

Overcoming obstacles



It's about a job: Overcoming obstacles

Overcoming obstacles

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.”

Eleanor Roosevelt, humanitarian.

You know you want to work but perhaps you're unsure that getting a job is the right thing to do at the moment. Maybe you're worried about whether you can juggle a job along with everything else going on in your life.

Now's the time to examine any fears and obstacles standing in the way of you finding work. Once you acknowledge these things you can plan how to overcome them. You don't have to be absolutely sure that you're ready to work before getting a job. Working may give you just the boost you need to help build up your confidence and feel more in control of your life.

Jumping over the hurdles

When you were a kid in school, no doubt every summer your sports teacher would line up rows of hurdles on the relay track and make you jump over them. If, like some people, you had short legs and weren't very fit, you dreaded making a fool of yourself as you tripped over them, while everyone else seemed to glide effortlessly over their tops.

Sometimes life feels like rows of hurdles lined up to stretch us to our limits. Every one of us comes up against barriers that threaten to block us from achieving what we want out of life.

Sometimes we can't climb over these barriers, no matter how hard we try. Some things we just have to learn to live with. But most of the time we **can** find ways around barriers.

It may be that right now certain hurdles or obstacles appear to be standing in the way of you getting a job. Sometimes other people put obstacles in our way to try to trip us over. Sometimes practical problems – such as not having the money to run reliable transport – make it difficult for us to work.

Other times however, the obstacles are entirely of our own making. We create them. Low self-confidence, for instance, is much more likely to hold someone back than anything anyone else says or does to them.

Fear usually lies at the heart of self-created obstacles. Everyone has fears of some sort. Job hunting is an anxious time for anyone. For someone with experience of mental illness and/or traumatic brain injury, it can be worrying on a number of fronts, including:

- fear of stepping out into the unknown
- fear of failure
- fears about whether working may aggravate your illness
- fear of disclosing your history of mental illness to an employer or co-workers
- fears about losing a benefit if you start working
- fear of losing the support and sympathy of people close to you when you start working
- fear about your ability to manage big changes to your daily routine, such as getting up early in the morning.

What obstacles are standing in your way?

- Lack of confidence and low self-esteem?
- Lack of suitable transport to get to and from work?
- Difficulty arranging childcare?
- Lack of appropriate clothing?
- Other challenges?

The '*Recognise the obstacles*' exercise on the next page gets you to face up to the barriers holding you back. Only when you know what you're up against can you begin to figure out some solutions.

If you are worried about losing some of your benefit as a result of working, have a chat with your Workwise employment consultant. They can support you to discuss this with your Work and Income case manager.

Recognise the obstacles

Purpose

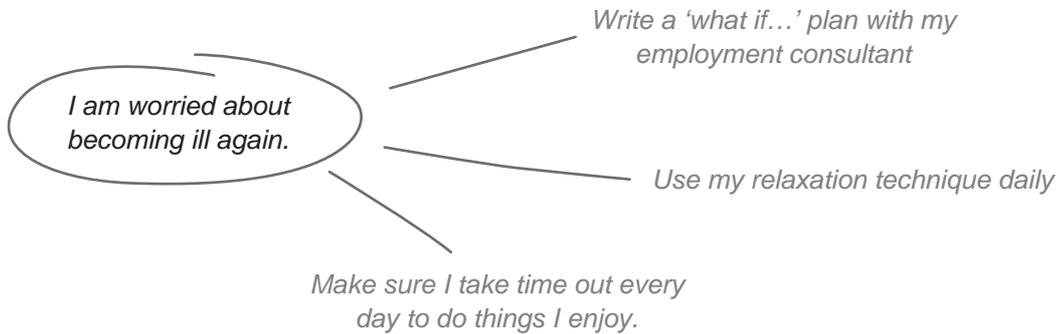
- To identify any barriers standing between you and working.
- To come up with ideas and action plans to help overcome those barriers.

Method

Think about all the things you worry about when you imagine yourself working. Jot them down in words or pictures on this page and put a circle around them – see the example below. This is a good exercise to do with a trusted friend, member of your whanau or your employment consultant.

Once you have finished ‘mapping’ your worries, start thinking about solutions or ways to ease your concerns. Brainstorm ideas with others. Remember, there’s a way around almost every problem if you look hard enough to find it.

Example:



A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their own worries and solutions. A small pencil icon is positioned in the top-left corner of the box.

Recognise the obstacles continued...



The **three** most important things that came out of this exercise for me were:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____