



Supporting Employees with Tourette Syndrome

Recognising Strengths and Embracing Neurodiversity

People with Tourette Syndrome (TS), like others in the neurodiverse community, often bring unique strengths to the workplace—creative thinking, problem-solving, empathy, and resilience developed from navigating a world not designed for them.

At its heart, inclusion is about recognising the value in different ways of thinking and being. TS doesn't preclude someone from succeeding in any profession. Across Aotearoa, people with TS are thriving in fields from education and healthcare to IT, trades, the arts, and more.

If you want to know more or have additional questions you want answered contact us at info@tourettes.org.nz.

What is Tourette Syndrome?

Tourette Syndrome is a neurological condition that typically begins in childhood and is characterised by involuntary movements and sounds known as tics. Tics can be motor (such as blinking, head movements, or facial twitches) or vocal (such as throat clearing, sniffing, or repeating words or sounds). Tics can change over time and often fluctuate depending on stress levels, fatigue, or other factors.

TS varies widely between individuals. It can be mild or more noticeable and may be accompanied by other conditions such as ADHD, anxiety, OCD, or learning differences.

Everyone's experience with TS is different. Some people's tics are barely visible; others may have more prominent symptoms.

Why Support Matters

Most people with TS want to work and are capable, committed, and valuable team members. With some understanding and simple adjustments, employers can help people with TS thrive in the workplace.

Providing a supportive and inclusive environment not only helps employees with TS succeed—it also benefits the wider team by promoting empathy, adaptability, and innovation.

Common Misunderstandings

- Tics are not signs of bad behaviour or poor attitude
- Swearing (known as coprolalia) affects only a small number of people with TS
- TS does not affect intelligence or ability to perform in most jobs

How to Support an Employee with TS

Open communication: Create a space where the employee feels comfortable discussing their needs. Let them lead the conversation about what support or adjustments may help.

Awareness and understanding: Provide information about TS to team members where appropriate. Reducing stigma helps everyone.

Workplace adjustments: Some simple changes might include:

- Allowing flexible work hours or regular breaks
- Offering a quieter workspace or noise-cancelling options
- Enabling remote or hybrid working where possible
- Allowing time off for medical appointments

Be patient and respectful: Tics are involuntary and often get worse with pressure. Recognising this helps reduce unnecessary stress.

Benefits to Your Workplace

Many people with TS bring unique strengths such as creativity, attention to detail, perseverance, and empathy. Supporting neurodiversity in the workplace can foster stronger, more resilient teams.

**For more information or support
email info@tourettes.org.nz**