

“ Thanks to an occupational therapist as my disability manager, I can return to work. ”

Working with an occupational therapist I trusted and a flexible employer allowed me to return to work. I was a compulsive gambler and had some abuse issues from childhood. I suffered from depression. I went to a treatment center, and was referred to an occupational therapist to develop a plan for my return to work. I worked in a fairly high profile job at a university as an administrative assistant to a Vice President. In order for me to go back to work, I had to be prepared.

I was scared to return to my work place because I feared what people thought about me. With the treatment centre located in the community, I know a lot of people think that if you go there, you're crazy. But, personally, I saw it as a healing place.

The first time I went back to work, about five months after I left the treatment center, I wasn't ready. I still had underlying issues and had a serious gambling problem.

My occupational therapist had many suggestions as to how to ease back into the workforce, none of which I would have thought about on my own. The first step for me was volunteering at a local food bank to deal with the public. I put my administrative skills to use and also gave food to people. This was a positive first step.

My occupational therapist also helped me get on a schedule and set goals. She was always monitoring my progress. I also had support from a gambling addiction group.

My second attempt back at work was very successful. My occupational therapist helped me and my employer lay out time lines. She helped explain what my legal rights were and human resources policies. She was a liaison.

My employer gave me a modified work schedule. I started with part-time hours as my occupational therapist believed I would relapse again if I had two weeks on the wrong program.

My employer was very patient and understanding. They wanted a good employee back. They had invested a lot in me so they were quite pleased with the outcome. My boss said to me, "When you came back the first time, and then you had a downfall, I was really worried you wouldn't be able to get it back together. But when you're on, you're on. You are way stronger now than you ever were."

After six weeks on a modified work schedule, I was back doing full time work. My employer was so pleased for me that I could overcome my problems. I credit it to my relationship with my occupational therapist. She was a really good influence in my life. I think of her as my savior.



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