

**THE UK WORK EXPERIENCE SURVEY**  
**for**  
**Persons with Rheumatic Conditions**  
**(UK WES-RC)**

**Sarah Woodbridge**  
**Occupational Therapist / Ergonomist**  
**Work Safe Work Fit**  
**Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

**[Sarah.Woodbridge@nhs.net](mailto:Sarah.Woodbridge@nhs.net)**

# UK WES-RC

- A structured interview for identifying barriers to the career maintenance of persons with rheumatic conditions.
- Also appropriate for general reduced function related to disability and age
- Adapted by Alison Hammond, Sarah Woodbridge, Rachel O'Brien and Mary Grant from the Work Experience Survey for Persons with Rheumatic Conditions developed by Saralynn Allaire, ScD, Boston University
- UK WES-RC development was funded by Arthritis Research UK

- UK WES-RC can be copied for clinical, research and educational purposes.
- [http://usir.salford.ac.uk/29320/1/WES-C\\_Manualv2\\_AH\\_8.6.13.pdf](http://usir.salford.ac.uk/29320/1/WES-C_Manualv2_AH_8.6.13.pdf)

- Easy to use
- Identifies barriers to returning or staying in work in a structured manner
- Priorities the barriers
- Encourages joint working with the patient to identify possible solutions
- Gives an opportunity to discuss issues which may not usually arise during assessment
- Compatible with motivational interviewing to facilitate change

• **Section 4. Completing Job Activities**

• Please check the items that are sometimes, or always, a problem for you.

• **Physical job demands**

- \_\_\_ Standing or being on feet too long
- \_\_\_ Prolonged sitting
- \_\_\_ Getting and up and down from sitting (describe)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Lifting, pulling, pushing, or moving materials, equipment or people
- \_\_\_ Carrying things
- \_\_\_ Bending, kneeling, squatting, or picking things up from low places
- \_\_\_ Reaching, raising arms above shoulders, or holding objects up
- \_\_\_ Climbing, ladders for example
- \_\_\_ Use computer or other keyboard devices – check which items are problems
- \_\_\_ Positioning (describe)  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Typing, keyboarding or using the mouse
- \_\_\_ Holding or turning papers while typing
- \_\_\_ Other  
(describe) \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Other hand or wrist use - check which items are problems
- \_\_\_ Holding things like tools or telephone, or opening things like jars or drawers
- \_\_\_ Handling objects, for example, turn pages, use mobile phone, chop food, etc.
- \_\_\_ Picking things up
- \_\_\_ Writing
- \_\_\_ Hands get cold
- \_\_\_ Other  
(describe) \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Body position issues  
(describe) \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Being able to move quickly
- \_\_\_ Doing repetitive activities
- \_\_\_ Strength or endurance issues  
(describe) \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Seeing well or other vision issues (describe)  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Talking or other voice issues (describe)  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Hearing or listening issues (describe)  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Other (describe)  
\_\_\_\_\_

• **Are any of the items you checked major problems? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No**

• **If Yes, please circle the items that are major. (Major means often or fairly bothersome)**

• **Section 8. Problem Prioritization and Solution Development**

• Review the problems identified in sections 1-7 with the client.

• List the 3 most bothersome problems/ barriers to employment. NB can be a group of related problems, eg

• “work station (i.e. seating, computer/mouse position, clutter, posture/positioning, filing)”

• “travel/parking to/at work and to work-related activities; carrying bags/equipment”

• “work scheduling; lack of breaks”

• Then describe possible solutions to the 3 problems and resources or people who can help. Be specific. 14

• Problem/barrier 1:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

• List all possible solutions considered:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

• Resources/ people to help: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Using the WES in condition / disability management

- Schwartz et al (1989) defined disability management as the use of 'services, people, and materials to:
  - (a) minimise the impact and cost of disability to employers and employees, and
  - (b) encourage return to work for employees with disability.'
- Help the employer and the employee to collaborate in identifying cost-effective accommodations that have the potential to control rising disability costs, which are consuming an increasing share of employer resources
- Help employers retain trained workers,
- Assist workers with a disability increase their job stability

# Support employment legislation relating to people with disabilities

- Equality Act (2010) requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate employees with disabilities
- WES provides information that enables people with disabilities to maintain productive vocational roles
- WES data is useful throughout the process of resolving problems that people with disabilities face in performing job roles

# Respond to the intrusiveness of disability

- Help the employee understand specifically
  - their work limitations
  - the priority to place on those limitations, and
  - examples of reasonable accommodations
- Gain greater control over the intrusiveness of illness and disability into the workplace, and a greater sense of self-efficacy
- Identify intrusive psychosocial stressors that increase role strain, disrupt economic and vocational stability, and create a sense of helplessness and external control
- Experiences that enhance self-efficacy are antidotes to the negative impact of disability / chronic illness on personal control.



# Sections of the UK WES-RC

- Preliminary Information and Work History
- Getting ready for work and travelling to work
- Workplace Access
- Assessing essential job functions – Completing Job Activities
- Relationships with people at work
- Environmental factors and company policies
- Job, career and home life
- Problem prioritising and solution development

# Problems and Solutions

- review the interview and begin to draw out problem themes
- identification of 3 key problems or barriers
- focus energy on finding possible solutions and formulating a plan of action

# Potential solutions / adjustments

- Restructuring of existing facilities
- Restructuring of the job
- Self-management approaches such as
  - joint protection
  - ergonomics,
  - Positioning
  - Fatigue
  - stress management
  - Splints
- Modification of work schedules
- Redeployment to other roles / positions
- Modification of equipment / new equipment
- Flexible personal leave policies.

# Reasonable adjustments

1. The identification of barriers and formulation of possible solutions constitutes the essential elements of an accommodation plan.
2. Share this plan with the employer
3. When presenting the plan to the employer, the client (and therapist if included) should emphasise the relationship between barrier removal and increased productivity.

