smile and think of something you are grateful for.

WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

At work, being a good communicator is important.

Strategies to help with workplace communication:

- Email is great, but it can be easily misunderstood. If you're unsure of an email, follow up with someone on the phone or in person.
- If a miscommunication has happened, address it directly. Think about the situation and what you can do next time to decrease the risk of it happening again.
- It's best always be professional in a work setting. Even if you get along well with your supervisor, be mindful about what information you share or what jokes you make.
- With co-workers who are also your friends, remind yourself that work is a professional environment. Be aware of what you are talking about and make sure you focus on work at work.

