

Disability awareness

Tourette's Syndrome

Tourette's Syndrome is a neurological condition characterised by a combination of involuntary and repeated movements and sounds – referred to as tics. It usually starts during childhood and for over half of those affected, symptoms will continue into adulthood. A large proportion of people with Tourette's Syndrome will also have other conditions the most common of which are Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

There are four main categories of tics:

Simple motor tics

- Eye blinking, head jerking, shoulder shrugging, nose twitching, teeth grinding, eye rolling, and facial grimacing.

Simple sound tics

- Throat clearing, yelping, grunting, squeaking, sniffing, coughing and tongue clicking.

Complex motor tics

- Jumping, touching other people or things, copying other people, smelling, twirling and sometimes hitting or biting oneself.

Complex sound tics

- Uttering words or phrases out of context, swearing loudly or shouting inappropriate words and phrases, repeating a sound, word, or phrase just heard.

Most people diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome have a combination of all types of tic, which may change over time. The tics can also vary depending on how they are feeling; perhaps worse when stressed anxious, ill or excited, and perhaps better if enjoying or concentrating on a task.

The tics are involuntary, meaning that they are not deliberate and people cannot help letting them out. Most people can suppress their tics for a short time, but this can be very draining. Eventually the tics will come out, and are likely to be even stronger or come in a big 'release'. Most people with Tourette's experience premonitory sensations – which are uncomfortable or unusual feelings before having a tic.

The tics are unlikely to cause long-term health issues but people can experience pain from a sudden movement and have disturbed sleep. However many people with Tourette's experience social and emotional effects such as low self-esteem, embarrassment, bullying and isolation.

Things that may help

- Find out if they have any specific triggers eg, foods, chemicals noise or light and help them plan to avoid them
- Help them to find ways to manage stress levels eg, helping them to plan and be organised, breaking down tasks into smaller steps
- Talk through any potential changes and give support and reassurance
- Encourage them to talk about what is worrying them either with a friend, family member or workplace buddy
- Suggest relaxation techniques/deep breathing
- Discuss ways to improve health/sleep patterns
- Advise taking regular breaks from tasks, getting up and walking around
- Regular exercise can release excess energy
- Suggest they find a quiet space to work free from distractions and noise
- Ask them if they have considered their diet (eg, remove stimulants/additives)
- Discuss if, when and how they want to tell others about their condition.

Contact us:

If you would like further information on how we can help you, please get in touch with us:

t: 0300 456 8113 e: training@remploy.co.uk w: www.remploy.co.uk/training

If you require this information in an alternative format, please email communications@remploy.co.uk quoting ref. R86- Nov17

