

Helping employees get back to work

Specialized return-to-work preparation can facilitate the transition back to work

Individuals off work on short or long-term disability may require special support before returning to work.

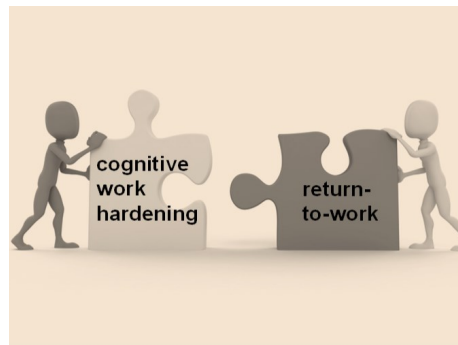
ERGO-Wise's **cognitive work hardening** program (*bridge2work*™) is specifically designed to provide such individuals with a "bridge back to work".

Working with a registered occupational therapist, clients practice and develop work skills in a non-threatening simulated work environment. This includes adjusting to a work routine; rebuilding cognitive abilities that may have atrophied while on disability; and developing coping strategies to help with work demands (e.g., stress management, time management, assertiveness).

ERGO-Wise's owner/director, Adeena Wisenthal, scientifically studied cognitive work hardening through her doctoral research. Her study findings highlighted key elements of cognitive work hardening that clients found useful for their return-to-work preparation. These included the structure of the program which provided them a routine and a work focus; customized work simulations that encompassed relevant work tasks that helped them rebuild cognitive abilities (e.g., concentration); and a simulated office environment that (i) provided a safe and supportive

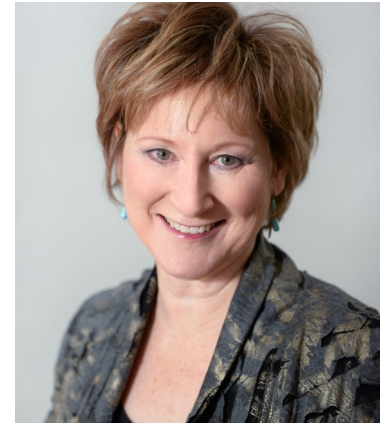
environment to 'practice' working and (ii) offered a realistic office environment that fostered a 'worker' role and enabled people to move beyond the 'disability' mentality.

Clients also commented on the learning that took place during cognitive work hardening. Education regarding pacing strategies, ergonomic principles, and strategies for more effective communication



encompassed 'coping skills education' and was touted by clients as helping them with their transition back to work.

Collectively, the elements of cognitive work hardening helped clients increase their work stamina, increase their self-confidence, and improve feelings of self-



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Adeena is an award winning occupational therapist and founder of ERGO-Wise. She specializes in return-to-work preparation for people experiencing reduced cognitive abilities (e.g. concentration), persistent fatigue, and lack of a routine following a disability such as depression, cancer, and post-concussion.

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ERGO-Wise's cognitive work hardening program casts a wide net

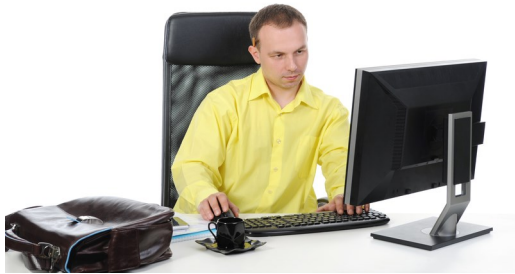
- ⇒ hundreds of people on disability have returned to work following depression, cancer, concussion
- ⇒ clients include project managers, administrative assistants, analysts, translators, nurses, lawyers
- ⇒ clients work for varied employers including the government, high tech, hospitals

cognitive work hardening

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efficacy (i.e. belief in one's abilities to do a task).

Cognitive work hardening offers insight into a person's work ability and work potential. Markers of work performance provide information regarding a person's functioning and anticipated occupational challenges. The need for job accommodations may surface with a view toward what will be needed once a person returns to their job. Difficulties that a client may encounter while at cognitive work hardening are addressed with the occupational therapist through a problem solving approach with a view toward employability.



Clients are referred to ERGO-Wise through their disability insurance carrier. Typically, the insurer is the person that recommends the cognitive work hardening program. Sometimes, a person's family doctor or specialized healthcare provider may recommend the program.

ERGO-Wise has been offering its **bridge2work™** cognitive work hardening program in Ottawa since 2000. It is a sought after treatment intervention owing to Adeena's extensive clinical experience providing this intervention, her

well-researched and in depth understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the intervention, and its proven success rate.



References

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ERGO-Wise's hallmark **cognitive work hardening program (bridge2work™)** has helped hundreds of clients return to work by helping them rebuild cognitive abilities needed to meet job demands, adjust to a work schedule, and address coping strategies including effective communication and organizational skills.

**Services are provided within a non-clinical
simulated work setting**

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