


Welcome to today's Webinar

Working from Home and Managing MS Symptoms during COVID-19

Your Presenter is:
Jacqui Efthimiou
Employment Support Consultant

Your Facilitator is:
Andrea Salmon

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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians past and present on whose lands we meet today.

We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and the relationship of Aboriginal people to country and respect the cultural authority of the elders in each community

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Introduction to Presenter




Jacqui is an Occupational Therapist working in the Employment Support Service in Sydney.



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Webinar Plan



- Benefits of work
- Barriers to work
- Managing symptoms in the workplace
- Setting up a home office.
- Disclosure
- Your rights and responsibilities in the workplace.
 - What if your employment ceases due to Covid-19?
- What happens next?
 - TPD and Superannuation

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Benefits & Barriers 

What are the benefits of working?

What do you see as the barriers to continuing to work?

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MS in the Workforce 

- Over 24,000 people in Australia have MS and over 2 million worldwide.
- 87% are working age (20 – 40 years old) at the time of their diagnosis
- Fatigue is the greatest contributor to people with multiple sclerosis reducing hours or leaving work


Australian MS Longitudinal Study

Managing Symptoms assists in Managing Work

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Symptom Management



Consider the symptoms you experience and how they impact on working?




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Symptoms impacting work




- Fatigue
- Cognitive function including memory
- Mobility
- Visual Disturbance
- Bladder & Bowel Changes
- Heat Sensitivity
- Depression



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Job Requirements 

Can you perform the inherent requirements of your role?


Job Description


Inherent requirements


- Physical requirements
- Cognitive requirements

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Working from home? 



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Ergonomic setup

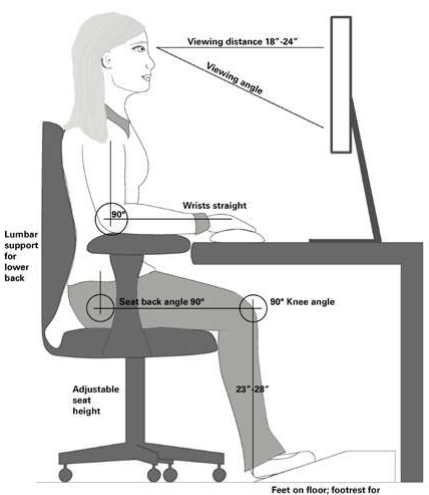



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Ergonomic Set Up



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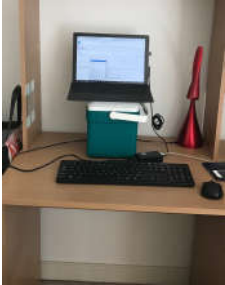
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Ergonomic Equipment



- Chair with adjustable backrest
- Monitor or raised laptop
- External mouse and keyboard
- Footrest if your feet are not flat on the floor
- Headset for phone calls.
- Be creative!




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How to not only survive but thrive!



1. Stick to a schedule / maintain routine / mentally distancing
2. Give yourself space
3. Don't let your usual practices go
4. Build Boundaries
5. Stay Connected

These ideas are just as important if you are also trying to manage home schooling whilst working from home.

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Understand your Legal Rights

- Discrimination
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Reasonable Adjustments

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>
<http://www.chronicillness.org.au/workwelfarewills/>

More information – Superannuation Lawyers Berrill and Watson:

W: <https://www.berrillwatson.com.au/>
P: (03) 9448 8048
E: info@berrillwatson.com.au

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What are you entitled to?

- Leave
 - Sick leave
 - Annual leave
 - Unpaid leave
- HR Policy
- Employment Contract
- Award
- Union



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Entitlements 

Centrelink Allowances and Payments include:


- Mobility Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Disability Support Pension
- Essential Medical Equipment Payment*
- Carer Allowance

Government Entitlements

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Better Access to Mental Health Care Plan
- Chronic Disease Management Plan
- Medical Cooling Concession*
- Parking Permits
- Taxi Subsidy Programs
- GST free cars

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Disclosure 

It is a very personal choice whether to disclose in the workplace or not

Consider Who, When & What


Pros

- e.g. enables changes in the workplace and role

Cons


- e.g. may lead to people focusing on your health rather than your abilities

Resources:
https://www.msaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/MSA_GuideForEmployees.pdf


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Staying at Work



Do not alter your working conditions, hours or consider leaving work before you have reviewed all options.



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Transferable Skills



Transferable skills are the general abilities you develop that are useful across a range of different jobs and industries.

They might be role-related, technical or general.

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What if my work changes during Covid-19?



- Your employer can ask you to do the following:
- Reduce your working hours on a temporary basis
- Work from home rather than attending an office
- Work a mix of home hours and office hours alternating with colleagues in your team
- Stand Down from work if there is no work to be completed
- Modify your work role within reason to enable you to continue working some hours
- Take Leave if you are able to do so

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What if I lose my job due to Covid – 19?



- New stimulus measures in place to support workers, landlords, business owners etc. Changes made regularly.
- Coronavirus supplement. Eligible for people on the following:
 - Jobseeker Payment (and some additional payments such as those currently receiving Partner Allowance, Widow Allowance, Sickness Allowance)
 - Youth Allowance
 - Parenting Payment (Partnered and Single)
 - Austudy /ABSTUDY (Living Allowance) • Farm Household Allowance • Special Benefit recipients
- Job Keeper payment available for eligible employers
- Job Seeker Payment for those now out of work
- Go to MyGov or contact Services Australia.

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Seeking advice



- MS Connect 1800 042 138
- Manager / Supervisor
- HR Department
- Union
- Fairwork Commission <https://www.fairwork.gov.au>
- Superannuation Fund Advisors or Lawyer
 - Income protection or TPD
- Legal advice – contact lawyer or MS Connect



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- Information, education, support to individuals
 - Currently employed with concerns
 - Job seekers
- Assessment (workplace, vocational, physical, cognitive)
- Assistance in managing symptoms
- Recommendations and Assistance on modifications and equipment to work role and work site
- Advice and Assistance on 'whole of life issues' impacting on employment
- Advocacy and links to other services

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Where is the MS ESS?




- Melbourne Metropolitan
- Geelong and Surf Coast (Rural Victoria)
- Sydney Metropolitan
- Brisbane Metropolitan
- Hobart Metropolitan
- Perth Metropolitan
- Expanding into Sunshine, Gold Coast and Launceston

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What we require to register you for assistance at work



- Confirmation of diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis (Letter from GP/ neurologist / report etc)
- Evidence of current employment (eg copy of a month's worth of payslips or contract)
- Confirmation of Australian citizenship – copy of birth certificate / passport, permanent residency cert etc
- Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN)- if you have ever received Family Tax Benefits etc, you will have one of these. *The program isn't means tested*
- You must be working a minimum of 8 hours per week above minimum wage to be eligible

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The National Disability Insurance Scheme 

You can access the Employment Support Service and the NDIS concurrently

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Take Home Message 

- Be Proactive and Plan Ahead
- Disclosure is your choice
- Make sure you are well informed before making decisions that impact on work
- Seek advice before making any permanent changes
- Be aware of what allowances and entitlements that you are eligible for

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Questions




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1800 042 138
msconnect@ms.org.au

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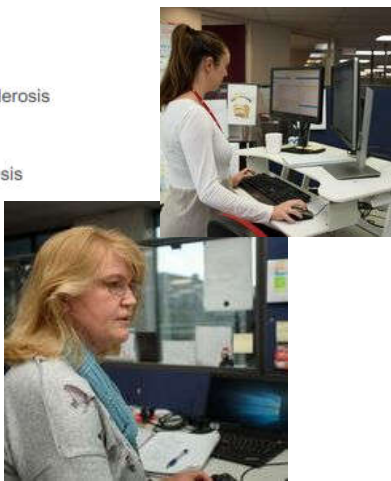
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MS Connect



10 reasons to call us:

1. Up-to-date, evidence based information about multiple sclerosis
2. Expert advice on managing symptoms
3. Information about minimising the impact of multiple sclerosis
4. Support for people who are newly diagnosed
5. Information about treatment options
6. Education programs
7. Connections to other people living with multiple sclerosis
8. Referrals to appropriate services in your area
9. Extra support for you and your family
10. Respite options to give families short-term breaks




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Peer Support




- ❖ 1:1 Phone Support
- ❖ Face to Face groups - *(temporarily converted to Telegroups)*
 - 2 in the ACT
 - 11 in Tasmania
 - 17 in NSW
 - 42 in Vic
- ❖ Telegroups
 - Currently running 12 telegroups
- ❖ Facebook groups
 - 3 groups – for people living with MS
 - for carers
 - for young carers – up to 25 years of age



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Get Your Act Together



- Online Tool – designed to help you better manage your multiple sclerosis symptoms
- Focuses on some of the common symptoms of MS – emotions, fatigue, continence, cognition, pain and heat sensitivity
- Designed for people living in the ACT but includes useful information for all people living with MS
- Complete the tool to receive a personalized report (listing services, resources, tips etc)

Visit www.ms.org.au and search **Get Your Act Together**

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Registered NDIS Provider 


MS is a registered NDIS provider in NSW, ACT, Vic and Tas and is approved to provide:
(Pls note: Face to face services/programs have been either converted to online programs or postponed)

- Assistance with 'Access Request Forms', Access rejections and pre-planning
- Support Coordination – assistance to help make your plan active
- Plan Management
- Short term accommodation (Vic)
- Group activities – yoga, dance for health, exercise (NSW)
- Exercise Physiology (NSW)
- Specialist Continence Assessment (Vic)
- Occupational Therapy (NSW and Vic)
- Physiotherapy (NSW)

**Want to learn more?
Please call
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1800 042 138**

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Thank you 

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Please stay on after this webinar to complete a short survey.

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