

# Returning to Work after Brain Injury

## Information for Employers

Following a Brain Injury people may experience the following symptoms

- Fatigue
- Slowed thought processing
- Altered concentration and attention
- Altered memory
- Altered ability to plan and organise self
- Altered communication
- Altered motivation
- Altered balance and coordination
- Hypersensitivity to noise, light

### **What are some things that can assist the person to return to work successfully?**

- Being able to work shorter hours and less days of the week initially, and to gradually increase hours and work days as symptoms permit. Ideally the person would not work consecutive days to begin with.
- Having regular breaks throughout the day, with a quiet place to take these breaks.
- Pacing activities throughout the day – completing more demanding tasks in the morning and easier tasks later in the day.
- Factor in travel time to and from work as this will contribute to fatigue, can hours be altered so person avoids peak hour travel?
- Work environment – providing a quiet environment, use of noise cancelling headphones, avoid harsh lighting, particularly fluorescent lights, reduce distractions.
- Slow communication down, allow the person time to process what you have said and form a response. If the person is struggling to answer then ask if they need you to repeat or rephrase what you have said to help them understand.
- If you are not sure they have understood you then ask them.
- Look directly at the person when talking to them so they can see your facial expressions and body language to facilitate understanding.
- Provide information in small chunks to facilitate processing.
- Break tasks down into smaller more manageable steps.
- Use simple short instructions for tasks
- Use of diaries and calendars to assist memory
- Write important information down
- Give information in small chunks using clear concise language
- Remember intellect and speech are not the same thing! The person may be able to understand you really well but struggle to form the words to reply to you.

*Sourced from ACC8319 Concussion Education Sheet*