

## **Disclosure and Job Accommodation Issues for Employees with Traumatic Brain Injury**

Most employees with traumatic brain injury need some type of reasonable accommodation at the workplace. When someone sustains a TBI, there are many behavioral and cognitive limitations that can potentially affect a person's job performance.

Here are some challenges that employees with TBI could encounter:

- Inability to remember oral instructions
- Inability to sustain attention
- Frequent irritability or frustration
- Needs to ask repetitive questions
- Expressionless or depressed appearance
- Difficulty accurately estimating skills and abilities
- Acts nervous and/or overwhelmed
- Interacts inappropriately with others

There is a fine line between unnecessarily disclosing a disability and requesting a job accommodation. What is the best way to ask for job accommodations? Consider the following suggestions:

- Do not emphasize the need for accommodation in a negative way.
- Use phrases like "I prefer...", "I work better when..." or "I complete tasks using..."
- Explain the reasonable accommodation(s) to supervisors and coworkers who need to know.
- Make sure the employee with TBI has experience using the accommodation(s) and can generalize its use(s) to a work setting.
- Do not overestimate or underestimate the employee's abilities.
- Get a clear understanding of the employee's cognitive and behavioral strengths and need for accommodation with a neuropsychological examination.
- Avoid discussing details surrounding the occurrence of the employee's brain injury.
- Utilize a job coach to fine-tune suggested accommodation strategies for the job site.
- Facilitate communication between the employee and employer/supervisor about accommodation implementation and job performance through job coaching.

Every person with a brain injury is different, just as every work situation is different. What works in one situation may not in another. A team approach is best when creating the best possible working environment with the employee who has experienced a TBI.

**For more information about disclosure and job accommodation, please contact:  
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services**