
LEARNING WORKS FOR ALL OF US

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Dazed and Confused by Louise Pohl

It was about 8 o'clock on Friday evening. I had just returned from a successful business trip to Toronto and Halifax. I was in the back seat of a taxi on my way home from the airport. One minute I was looking out the window while we waited to turn left in an intersection, the next I was in the back of an ambulance on my way to the emergency ward.

After spending six hours at the hospital, I was sent home. The prognosis: a concussion, a cracked rib, soft tissue damage. The advice: take Extra Strength Tylenol and Ibuprophine for the pain.

Two months have passed and I am back at work – sort of. My physical pain has reached manageable levels, but I am still struggling with the effects of the concussion. For example, if I move my head too quickly to the left or lean forward, I get a wave of dizziness. I can't concentrate if other people are talking or the phone is ringing. I can only work for one or two hours at a time before my brain jams up and refuses to function. Although I can manage linear thinking, any task involving the synthesis of different concepts takes time.

I have learned a lot about the effects of a concussion on brain functioning. Apparently your brain, which is floating in liquid, can get bruised just from banging into the side of your skull. The artery that travels to the brain through your spine can be damaged. Some people lose their short-term memory. Others fall over or get nauseous. For most, these symptoms are only temporary. For those less fortunate, the symptoms persist.

So how has LearningWorks facilitated my return to work? If you have a co-worker or employee returning to work after an accident, what do you need to know?

My business partners were very **sympathetic and understanding about my situation**. They encouraged me to take whatever time I needed to heal from my injuries. Once I started coming into the office, I was able to let them know when I reached a saturation point without feeling criticized or inadequate.

A graduated return to work has been helpful. Before I started regular hours, I came into the office for short periods of time: to catch up on paperwork or attend short meetings. This gave

me a chance to re-experience the pace without having the responsibility of being a full participant.

Because of the difficulty with concentration, **having minimal distractions when I am in the office makes it easier to get work done.** People refrained from stopping by to ask questions or get my feedback unless absolutely necessary.

And finally, **having the flexibility to take frequent breaks** has allowed me to work longer days. Without breaks, I can only last a couple of hours. If I stop and rest every hour or so, I can be productive twice as long.

It is my second week back to work and I can function for longer periods of time and tolerate a few more distractions. Though the transition from recovery to work has not been as shocking as the transition from taxi to ambulance, it has still been a bumpy road. Recovery is not only physical, it is emotional and mental. For all of us dazed and confused employees, patience, compassion and understanding go a long way to helping us get back on our feet.

LearningWorks' Lowdown

ProD – More Coaching

Jane recently attended an excellent Team Coaching Workshop which validated a lot of the work we do and gave new insight and tools to be more effective. A Team Coaches' Networking Group has also evolved and we are happy to use LearningWorks' office for our very stimulating meetings.

Next Breakfast Meeting

Please join us:

Time: 8:00 a.m.
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2004
Place: LearningWorks
Suite 205 – 1110 Hamilton Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2S2

RSVP: LearningWorks at 604-669-6757 by June 21st



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