

WWC BRIEFING NOTE

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS RETURNING TO WORK POST CANCER TREATMENT.

In 2018, WWC supported a research study conducted by Andrew A Parsons at the University of Hertfordshire. Andrew (with his Supervisor Dr Colleen Addicott), presented his initial findings at the British Psychological Society, Division of Occupational Psychology meeting in Chester on the 9th January 2019. The title of the talk was "The aftershock of coming back to work: Work engagement in Cancer Survivors".

Headline results indicated:

1. Having resilience and optimism were predictors of the quality of an individual's working life
2. People with a high quality of work were more highly engaged at work. The Quality of Life questionnaire used as part of the research showed that this group were working with dedication, absorption and vigour.
3. Changes (over time) in an individuals' self-concept, including having restored self-confidence, appear to be an important element of how well people re-adjust to work post treatment.

Implications

Key implications to note were:

For the individual: Individuals with a cancer diagnosis experience significant changes in how they view the world and benefit from support to build their self confidence in a work setting.

For Line Managers / Colleagues: Have a key role to play in building an employee's self-confidence after returning to work and need to be made aware of this. Building their communication skills is a critical requirement.

For the organisation: Returning to work is a different experience for each individual and is influenced by each individual's social and life circumstances. Given this, a 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to be very effective; an individualised, person-centred approach is much more likely to provide the type and quality of support needed.

Andrew and Colleen are currently completing the full manuscript to submit in the near future.

The full paper including the data will not be available until the end of the year but we hope to be able to publish the findings and the abstracts in September/October.