

## **Productivity Support for People with PTSD**

### ***General Focusing and Productivity Issues:***

- Making sure the person and the job are a good match
- Mentoring by a co-worker or retired worker
- Job coaches who make frequent, scheduled site visits
- Clear expectations and consequences
- Positive reinforcement
- Uninterrupted work time
- Stop watches or timers for time management.
- Dividing assignments into goal-oriented tasks or steps
- Training for all employees in problem-identification and problem-solving strategies
- White noise or environmental sound machines (to help eliminate distractions)

### ***Fatigue:***

- Allowing flexible start times
- Flexible work schedules and/or job sharing with another employee.
- Allowing employees to make up missed time
- Flexible break schedules, combining shorter into longer or allowing more frequent, shorter breaks
- Scheduled rest breaks to prevent stimulus overload and fatigue
- Backup coverage for break times
- Pre- or post-workday exercise programs for all employees
- Eliminating non-essential travel
- Allowing extra time for travel
- Allowing full-spectrum lighting

### ***Memory Challenges:***

- Schedule reminders (telephone, pagers, emails, calendar reminders, alarm clocks)
- Work task checklists, clipboards and tape recorders
- Assignments, instructions, training materials in writing

### ***Headaches:***

- Alternative lighting for people with headaches
- Breaks from computer work or reading

### ***Startle Responses:***

- Allowing employees to transfer to a position with fewer triggers for startle responses
- Rearranging work-spaces to separate easily startled employees from areas under construction
- Mirror mounted in cubicle, or sensor mat at entrance, to avoid startle responses when other employees enter the cubicle and begin speaking

**Difficulty Handling Stress and Emotions:**

- Understanding that symptoms of PTSD (or of any psychological condition) may ebb and flow, and that the person may experience good days and more challenging days
- Providing encouragement, moral support, and a listening ear
- Support for pursuing treatment and assistance, even during work hours (Treatment can be effective in managing psychological symptoms and conditions, and support for the need to regularly follow up or comply with treatment recommendations is an important part of recovery and productivity)
- Allowing support phone calls in the workplace when needed
- Encouraging use of employee wellness programs
- Workplace-wide stress-identification and stress-reduction efforts
- Pre- or post-workday exercise programs for all employees
- Time off for physical therapy or massage therapy
- Private space for employees who want to do yoga or meditation
- Allowing full-spectrum lighting for employees affected by seasonal
- Allowing headphones or soothing music
- Allowing support animals

**Please note:** This list of suggestions was compiled from ideas presented in several sources, with significant contributions from the following:

- “Frequently Asked Questions About Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) & Employment,” America’s Heroes at Work, [www.americasheroesatwork.gov/resources/factsheets/FAQPTSD/](http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/resources/factsheets/FAQPTSD/)
- “Demystifying Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Workplace,” webcast by Lisa Stern and Meg Krause (America’s Heroes at Work), co-sponsored by One More Way and the U.S. Department of Labor, presented January 28, 2010.
- *Workplace Warriors: The Corporate Response to Deployment and Reintegration*, Marcia Carruthers (Disability Management Employer Coalition) and Carol Harnett (The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., published by Disability Management Employer Coalition, 2008.
- *Employees with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*, Job Accommodation Network, Accommodation and Compliance Series, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2008.
- “Understanding the ADA and Job Accommodations for Veterans with Disabilities,” Robin A. Jones (DBTAC Great Lakes ADA Center), 2009 presentation.