

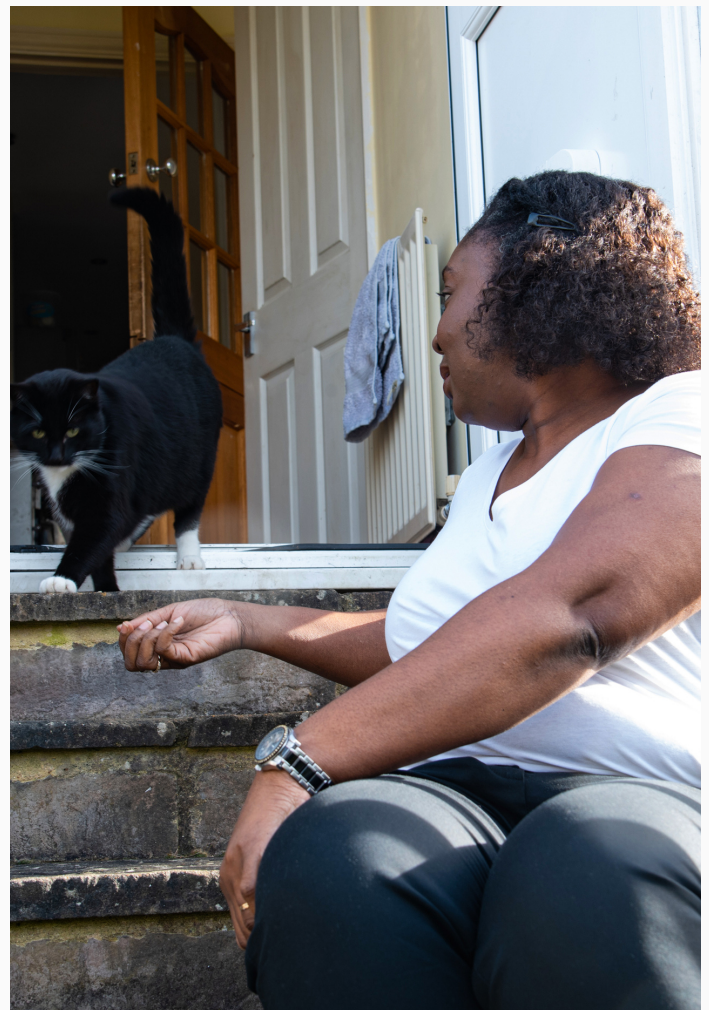
REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS - HOW TO START A DISCUSSION WITH YOUR BOSS AFTER A BRAIN INJURY



welcome!

I'm Jo Bresi-Ando. I'm an Occupational Therapist and I work with lots of people who are recovering from a brain injury.

This is my cat Jesse Silver who insisted on photo bombing the picture!



Before we dive in..

let's acknowledge what you and your family have been through and are still going through.....

brain injury is a life changing, traumatic event.....

- A roller coaster of emotions
- 2 steps forwards
- 4 steps backwards
- Getting better is hard and takes work. Your recovery is likely to be the biggest challenge of your life.....

but

here you are
taking the next steps on your
journey.

You are the expert on you.

Who is this guide for?

This short guide is aimed at individuals recovering from a **mild to moderate** brain injury or stroke along with their families and/or carers. The information will work best for those people who **have already returned to work or are about to return to work.**

What does a successful return to work look like?

Whilst the information presented here will be helpful, it is unlikely to be enough for you and your employer to make all the changes you'll need. It is just one step in the journey of preparing to speak with your employer.

Emotional, physical and social needs all have to be addressed. It's about understanding that all the hidden turmoil of recovering from a stroke/brain injury does not get left at the office door, you take it with you and it can directly impact your work performance.

You may **need the additional support of a variety of professionals** that specialise in helping people return to work, including an Occupational Therapist.



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Definition of "**reasonable adjustments**" and why they are needed.
- How to **identify the demands of your job role** and how your brain injury links to this.
- How to **identify your specific difficulties and apply it to your job role.**

WHAT YOU WILL GAIN

- A **list** outlining **your difficulties** that you can **show to your employer** to start a discussion.

What are reasonable adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are changes that **employers** are **required by law** to put in place for a worker with disabilities, physical or mental health conditions, so that they can carry out their job role.

If you have experienced a brain injury and are able to return to work, it is likely that you will need to speak to your employer about making changes to your job role, so that you can complete your job.

What counts as a reasonable adjustment?

These are some of the common adjustments that employers put in place for their employees.

- Doing things another way, such as allowing someone with social anxiety disorder to have their own desk instead of hot-desking.
- Making physical changes to the workplace, like installing a ramp for a wheelchair user or an audio-visual fire alarm for a deaf person.
- Allowing employees who become disabled to make a phased return to work, including flexible hours or part-time working.

Identifying exactly what your difficulties are and presenting this to your boss.

Before talking to your employer, it is a good idea to think about the different aspects of your job.

Write down what is the overall aim of your job.

What are the essential tasks that I do in my job?

These are tasks that **you must do yourself and cannot be given to someone else.**

Here are some prompts that can help you to decide what is essential and what is non-essential.

- How much time during the day do I spend doing this task?
- Does the task exist to get the job done?
- Do other employees roles depend on me getting this task done?
- Is my job very specialised?
- If I cannot do my tasks what will happen?

What are the different demands involved in this essential task?

Every activity or task that you complete as part of your job role is likely to require a mix of the following elements.

Physical demands

Thinking and understanding (cognitive) and psychological demands

Environmental (physical and social) demands

Here are some examples of the types of demands you should consider

- Mobility (sitting, walking, standing, running)
- Dexterity
- Coordination
- Visual

Look at the the next page with an example filled in for you.

The first example is someone **working out what the tasks** involved in a receptionists job are. Then deciding which are **essential** and non essential.

| Job role: Receptionist | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Job tasks | Time spent doing the task | Essential or non-essential | Rank importance |
| Answering and forwarding phone calls. | 80% of the day | E | 2 |
| Meeting and greeting clients and visitors | 90 % of the day | E | 1 |
| Keeping the reception area tidy. | 10% of the day | NE | 4 |
| Sorting and distributing post | 20 % the day | NE | 3 |

They have then taken one of the "**essential**" tasks and started working out the **types of demands** involved.

| Essential task – answering and forwarding phone calls | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Demand | What? | Details |
| Mobility | Sitting | Constant sitting |
| Dexterity | Fine finger movement | Pressing numbers on the phone pad. |
| | Writing | Taking messages |
| Hearing | Hearing | Constantly listening to callers |
| Cognition | Memory | Remembering messages given by callers |
| | Concentration | Paying full attention to a caller and not getting distracted. |
| Interacting with other people | Talk with my supervisor | Daily update from supervisor |
| | Talking with callers | Communicate with a pleasant and positive attitude. |

Once you have **completed the two steps** above, you should have

- **A list of the essential tasks** that make up your job role.
- **A list of the demands** that your job makes of you.

Putting these together, should highlight exactly where the challenges lie.

You can **start a discussion** with your boss about what you have discovered and focus on asking for reasonable adjustments that **target your particular challenges**.

Even with this guidance it can still feel daunting to start the conversation.

If you need **more guidance and support**, sign up for my course that deals with returning to work and gives even greater support around this topic and more.