



Managing mental health (Schizophrenia) in the workplace

An occupational therapy functional capacity assessment was requested by the manager of an international IT business company for an employee who had a diagnosis of schizophrenia and other longstanding mental health issues. The occupational health department requested an objective occupational therapy assessment of the employee's capacity to undertake the demands of the role and how to manage health conditions at work with advice on any reasonable adjustments required to meet the employee's needs.

A face to face semi-structured interview was undertaken. Current duties and tasks were focussed upon to gain an understanding of capacity.

Capacity for job demands was confirmed, but productivity could be enhanced through improved management of some of the symptoms at work. The following advice was given:

- Continue to have an open and practical conversation with colleagues about how the health condition may impact on work and what adjustments/approaches would help
- Organise regular weekly catch up meetings to prioritise the tasks and focus on these so that work is kept up to date
- Utilising in-house support systems so as to not feel 'singled out'
- A workload adjustment was proposed to management
- Advised to trial a later start/finish time for a period of 3 months
- General principles of reducing environmental distraction such as email traffic should be applied
- Establish a "work buddy or mentor" support
- Identify relevant internal health and wellbeing policies
- Refer to the local NHS occupational therapy mental health team
- Ensure continued attendance at work during heightened symptoms
- Mental health awareness training/education for supervisors/line managers

For more information about occupational therapy and work, please visit:

www.COT.org.uk/specialistsections/Work



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