



## When Two Worlds Collide: Managing Physical and Mental Health Conditions at Work

Hi, I'm a research staff at the Transitions ACR and I'm here to share a snippet of my experiences as a young adult with multiple medical and mental health conditions. Some people may think that I drew the short end of the stick, but I beg to differ. My conditions have given me perspective, a greater appreciation for life, and opened the door to many amazing experiences. One of those amazing experiences is my current job at the Transitions ACR. My job position is unique in the sense that it is designed solely for a person with a mental health condition. I use my lived experience with a mental health condition to help shape research by effectively implementing youth voice in all areas of the research process.

How do I manage work with medical and mental health conditions? That is a good question! The short answer is that it requires thinking outside of the box, being flexible, and constantly adapting. Is it worth it? Yes! I owe much of my recovery and improved health to being employed. I've run into a few obstacles along the way, four of which I will be sharing with you all. This entry will cover one of the four obstacles: bridging the divide to maintain my employment.

One of the first obstacles I faced was getting some members of my medical team to understand my mental health conditions. Some of my medical providers were initially wary about me working given my health conditions, but it was soon evident to everyone that employment is necessary for my mental health recovery. My medical team witnessed first-hand that I experience an increase in negative emotions and symptoms related to my mental health condition when I'm unable to work. Self-advocacy also played a key role in educating them on what works and what doesn't. Everyone is different, so don't be afraid to speak up! My job allows me to be more than a diagnosis. It gives me meaning and purpose to my life. It's a constant reminder that I'm more than a diagnosis. Personally, it's the most effective escape from my day-to-day life of appointments, surgeries and treatments. Work can be an unexpected and wonderful tool for recovery.



This entry is just one example of how motivation, resourcefulness, and persistence can help in overcoming a variety of adversities and living the life YOU want to live! Stay tuned for our December 2018 newsletter to read about work/life balance as a young adult with both medical and mental health conditions!