



# Disability Awareness Guide

Your guide to understanding the diversity of disabilities so you can promote awareness and inclusion in your workplace



Castle

castle.org.au  
1300 817 917

# OUR VALUES

## BE GENUINE

We're down to earth, caring people and honest straight-talkers. Our work is all about building honest, fair and transparent relationships with participants: you can't fake it. Being genuine holds us accountable to always acting with integrity and putting the interests of participants first.

## LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

We recognise that life and work isn't always smooth sailing. Bumps in the road are par for the course. We are able to see past the bumps in the road, think laterally and act calmly in difficult situations. We look for the opportunity to unlock the full potential of our participants everywhere and every day

## CELEBRATE THE WINS

Assisting people with disabilities achieve their goals - feeling part of and contributing to their community - is life changing. We never take that for granted. Our work is satisfying and fulfilling, built on small, significant gains and moments that deserve to be celebrated together, as teams and with participants

## WE NEVER GIVE UP

When the going gets tough, our people roll up their sleeves and get the job done. Our work rests on a foundation of trust that must be earned. Our work offers the chance to truly change people's lives. In following through we recognise this as both a great privilege and responsibility.

**We respect and acknowledge the Awabakal, Worimi, Kuring-gai and Darkinung people on whose traditional land our Castle team work, live and dream.**

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# 3 MESSAGE FROM CASTLE

Employing someone with a disability could be one of the best business decisions you make. I'm sure the vast majority of you would agree, people who have a disability deserve the same opportunity to find work as everyone else and supporting these people in gaining a job is the right thing to do.

However, people with a disability face unemployment rates nearly double the national average. The first step to addressing this is to raise awareness and promote inclusion in our community. Together, we can ensure every member of our community has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Research shows hiring a person with a disability, health condition or injury makes good business sense. You gain loyal employees, enhance staff morale and your customers love it. Considering 1 in 5 Australians have a disability, there are a lot of potential customers who will appreciate your support of inclusion.

At Castle we believe we need to educate businesses about what disability is, remove the stigma and demonstrate just how easy it is to hire a person with a disability. Not all disabilities are visible and mental health is a significant issue in our community. Given 45% of Australians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime, it's likely you already have an employee in this situation.

Four million Australians have a disability, health condition or injury so it's time to join the Disability Inclusion Revolution and tap into this under-utilised pool of talented people. As the Founder of the Valuable 500 movement, Richard Branson says, "If disability is not on your board agenda, neither is diversity. Nor is innovation, productivity, brand experience, talent, risk and reputation."

We hope this guide to disability awareness helps you understand the diversity of disabilities, how health conditions may manifest in the workplace and what to do to support your existing and future employees.



**Castle**  
LIVE WORK LEARN

# BUSINESS CASE FOR HIRING A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

People who have a disability deserve the same opportunity to find work as everyone else. One in five Australians identify as having a disability however the unemployment rate of this group is nearly double the national average<sup>1</sup>.

When surveyed by the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia, 69% of business owners stated that employing someone with a disability delivered a positive outcome.

While 77% of businesses are open to hiring a person with a disability, only 39% of larger businesses, 29% of small-to-medium businesses, and 17% of micro businesses currently employ a person with a disability<sup>2</sup>.

Hiring a person with a disability is not an act of charity. You will gain a loyal, skilled and talented member for your team, who is eager to support your business es. The benefits for businesses who employ a person with a disability are wide-ranging and hugely impactful. These can include;

- » Employing someone with a disability creates a positive, community oriented reputation for your business.
- » Your customers will love it. Customers with disabilities are three times as likely to avoid an organisation that has a negative diversity reputation than those who don't.
- » You actively demonstrate to customers and potential staff you are an inclusive, progressive employer of choice.
- » You will know that you have positively changed someone's life and are helping build a more inclusive community.

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, 4430.0 - Disability, Aging and Carers, Australia 2018 viewed 3 February 2020

[2] Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) 2018, Making it Easier for Small Business to employ people with disability

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

At Castle, we believe everybody has the right to work, to live a full and meaningful life and contribute to society. The first step to enhancing the inclusion of people with disability is fostering awareness and increasing workplace participation rates.



Your perspectives and social stereotypes are shaped by your personal experiences, so it's no surprise that people's understanding about disabilities will differ. Disabilities are diverse, not always visible and are unique to the individual.

This guide can be used as a resource in your business to increase your awareness and understanding of the spectrum of disabilities that your employees may experience. While our fact sheets offer insight into the impact of a disability on the employee's abilities in the workplace, it is important to understand that each individual's needs and circumstances will differ. We encourage you to promote open dialogue with your employees about this.

## DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Disability Employment Services (DES) is a government program that assists people with a disability, injury or illness in preparing for, finding and keeping a job. As a DES provider, Castle can facilitate access to this under-utilised pool of talented people.

We will tailor a shortlist of candidates for your business, simplifying your recruitment process at no cost to you. Our Account Managers take the time to understand the skills and experience you require for the role. We match you with candidates who are the right fit for your team and support you and your new employee, every step of the way.



Employment gives people a purpose in life, offers a meaningful connection within the community and creates financial and social independence. As a business owner, when you hire a person with a disability you not only gain a valuable team member, you have the opportunity to open up a world of possibilities for someone.

# SUPPORT AND INCENTIVES

When you hire a person with a disability through Castle, you're not only gaining a valuable employee, you also gain access to ongoing support, government incentives and other business benefits.

- » Employers may be eligible for government incentives and wage subsidies up to \$10,000 for eligible job seekers they hire.
- » We can assist you in accessing funding for workplace modifications and assistive technology such as wheelchair ramps, specialised computers and interpreters.
- » Workplace modifications not only make your business more accessible to employees, but may also opens your door to customers with a disability.
- » Businesses that employ people with a disability build a positive reputation as supporting their community and attract customers who either have or know someone with a disability



## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYEES

Work Assist is a free service, funded by the Australian Government and facilitated through DES providers. It is available to employers with staff at risk of losing their job due to the impact of an injury, disability or a health condition.

To be eligible, your employee must provide evidence of a medical condition, must have worked an average of 8 hours per week for 13 consecutive weeks and be an Australian resident or TPV Holder aged between 14-65.

For at least 6 months, you have direct access to our team of Employment Support Managers. We provide you and your employee with strategies and assistance to overcome the barriers preventing them from meeting your business' productivity needs.

Examples of support include; organising interventions such as occupational therapy, pain management and counseling, arranging workplace assessments and modifications and suggesting ways to redesign certain aspects of the employee's role to ensure they can continue to perform to the best of their ability.

# TYPES OF DISABILITY

Defining disabilities is complicated as each individual's experiences, restrictions or impairments are different. A person may be born with a disability or acquire it later in life due to injury or illness. It may be visible, invisible, permanent, temporary, physical, intellectual or related to mental health.

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disability as;

- » Total or partial loss of a person's physical or mental functions
- » Presence of organisms capable of causing the body disease or illness to the body
- » The malfunction, malformation, disfigurement or loss of one or more parts of a person's body
- » A disorder or malfunction that results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition
- » A disorder, illness or disease that effects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour



## MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

Impact an individual's emotions or behaviour. It is characterised by how a person thinks, feels or perceives. It is estimated that 45% of people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime.



## SENSORY DISABILITY

Impact a person's senses, spatial awareness and interaction with the world around them. The most common includes visual, hearing and speech impairments.



## PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Impairs mobility, physical capacity or stamina. A person may be born with it or acquire it due to injury, illness or disease. While many assume physical disabilities only affect the body, they can also impact mental capacity such as an acquired brain injury.



## NEUROLOGICAL DISABILITY

Impact a person's ability to learn and communicate. It can be caused by illness, genetic or neuro-developmental conditions. These do not indicate low intelligence and can simply limit a person's ability to acquire specific skills or their personality traits

# INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AND IN THE WORKPLACE

When employing a person with a disability, it is important to understand how **their** impairment impacts **their** capacity in the workplace. Making adjustments to the work environment for staff with disabilities enables them to perform efficiently and safely, giving them the same opportunities within the business as any other employee.

The workplace adjustments required will differ significantly depending on the individual and their capacity. Some may not need any changes, some may need minor changes to the requirements of the job, while others may need specific equipment or structural changes to the workplace. It is important to communicate with your employee and understand their specific needs so that you can accommodate for them in the workplace.

## WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY

Many assume employing a person with a disability will have a negative affect on productivity however, the Australian Public Service Commission reports workers with a disability have;

- » Higher job retention, better attendance and fewer sick days
- » Fewer workplace health and safety (WHS) incidents
- » Little difference in productivity levels compared to those without a disability

## WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS

When you employ through Castle, we conduct a FREE workplace assessment to ensure your business can accommodate for the individual. Through the Government's Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) we facilitate the purchase and installation of any necessary equipment, assistive technology and modifications to your workplace.

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The way we speak to people has a direct affect on how they view themselves in society. First person language prevents individuals being defined by their disability. For example, referring to someone as 'a person with a vision impairment' recognises the disability after the person. Conversely, avoid referring to someone without an impairment as 'normal' or 'able'. It is also important to;

- » Be mindful of body language and make eye contact
- » Speak clearly and use your usual tone of voice
- » Communicate directly with the person not through a third party such as their carer or interpreter
- » Avoid making assumptions about a person's disability or their capacity

# ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY (ABI)

ABIs are caused by damage to the brain due to an injury or illness. They can be a result of accidents, stroke, tumours, infection, lack of oxygen or degenerative neurological disease. ABIs result in deterioration of the person's cognitive, physical, emotional or independent functioning.

Brain injuries are often called the 'hidden disability' because there may be no physical signs of injury. The long term effects of brain injuries vary depending on the severity, nature and location of the damage. Generally, brain injury effects can be categorised as;

**BEHAVIOURAL-** Damage to areas of the brain that regulate emotions and impulses such as anger, self-centeredness and social capacity.

**COGNITIVE** - Include attention, memory, concentration problems, difficulty with motivation or decision making.

**MENTAL** - Impact a person's mental state. This can cause experiences such as depression, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions and panic attacks.

**PHYSICAL** - Wide ranging and include sleep issues, fatigue, headaches, dizziness and hearing problems.

**600 000 Australians have an ABI, 66% of these are acquired under the age of 25**



Brain Injury Australia

## **AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK**

- » May be prone to irritability due to behavioural effects of injury
- » May have issues with concentration and managing multiple tasks at once
- » May experience memory loss, affecting their ability to complete tasks
- » May experience fatigue or other physical symptoms that affect concentration

## **WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

- » Develop an understanding of the condition, symptoms, any medication and its effects.
- » Maintain close communication with your employee
- » Flexible working environments including hours, breaks and work loads where practical
- » Provide ongoing personal support through an assigned mentor or buddy
- » Develop a work plan with your employee, defining their role, responsibilities and necessary adjustments
- » Keep work areas free from distraction and if needed, incorporate tools to assist, such as assistive technology, prompt cards or calendars

# ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER & LEARNING DIFFERENCES

ADHD impacts a person's ability to control their behaviour. People with ADHD may experience difficulty paying attention, hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour. In adults, hyperactivity often decreases but they may still struggle with restlessness and paying attention. This can impact capacity and performance in the workplace.

Learning differences such as Dyslexia, Dysgraphia or Dyscalculia affect the way the brain interprets information. This impacts reading, writing, mathematics, organisation and communication skills. Unrecognised, learning differences can cause individuals to fall behind their peers, leading to poor literacy skills, coping strategies and low self-esteem.

Learning differences are not a sign of un-intelligence, but one of a difference in strengths. Many people with dyslexia can be 'out-of-the-box' thinkers, with a knack for creative. These individuals are often skilled at strategic, real-world thinking.

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » The employee may experience impulsiveness, disorganization or poor time management
- » The employee may have trouble reading for long periods of time, may transcribe inverted letters and numbers or require a colleague to assist them to read and write
- » As a result of their condition, they may experience low self-esteem, frustration, irritability or a mental health condition
- » Mood or motivation may affect their relationships in the workplace

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Maintain open communication so you can understand their needs, skill level, side effects of medication and triggers
- » Become familiar with the behaviours that indicate stress and facilitate breaks
- » Consider using personal prompts and reminders to keep them on task
- » Reduce distractions in the workplace where practical
- » Work together to determine the best way to administer tasks, memos and deadlines
- » Follow up on tasks and memos to make sure they understand the message
- » Offer a workplace mentor to help with time and task management
- » Provide flexible workloads to allow more time for reading, writing or numerical tasks

**ADHD affects one in twenty Australians with an estimated 75% yet to be diagnosed**



ADHD Australia

# ANXIETY

Anxiety is a feeling of fear or apprehension about what is to come and is the body's natural response to stress. While it is normal to feel anxious about social situations or looming deadlines, anxiety becomes a disability when it prevents people from fulfilling tasks and living their life.

People with anxiety experience intense, excessive and persistent worry about everyday situations such as phobias, separation, social situations or illness. Anxiety can also provoke panic attacks where they experience sudden episodes of intense fear that reach a peak within minutes.

Anxiety can present a range of symptoms including;

- » Feeling excessively restless, tense, irritable or edgy
- » Excessive fear or worry about the past, present or future
- » Catastrophizing or obsessive thinking about hypothetical situations and relationships
- » Physical symptoms such as hot and cold flushes, racing heart, tightening chest, quick breathing, pins and needles, dizziness or nausea

Anxiety can be managed through medication and psychological therapies. It is important to understand that each person's experiences are unique.

**On average, 1 in 4 people will experience anxiety at some stage in their life.**



Beyond Blue

## **AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK**

- » Employees may avoid certain situations, may become easily overwhelmed or upset without an obvious prompt
- » Mood or motivation may impact their relationships in the workplace
- » They may be sensitive to feedback or have low confidence in their work
- » They may have difficulty concentrating or managing multiple tasks at once
- » Disrupted sleep patterns may lead to fatigue and irritability during shifts

## **WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

- » Encourage communication so you understand their condition, its fluctuations and situations that trigger anxiety
- » Be aware of behaviours or triggers that indicate they're experiencing symptoms
- » Consider providing flexible work practices, hours and loads where practical
- » Provide environments that facilitate coping strategies
- » Eliminate uncertainty by setting clear tasks and deadlines. Monitor progress to ensure they don't feel overwhelmed
- » Avoid phrases like "you're okay" or "calm down" when they're having a panic attack

# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental condition that may affect a person's communication skills, social interactions, interests and/or behaviours. These difficulties are often accompanied by restricted or repetitive physical behaviours and sensory sensitivity to sounds, lights, smells or touch.

The term "spectrum" is used to emphasise that Autism is a unique experience for each person. People with autism have a wide range of challenges and unique strengths such as:

- » Difficulty understanding body language, the meaning of expressions, jargon and slang
- » Speech and language challenges. E.g. being non-verbal or inappropriate in their communication tactics
- » Uncontrolled and/or repetitive movement, speech or use of objects. This can include hand-flapping, rocking, or repeating sounds
- » Agitation from changes to their routine or environment
- » Intense focus on niche areas of interest. The accumulation of knowledge or skills is in this area is often impressive.

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Your employee may struggle to develop relationships due to their difficulty partaking in social interactions
- » Their facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures may not reflect their feelings, resulting in misunderstandings that lead to conflict with colleagues and customers
- » They may be easily overwhelmed by sensory stimulants such as loud music, bright, flashing lights or congested spaces

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Develop an understanding of their condition, behaviours and/or triggers
- » Ensure training is clear describing their role, responsibilities and everyday protocol like starting times
- » Consider modifying the job to suit the employee's strengths
- » Provide clear feedback and praise accomplishments
- » Consider assigning a workplace support person to assist with task management
- » With permission, educate their colleagues on their specific behaviours, needs and the autism spectrum
- » Flexible working arrangements that limit sensory stimulation and/or distractions where practical
- » Consider the use of personal prompts or task reminders such as alarms
- » Mediate workplace issues that may arise due to miscommunication or misunderstandings

**1 in 70 Australians identify as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Austism Spectrum Australia



# BIPOLAR DISORDER

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition where the individual experiences intense fluctuations in their mood and energy. It is characterised by oscillating manic (or hypomanic) and depressive episodes. The severity and duration of these episodes depends on the individual and their circumstances. These changes in mood affect the thoughts and behaviours of the person and consequently their capacity in the workplace.

Depressive episodes are characterised by extremely low moods, feelings of hopelessness, sadness and a lack of interest or pleasure in life. This can lead to the individual struggling to concentrate, partake in their regular activities and experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Manic episodes are characterised by extremely high moods and activity. The individual can experience intense emotion such as anger or happiness. The intensity of these moods can lead to agitation, racing thoughts, high levels of energy, little need for sleep and rapid speech.

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

Depressive episodes can cause;

- » Withdrawal from social interactions or relationships
- » Low moods that necessitate sick days be used
- » Changes in sleep patterns creating fatigue, irritability and lack of motivation.
- » Sensitivity to feedback or low confidence in their work
- » Difficulty concentrating, managing or finishing tasks

Manic episodes can cause:

- » Impulsive and emotionally intense behaviour, potentially leading to conflict with colleagues or customers
- » Energy or motivation for new ideas and projects, resulting in them taking on more work than they can achieve.

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Maintain supportive communication, understand their illness, early signs of episodes and side effects of medication.
- » Provide environments that facilitate coping strategies
- » Set achievable, clear goals and monitor their progress
- » Gain emergency contact details and understand when these should be used
- » Allow the individual to attend services such as counselling
- » Regular positive affirmation
- » Manic episodes may cause increased energy and productivity. Be sure not to assign more work than you usually would during these episodes.

**Bipolar Disorder affects 2.9%  
of Australians or over  
565,000 people.**



Australian Bureau of Statistics

# CEREBRAL PALSY

**In Australia, around 600 to 700 infants are born with CP each year**



Cerebral Palsy Australia

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a permanent, non-progressive disorder caused by damage to the developing brain. It affects body movement, coordination, muscle tone, reflexes, posture and balance. People who have CP may also experience epilepsy, visual, learning, hearing, speech or intellectual impairments.

The symptoms differ significantly between cases. While an individual with severe CP might need extensive, lifelong care, a mild case may only exhibit slightly awkward movements with no special assistance required.

Symptoms can include;

- » Shaking and/or involuntary movements
- » Weakness and/or lack of coordination in voluntary movements
- » Stiff or tight muscles and exaggerated reflexes
- » Premature aging due to extra strain on their body
- » Acute and chronic pain
- » Post-impairment syndrome, including degenerative arthritis, repetitive motion injuries and fatigue

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Depending on the severity of their CP, your employee may require workplace adjustments that accommodate for their physical capacity
- » They may experience fatigue or weakness due to increased physical exertion
- » They may experience fluctuations in their mental health due to their condition
- » They may withdraw from social interactions due to difficulty communicating or low self-esteem

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Develop an understanding of their condition, capacity and support needs
- » Conduct a workplace assessment and make adjustments that ensure they can perform to the best of their ability.
- » Install any required assistive technology such as writing aids, speech recognition software or telephone assistance devices
- » Ensure workspaces are accessible and facilitate privacy (e.g. toilets or parking)
- » Be flexible, considering potential need for additional breaks or to attend medical appointments
- » If necessary, allow their personal care attendant to assist them in the workplace or assign a workplace support person to help with tasks
- » Consider modifying tasks to suit the employee's abilities

# PARTICIPANT

## CALEB MORAN

It's been five years since Caleb started his journey to work and with the support of our Maitland team he is now in his 4th year of a carpentry apprenticeship.



Due to his Aspergers and ADHD, Caleb says he sometimes loses track of what he's doing, particularly when assigned several tasks at once. To remedy this, he'll often ask his supervisors questions about the best way to do a task or what they'd like done next. While initially he was worried that this was annoying, with Castle's support as a mediator, he's now confident that his boss understands that this behaviour is a part of his disability.

Caleb takes immense pride in his job at Heartwood Constructions and his role in the workforce. He said, "I never thought I'd be able to get out of department housing" but now is renting a home in Fern Bay and is providing for his wife and their son.

## ELIZABETH GILLIGAN



For Liz, the biggest obstacle to finding a job was her anxiety during interviews. When seeking feedback about why she wasn't chosen for a position, employers often highlighted her reluctance to answer questions or participate in group interviews. Thankfully, during her interview at Powerdown, Liz's boss recognised her behaviour as anxiety, calmed her nerves and gave her the job.

Liz is still affected by anxiety on the job, particularly when her workload is high, but feels comfortable communicating with her boss and asking for help. With the support of an understanding boss, Liz is now thriving in the workplace and achieving her goals.

# STORIES

## SARAH MACDONALD

Sarah is on the Autism spectrum and faces difficulty communicating in the workplace. Although she may seem shy or withdrawn, she loves her job in the kitchen at the George Tavern and takes pride in contributing to society through work.



Sarah says in the past, the biggest challenge of her disability was having the confidence to talk to her boss about her role in the business. She said “it was very hard and stressful because I didn’t have anyone when I needed help”. Since choosing Castle as her DES provider, she can seek assistance from her case manager to communicate with her boss quickly address her concerns.

Sarah said “I love going to work, it makes me happy, they guys in the kitchen are really amazing and my boss is really cool”.

## BENJAMIN BROWN



Ben has been a Participant of Castle for almost three years and doesn’t let his cerebral palsy stop him from achieving his goals.

In addition to studying towards his Certificate of Registration in Real Estate with Triple Lakes Real Estate Budgewoi, Ben is also employed part-time as an Administration Assistant with Richardson Legal.

Ben is a proactive person that loves to set himself goals regardless of his setbacks. In 2018 he was 1 of 17 locals to be chosen to carry the Queens Baton for the Commonwealth Games and has been a recipient of Rotary Youth Leadership Award.

# DEPRESSION

Clinical depression is more than just feeling low during tough times. It is characterised by intense negative feelings and a lack of interest or pleasure in life. The severity and duration differs significantly between cases. It can be triggered by traumatic events or a person may be susceptible due to family history or personality traits.

Depression can be described as mild, moderate, severe melancholic or psychotic. People with melancholic depression experience physical symptoms such as fatigue and low energy. People with psychotic depression can lose touch with reality, experiencing hallucinations.

Symptoms of mild and moderate depression can include;

- » Low mood, hopelessness and lack of interest in daily life
- » Lack of motivation or ability to concentrate
- » Self-isolation and inability to express emotions
- » Low energy, fatigue & irritability
- » Changes in eating habits

It is important to understand that depression is just as debilitating as any physical disability. Allowing sick days for treatment and considering how workplace conditions such as stressful deadlines can enhance your employee's symptoms ensures you support mental health in your business.

**Depression affects more than 1 million Australians each year.**

Beyond Blue

## **AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK**

- » They may have difficulty concentrating and managing multiple tasks
- » They may be sensitive to feedback or have low confidence in their work
- » Disrupted sleep patterns may lead to fatigue and hence heightened irritability
- » Mood or motivation may affect their relationships
- » They may take sick days during low mood periods

## **WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

- » Encourage communication so you understand their history, medication and any triggers
- » Become familiar with the behaviours that indicate low moods and facilitate breaks
- » Provide environments that facilitate coping strategies
- » Identify and modify tasks that they may find stressful e.g. managing others or direct customer contact
- » Set achievable, clear goals and monitor their progress to ensure they are not overwhelmed
- » With permission, speak with their health professional about their mental health care plan
- » Allow the individual to attend treatments such as counselling

# DEVELOPMENTAL COORDINATION DISORDER (DCD)

People with DCD or Dyspraxia experience difficulties with their coordinated movement. This may impact fine motor skills tasks like writing and gross motor skills tasks like walking.

Dyspraxia or DCD occurs when messages from the brain are not effectively transmitted to the body. It can be caused by damage to the brain, genetics or may be a symptom of a dementing disorder that develops later in life. It affects;

- » Movement and coordination
- » Communication, causing the person to speak slowly, repeat words and have difficulty with pronunciation
- » Sensory sensitivity, causing difficulty coping with intense sound, light and textures
- » Visual competency, resulting in problems with reading and focusing on tasks

There is often an overlap between Dyspraxia and other learning differences such as Autism spectrum disorder. People with dyspraxia often develop their own strategies for working effectively and are persistent, highly motivated and creative thinkers in the workplace.

**It's estimated 10% of people have Dyspraxia and 2% of cases are severe.**

Occupational Therapy Children

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Difficulties with motor skills may impact your employee's ability to do refined tasks such writing or typing
- » Difficulties with speech may impact their ability to communicate clearly, hence affecting relationships
- » Extensive exposure to light or loud noises may cause irritability or hyperactivity
- » They may have trouble focusing on reading materials for long periods
- » They may have trouble organising their workload and with time management

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Encourage communication so you understand their challenges, coping strategies and capacity at work
- » Consider adjusting schedules, workloads and task allocation to allow extra time for tasks which require motor skills
- » Reduce distractions where practical e.g. allow headphones or quiet spaces for the employee to work in
- » Offer a workplace mentor who oversees and assists with tasks and time management
- » Create a workplace plan with your employee, recognising their capabilities and setting guidelines for their role and responsibilities.
- » Consider adjusting written tasks, information and processes to be digital
- » Use prompts and reminders to keep them on task

# INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

An intellectual disability is characterised by below average intellectual function. People with this condition may also experience physical, behavioural and emotional difficulties, ranging from mild to severe. This includes difficulties with;

- » Learning and processing information
- » Communicating, reading or writing
- » Daily living tasks, including self-care, independent living, and managing personal affairs
- » Social skills, self-expression and self-direction

Intellectual disabilities are most commonly present from birth due to chromosomal conditions, genetics or damage to the brain during pregnancy. Conditions include;

**FRAGILE X SYNDROME** - genetic condition caused by alterations in the FMR1 gene on the X chromosome.

**DOWN SYNDROME** - genetic chromosomal condition that occurs at conception.

**FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME**- a condition caused by alcohol exposure during pregnancy.

**DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY**- a childhood delay in physical, emotional and social skills and can be short or long-term.

**Approximately 1 in 1100  
Australians have Downs**

**Syndrome**

Telethon Institute for  
Child Health Research

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Your employee may have difficulty learning new tasks, solving problems, working independently and grasping complex concepts
- » They may struggle with communicating, particularly when explaining tasks they don't understand.
- » They may face difficulty concentrating, completing tasks or multi-tasking
- » They may experience mood swings or be easily upset

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Communicate with your employee or their carer so you understand their capacity at work
- » Consider a buddy system to provide learning support
- » Implement flexible hours, workloads and deadlines with extra time for tasks
- » Communicate tasks and training as small steps, one at a time. Give time frames for each step's completion
- » Create a plan for how best to delegate tasks. Consider using tools such as apps, visual prompts, calendars, alarms, checklists with large font and always check they understand instructions

# HEALTH CONDITIONS

“Health condition” is an umbrella term used to describe illnesses that affect the ability of the body to function. These conditions may be temporary, episodic, remissive, degenerative or terminal.

Each person’s experiences and symptoms will be unique to their condition however, all health conditions affect the individual’s capacity in the workplace.

Examples include;

- » Alcohol and drug dependency
- » Asthma, emphysema and respiratory disorders
- » Cancers including brain, breasts, lung, pancreas, skin, bowel, ovarian, and renal
- » Chronic fatigue or chronic pain syndrome
- » Chrons Disease
- » Heart and artery diseases
- » Cystic Fibrosis
- » Diabetes
- » Endometriosis
- » Hepatitis C
- » Hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism
- » Immunodeficiency
- » Kidney disorder
- » Liver disorders and cirrosis

It is also essential to consider how workplace environments can cause health conditions. For example, extensive exposure to smoke and chemical fumes can lead to respiratory disorders or aggravate pre-existing conditions such as asthma.

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » The employee’s health condition may affect their physical capacity e.g. their stamina and strength. This may impact their ability to stand for long periods or lift heavy objects
- » The condition may affect their mental health, leading to self-isolation, low moods or poor concentration
- » Your employee may take additional sick days depending on fluctuations in their condition, mental health or medical appointments
- » They may require additional breaks to take medicine. For example, a diabetic employee self-administering insulin.

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Ensure you understand the condition and their capacity to work
- » Be familiar with any medication they’re taking, its side effects and provide safe disposal facilities
- » Maintain a positive attitude so they can feel comfortable communicating fluctuations in their condition
- » Facilitate flexible hours, workloads and deadlines
- » Ensure you’re aware of emergency contacts and when they should be used.

**Cancer is the leading cause of death in Australia with 50000 deaths estimated in 2019**



Cancer Council

# HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Hearing impairments affect a person's ability to communicate and interact with the world around them. Functional hearing loss can range in severity from partial to complete loss of sound. It can be caused by a multitude of factors including illness, infection, trauma, genetics congenital conditions, or age.

People who identify as Deaf (with a capitalised D) may have difficulty identifying environmental sounds, others may have no functional hearing and rely on sign language and lip reading to communicate.

A person may also experience Tinnitus, a consistent ringing in the ears when no such physical noise is present. This may affect their ability to concentrate on tasks or to sleep, causing fatigue.

It is important to consider how environmental factors and occupational conditions affect an individual's hearing. Loud machinery, high frequency pitches or excessive exposure to audio devices can result in damage to the inner ear and nerves.

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Hearing impairments affect the person's ability to communicate with colleagues and customers. They may rely on sign language, lip reading or an interpreter.
- » Your workplace emergency procedures may need to be adapted to accommodate their hearing capacity
- » They may experience frustration when communicating, leading to them avoiding social situations
- » Unexpected hearing loss can have a negative impact on mental health, resulting in low mood and withdrawal from social interactions.

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Ensure you understand their impairment and their hearing capacity
- » Consider your induction protocol and ensure it's accessible to your employee
- » Ensure any modifications, aids or assistive technologies are in place from their first day of employment
- » Consider existing workplace communication such as meetings, ensure these are adapted so the employee is not excluded
- » Ensure they are confident in a evacuation procedures
- » Consider providing personal protective equipment (PPE) in your workplace to protect your employees from industrial deafness.

**1 in 6 Australians  
are affected by  
hearing loss**

Australian Bureau of Statistics



# MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS)

MS is a neurological condition affecting elements of the central nervous system including the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves. There are three types;

Relapsing-remitting (RRMS) when the individual has partial or total recovery after attacks. Roughly 75% of cases are RRMS. In secondary progressive (SPMS) the person only partially recovers after an attack. In primary progressive (PPMS) the symptoms gradually worsen rather than being periodic attacks.

MS is caused by scars within the central nervous system that interfere with nerve impulses. Symptoms of the condition are unique to each person as they are dependent on where these scars manifest and their severity. Symptoms can include;

- » Muscular spasms, loss of mobility, weakness, problems with balance, motor control and co-ordination.
- » Difficulty concentrating and loss of memory
- » Vertigo and impaired vision
- » Bladder incontinence and/or constipation

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Impaired vision and memory loss may affect their ability to focus and complete tasks
- » May need to avoid working in environments where loss of balance could cause injury
- » In cases where the condition has progressed, speech, mobility and everyday tasks such as eating and drinking may be affected by tremors
- » Muscular spasms may cause difficulty sleeping and hence fatigue and irritability
- » They may experience mental health conditions as a result of their diagnosis

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Maintain a supportive attitude and open communication so you are aware of fluctuations in their condition.
- » Understand their history with the condition, their medication and side effects.
- » Conduct a workplace assessment to determine if they need assistive technology or modifications
- » Offer flexible working conditions and additional breaks to accommodate for random or frequent attacks.
- » Ensure you're aware of emergency contacts and when they should be used.
- » Examine workplace accessibility and layout, considering potential injury due to loss of balance

**On average more than 10  
Australians are diagnosed  
with MS every week**

MS Queensland



# PARTICIPANT

## JAKE EVELEIGH

When Jake first joined Castle DES, he struggled to find motivation to get out of bed or interact with people. After working with his case manager, he commenced work experience at Dominoes.



Jake was supported initially for 2 weeks and then was given independence in the roll for 8 weeks. Jake was flourishing, taking pride in his appearance and his role in the workplace. Since this work experience position was so successful, Jake was placed into employment and assisted with onsite support.

Jake has just recently passed his 26 weeks of employment and has received feedback from his employer that if he obtains his license, they would consider him for a position in the Management Team.

## MATTHEW SCAMMEL

Matt says the biggest obstacle he faced when looking for a job is the assumptions employers made about his inability to read and write.



When seeking feedback about why he didn't get a job at a local cleaning company, he was told that management was concerned that because he couldn't read, he might accidentally drink one of the chemicals. Matt says he was shocked and that his intellectual disability doesn't prevent him from having common sense and being a hard worker.

Matt is now a cleaner in Mayfield and says "being employed brings me satisfaction, a willing to get out of bed, have a purpose and feel needed in a place".

# STORIES

## HAYLEY WILTON

Hayley's learning impairment doesn't stop her from setting and achieving her goals. She is currently studying a Certificate III in business administration through Castle and is employed part-time with Hunter Water as an administration assistant.



She is an asset to the Hunter Water team, helping around the office by scanning archived files, opening mail and getting the daily paper. During the closure of the Hunter Water office during COVID-19, Hayley continued her role with the company, scanning files from home in her office. She says her goal is to learn how to answer the phones and work in reception. We have no doubt with her drive and dedication to learning, she will achieve this.

## LIAM ANDERSON



Despite having completed certificates in First Aid, attaining his RSA, RCG and completing work experiences in numerous businesses, Liam struggled to find employment.

Due to Liam's bi-polar and personality disorders, he experiences fluctuations in his mental health, which can affect his ability to perform consistently in the workplace.

With Castle's support, he was able to commence work experience at local discount store, Maxi Save. With on the job support from his case manager and open communication with his supervisor, he thrived in his placement and was offered a part-time position at the store.

# MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDER (MSD)

MSDs affect the body's movement and are caused by injury to and/or overuse of muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, discs and joints. A person may be born with a MSD or may develop one due to injury. MSDs can also be caused by tasks in the workplace that place repetitive strain on the body. This can include carpal tunnel, tendonitis, arthritis, sprains or strains. Other common conditions include;

## INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISORDER OR HERNIATED DISC-

When the discs between the spinal bones deteriorate or slip due to injury or the fluid within the discs drying out. Spinal discs absorb impact between the vertebrae, helping your back bend and twist hence the disorder can cause pain, numbness and reduced flexibility.

**FIBROMYALGIA-** Is a chronic pain condition where the individual experiences locational tenderness, fatigue, and cognitive disruptions. The condition is likely to fluctuate due to the brain and nerves misinterpreting pain signals.

**SCOLIOSIS-**Is a sideways curvature of the spine caused by growth spurts or conditions such as muscular dystrophy. The condition causes pain and discomfort for the individual.

**12% of the total disease burden in Australia was due to musculoskeletal conditions**



Australian Institute of Health and Wellness

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Each person's experiences of pain and fatigue can vary day to day, reducing their ability to complete tasks like lifting, writing, standing etc.
- » Their speed and mobility can vary depending on their degree of pain
- » Prolonged symptoms can result in fatigue affecting their ability to focus.

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Ensure you communicate with your employee, understand their specific condition and its effects on their body
- » Regularly seek updates on fluctuations in their health or how seasonal conditions are affecting them
- » Consider if they have any physical restrictions such as lifting or performing repetitive tasks and if they require additional breaks from sitting or standing.
- » Accommodate for appointments such as physical therapy
- » Regularly review their workplace adjustments to ensure they are still effective
- » Consider allocated parking spaces for individuals with mobility restrictions

# OTHER MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Mental illness is not limited to depression and anxiety, it is an umbrella term used to describe the diverse range of unique conditions that affect an individual's emotions, thinking or behaviour. Mental health conditions can range in severity and duration and can re-occur throughout a person's lifetime due to trauma or stress.

**EATING DISORDERS-** can include anorexia, bulimia, binge or disordered eating and arise as a result of negative body perception. This often leads to extreme weight loss or gain, depression, anxiety and other health conditions.

**OCD-** when anxious thoughts become repetitive it can lead to behaviours that cause difficulties in daily functioning. People with OCD often feel ashamed about their compulsions.

**PERSONALITY DISORDER-** is a pattern of thinking or a behaviour that is inflexible and affects daily life, causing distress. The person may appear withdrawn, overly emotional, odd or eccentric and can't control this element of their personality.

**PTSD-** occurs as a result of experiencing a traumatic event. Symptoms may include anxiety and intrusive thoughts or memories about the trauma, affecting their daily life.

## **AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK**

- » Mood or motivation may affect their relationships in the workplace
- » They may be sensitive to feedback or have low confidence in their work
- » They may have difficulty concentrating and managing multiple tasks
- » Disrupted sleep patterns may lead to fatigue
- » Can experience heightened irritability due to fatigue, low mood or anxiety, leading to aggressive tendencies

## **WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

- » Communicate with your employee so you understand the condition, side effects of medication, triggers and any behaviours that indicate heightened symptoms
- » Provide environments that facilitate coping strategies
- » Set achievable, clear goals and monitor their progress, ensuring they're not overwhelmed
- » Gain emergency contact details and understand when these should be used
- » Avoid phrases like "you'll be okay" or "toughen up" when talking to your employee

**1 in 5 Australians will experience a mental illness each year or 45% will in their lifetime**



The Black Dog Institute

# OTHER NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Neurological conditions affect the central nervous system. They may occur due to injury, infection or illness to the brain, spinal cord, nerves, neuro-muscular junctions or muscles. The effects may be acute, chronic, remissive or degenerative. There are over 600 recognised conditions, some common examples include;

**CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASES-** occur when the cerebral blood vessels are affected by loss of blood flow or bleeding, causing damage. Examples include strokes, migranes or aneurysms.

**DEMENTIA-** is a degenerative condition that results in loss of cognitive ability and memory. Alzheimer's is most the common form of this condition.

**PARKINSON'S-** results from damage to the nervous system and the cells that produce dopamine. This causes loss of muscular control, resulting in tremors, stiffness, slow movement and balance issues.

**NEUROINFECTIONS-** affect the brain, spinal cord, muscles and nerves, resulting in impaired mobility and cognition.

**EPILEPSY-** causes unprovoked, recurrent seizures due to a sudden rush of electrical activity in the brain

**Dementia is the second leading cause of death of Australians**



Australian Bureau of Statistics

## **AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK**

- » Each person's symptoms will be unique and dependant on the location and severity of the damage.
- » Difficulty concentrating and with recalling memory
- » Difficulty with speech, mobility and coordination
- » Muscular spasms or pain causing frustration, fatigue and affecting ability to perform regular tasks
- » Symptoms may affect mental health and mood, consequently impacting relationships in the workplace

## **WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

- » Maintain supportive, open communication so you understand their condition and the symptoms they experience.
- » Conduct a workplace assessment to determine if they need assistive technology or modifications
- » Offer flexible working conditions and additional breaks to accommodate for fluctuations in the condition.
- » Ensure you understand the side-effects of any medication
- » Be aware of emergency contact details and when they should be used.

# PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

Physical impairment is an umbrella term that describes any condition that restricts a person's mobility in their daily life. A person may be born with the impairment or may acquire it due to injury or illness. Common examples include;

**AMPUTATION AND LIMB LOSS-** the absence of any body part due to surgical amputation or malformation. It can be acquired through injury, illness or they may be born with a condition.

**CONGENITAL ANOMALIES-** can include heart, neural tube defects, spina bifida, cleft lip or palate and is caused by genetics, nutritional or environmental factors in the womb.

**SKIN CONDITIONS-** can be acquired at birth or through injury or illness. Skin conditions can restrict mobility, cause discomfort, itching, pain and mental health issues. Examples include eczema, burns, psoriasis and ichthyosis.

**SPINAL INJURY-** can occur as a result of a trauma or a medical condition such as spina bifida. The spinal cord may be severed or damaged due to compression or bruising. This results in Quadriplegia or Paraplegia

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Your employee may experience pain, discomfort, itching, phantom limb, poor circulation or spasms due to their impairment.
- » They may need additional support if their mobility and functional capacities are impacted.
- » Associated pain and symptoms may fluctuate, affecting daily activities, mood, mental health and cognitive functioning
- » They may require rehabilitation and physical therapies in the workplace

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Communicate with your employee, understand their restrictions and side-effects of medication
- » Ensure you allow additional breaks from sitting or standing if required
- » Conduct a workplace capacity assessment to determine if modifications or on the job support are needed
- » Provide an accessible workplace, including parking, entrances, exits and hallways
- » Ensure mental health support services are available

**Only 4% of people with a physical disability in Australia use a wheelchair**



Australian Bureau of Statistics

# SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia is a mental health condition that affects the functioning of the mind. A key symptom of the condition is psychosis, when the individual struggles to differentiate what is real from what it not. This is often experienced as short episodes of intense symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, disordered thinking or irregular behaviour. Not all people diagnosed with schizophrenia will experience psychosis. Other symptoms include reduced motivation, ability to express emotions, problems with memory, attentiveness or depression.

Schizophrenia can be caused by genetics, disruptions in cognitive development, substance abuse or traumatic experiences, particularly in childhood.

Stereotypes about schizophrenia assume people with the condition have split personalities or are violent however, this is not accurate. It is important to understand that each person's experiences are unique and the condition is treatable through medication and psychological therapies.

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » The impact will vary considerably based on the severity of the condition, the person's circumstances or the triggers they may be experiencing at a given time.
- » Conversation with your employee may be disjointed and they may struggle maintaining attention or motivation
- » Your employee may avoid social interaction, demonstrate irrational paranoia or behaviour

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » It is likely your employee is already familiar with their personal triggers or behaviours that indicate an oncoming episode. Communicate with them, familiarise yourself with these indicators so you can detect when they may need additional support.
- » Evaluate how you can adapt the individual's coping strategies into the workplace. E.g. isolated spaces
- » Consider the environmental conditions that may negatively affect their condition E.g. loud noises
- » Ensure any job expectations and deadlines are clear and that the employee is comfortable with these
- » Maintain positive and supportive communication.

**Schizophrenia affects  
1 in 100 people or roughly  
150 000 Australians**

The Florey Institute



# VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

A visual impairment affects a person's sight and their ability to interact with the world around them. Legal blindness occurs when the person cannot see at 6 metres what others see at 60.

A person who is completely blind has no measurable vision and light perception. Others have vision loss that cannot be corrected through aids such as glasses. Impairment can occur from birth or can develop and can also affect depth and colour perception, They can include;

**CATARACTS-** the clouding of the clear lens in the eye causing blurred vision, glare sensitivity, distortion or the feeling of looking through a veil.

**CORTICAL VISION IMPAIRMENT-** is caused by the disturbance of the visual cortex of the brain. The eyes may function normally but the brain does not interpret what the eyes see. This can be caused by lack of oxygen to the brain, head injuries or infections in the central nervous system.

**GLAUCOMA-** is an eye disease that affects the optic nerve connecting the eye to the brain. Glaucoma is often caused by a blockage in the eye's drainage system. Symptoms include blurred vision, loss of peripheral vision and difficulty adjusting to low light.

**There are 575,000 people who are blind or vision impaired living in Australia**



Australian Blindness Forum

## **AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK**

- » The person may require assistive technology or non-text informational resources
- » They may require a white cane or guide dog
- » Unexpected impairment may have emotional impact, resulting in social isolation, a loss of independence and decline in mental health

## **WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

- » Ensure you understand your employee's condition and how it affects their capacity to work
- » Consider your induction protocol. If it's text based how will you support the employee in training?
- » Ensure any modifications, aids or assistive technology is in place from their first day of employment
- » Consider existing workplace communication such as newsletters or emails and ensure these are adapted so the employee is not excluded
- » Ensure they are confident in evacuation procedures
- » Make sure amenities are in place if they require a guide dog and that staff are aware that they must not fuss over or feed the dog.

# PARTICIPANT

## CRYSTAL NORDEN

Gaining a stable and supportive job at Benhome retirement village has helped Crystal overcome her schizophrenia and live a fulfilling life. Crystal said “I had really great support from my work mates and supervisor so that’s been a really great encouragement. I don’t really have an issue now with my original disability”.



When she was first diagnosed with Schizophrenia, Crystal says it wasn’t people’s stereotypes about her condition that affected their perception of her but their reaction to her behaviour. She urges employers who are considering hiring a person with a mental illness not to be discouraged. The person may need additional support or communication in the workplace but it can make all the difference and change a life.

## TYSON SAUNDERS



When Tyson became physically impaired, he faced barriers such as low self esteem, the loss of his licence and his independence. Despite this, he continues to look at the positives, focus on the here and now and not allow self-doubt to manifest.

Tyson goes above and beyond, especially when it comes to his job as a training instructor at Active Fitness. To get to work, he catches public transport from Kincumber to Doylson twice a week, leaving home in the early hours of the morning. A 3 hour round trip for a 4 hour shift. That’s the kind of employee we’d want on our team.

# STORIES

## SELINA KING

After taking time away from the workforce to raise her family, Selina struggled to find a job. Facing a MSD, depression and homelessness, she came to Castle to rebuild her skills and gain confidence when applying for jobs.



She said “it’s not that I didn’t want to work, it’s just that no one would give me a shot to show them that I was eager and wanted to make a difference to in their business.” To gain experience, Selina undertook work placement in reception at the Castle’s Newcastle office. Selina impressed the Newcastle team so much that she was given a part-time role. Selina says there’s not one area of her life that hasn’t improved from getting a job.

## MIKAYLA TURNBULL



Mikayla was eager to work but lacked confidence due to her learning disability. To help her develop skills and gain experience in the workforce, she commenced a PaTH internship with McDonalds at Mayfield.

At the start of the 12 week program Mikayla was shy around customers and required regular direction from her supervisors. Upon completion of her intership, Mikalya could confidently maintain the dining area’s presentation, help customers use the self serve booth and assist with drive thru operations. After impressing her supervisors with this growth, she was offered a part-time role in the team.

# WORKPLACE INJURIES

This includes all injuries acquired on the job, affecting your employee's ability to work. Your employee may have a pre-existing condition that is aggravated due to workplace conditions or the injury may arise due to an accident. Injuries can also occur when your employee is travelling to, from or for work and can include:

**PHYSICAL-** cuts, abrasions, limb loss, spinal injury, brain injury, fractures, burns, industrial deafness, musculoskeletal conditions due to lifting or repetitive strain injury.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL-** such as anxiety or depression due to social conditions at work, traumatic events or excessive stress experienced in their role

**DISEASES-** such as respiratory conditions, cancers caused by chemical exposure or aggravation of a pre-existing illness.

It's best practise to conduct a risk assesment, identifying potential hazards in the workplace. This allows you to implement precautionary measures such as mandatory PPE, protecting staff from injury.

## AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE AT WORK

- » Physical and neurological injuries may affect their ability to communicate resulting in reliance on sign language, assistive technology or an interpreter.
- » Physical conditions may cause pain, discomfort, itching, phantom limb or numbness
- » They may need extra support if their mobility and functional capacities are affected
- » They may require rehabilitation or physical therapies in the workplace
- » Disrupted sleep patterns due to pain or stress may lead to fatigue and heightened irritability, affecting workplace relationships
- » They may experience mental health issues as they come to terms with their impairment

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- » Avoid blame, remaining positive about their role in your workplace.
- » Facilitate transitions into other roles during recovery
- » Encourage communication about recovery, treatment and long-term effects of the injury
- » Listen to and address any concerns about job security
- » Conduct a workplace assessment and make any necessary modifications
- » Work closely with their return to work and workers compensation case managers.
- » Facilitate additional breaks for fatigue or to attend treatment therapies

**There were over 107 000 workers compensation claims from 2017-18**



Safe Work Australia

# RESOURCES FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Organisation	Website	Contact
Australian Network on Disability	<a href="http://and.org.au">and.org.au</a>	1300 363 645
Austism Spectrum Australia	<a href="http://autismspectrum.org.au">autismspectrum.org.au</a>	1800 277 328
Beyond Blue	<a href="http://beyondblue.org.au">beyondblue.org.au</a>	1300 22 4636
Black Dog Institute	<a href="http://blackdoginstitute.org.au">blackdoginstitute.org.au</a>	02 9382 4530
Brain Injury Australia	<a href="http://braininjuryaustralia.org.au">braininjuryaustralia.org.au</a>	1800 272 461
Castle	<a href="http://castle.org.au">castle.org.au</a>	1300 817 917
Deaf Australia	<a href="http://deafaustalia.org.au">deafaustalia.org.au</a>	1800 422 015
Diabetes Australia	<a href="http://diabetesaustralia.com.au">diabetesaustralia.com.au</a>	1300 136 588
Disability Employment Australia	<a href="http://disabilityemployment.org.au">disabilityemployment.org.au</a>	03 9012 6000
Disability Services Australia	<a href="http://dsa.org.au">dsa.org.au</a>	1300 372 121
Epilepsy Australia	<a href="http://epilepsy.org.au">epilepsy.org.au</a>	1300 37 45 37
Headspace	<a href="http://headspace.org.au">headspace.org.au</a>	03 9027 0100
Heads Up	<a href="http://headsup.org.au">headsup.org.au</a>	<a href="mailto:headsup@beyondblue.org.au">headsup@beyondblue.org.au</a>
Job Access	<a href="http://jobaccess.gov.au">jobaccess.gov.au</a>	1800 464 800
Lifeline	<a href="http://lifeline.org.au">lifeline.org.au</a>	13 11 14
Limbs 4 Life	<a href="http://limbs4life.org.au">limbs4life.org.au</a>	1300 782 231
People with Disability Australia	<a href="http://pwd.org.au">pwd.org.au</a>	1800 422 015
Physical Disability Australia	<a href="http://pda.org.au">pda.org.au</a>	1800 732 674
Safe Work Australia	<a href="http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au">safeworkaustralia.gov.au</a>	13 10 50
Synapse	<a href="http://synapse.org.au">synapse.org.au</a>	1800 673 074
Vision Australia	<a href="http://visionaustralia.org">visionaustralia.org</a>	1300 84 74 66



**LIVE WORK LEARN**