



Parkinson's Disease Information Sheet 2.13

Employees with Parkinson's

Idiopathic Parkinson's disease is a common progressive neurological condition that is characterised by motor (movement) and non-motor symptoms. Many people develop Parkinson's while they are still in the workforce with the average age of diagnosis being 55. Young onset Parkinson's refers to those diagnosed between 21 and 40. While each person with Parkinson's will present uniquely, the most common symptoms are:

- tremor
- bradykinesia (slowness of movement)
- muscle rigidity
- postural instability.

Other more visible symptoms which may affect employment include decreased facial expression, microphonia (quiet voice) and micrographia (small handwriting).

Ideally a person with Parkinson's will be able to continue in employment, and this may require adjustments and understanding from employers and colleagues. This is not only a financial benefit but also enhances independence and self-esteem. With support following diagnosis, productive employment may be possible. Discussion with the employee living with Parkinson's to identify their specific needs is recommended.

Independent services pertaining to employment and disability include:

Disability Employment Services

This is a government funded service that may assist with maintaining employment available through the JobSearch website www.jobsearch.gov.au.

CRS Australia

This is a Federal government service (formerly known as Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service). It is a provider of disability employment and assessment services to employers and people with a health condition. Referral can be carried out via the website www.crsaaustralia.gov.au.

Parkinson's and Employment Discrimination

In addition to Federal legislation, each state and territory has specific rulings to address the needs of both the employer and employee in cases where disability impacts on employment. Individual advice should be sought from the relevant authority.

Workers' compensation legislation may apply in some circumstances. Other sources of information are:

- Parkinson's Victoria – Work, Superannuation and Parkinson's Disease
- Parkinson's Victoria – Disability Employment Services
- Parkinson's Victoria – Making Decisions About Work www.parkinsonsvic.org.au
- Parkinson's Disease Society (UK) – Employment Guide www.parkinsons.org.uk
- Parkinson's Disease Information Sheet 2.12 Employment and Parkinson's website www.parkinsonwa.org.au

Parkinson's New South Wales is currently producing a publication on employment and Parkinson's.

For further information please contact your state Parkinson's organisation: FREECALL 1800 644 189

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