

Stories Behind the Cases

Rediscovering life after burnout

Gordon's story



In his 40s, commercial planner Gordon was experiencing neurodivergent burnout at work, and was struggling with his dyspraxia and ADHD.

Gordon suspected that he also had autism, but the diagnosis wait list was years long. The burnout he was experiencing was partnered with symptoms he didn't know how to manage, affecting his well-being. ***What support did he need?***

The need

After years of silent struggle, Gordon's mental health hit rock bottom, experiencing depression and basic functioning due to neurodivergent burnout and sensory overload.

When a referral was made to Krysalis, Gordon had spent near to six months off work. His employers were unsure why he had been previously under-performing, and they had no accommodations as they didn't understand his needs.

Krysalis was asked to explore Gordon's burnout, and the potential for his return to work.



“Gordon was in a difficult place when we first met. We started off by addressing some of his foundational needs, which included considering his sensory function. It acted as a springboard to help Gordon better understand himself.”

Nichola Shellum
Occupational Therapist

The question

Neurological occupational therapist and sensory integration practitioner, Nichola Shellum, discovered that Gordon's burnout followed a boom and bust pattern, where he would function well for a short period of time, before experiencing burnout again.

Nichola knew Gordon suspected he also had autism, and that gaining a diagnosis would help him feel validated about the symptoms he was experiencing. It was also clear that Gordon needed to understand himself, and his symptoms, before his employer could.

This led to Nichola asking the hardest question of all:

“COULD GORDON BECOME READY FOR WORK AND IF SO, HOW?”



“We developed a lot of strategies throughout our intervention and this enabled Gordon to slowly build up his voluntary work, and then follow the plan to return to paid work.”

Nichola Shellum
Occupational Therapist



Seeing the whole picture

Nichola worked with Gordon therapeutically online, completing two sessions a week in thirty minute chunks to not overwhelm him or trigger his fatigue. This also helped create routine, which supported his executive functions such as planning his week.

They focused on Gordon's sensory needs, fatigue, and everyday function. Before talks of returning to work, Nichola understood that Gordon's mental health was the priority.

To support this, Nichola explored a 'rest and digest' period with him, focusing on dedicating one day a week to self-care and personal hygiene, ensuring that Gordon's routine assisted both his ADHD and autistic traits.



Specialist support

Gordon valued exercise, and his functional goals included wanting to walk his dog more. He hired a personal trainer to help him return to the gym, which Nichola encouraged as she knew it would boost his mood and calm his central nervous system.

Other strategies involved Krysalis's Mindful Hand (a resource used for sensory regulation), visual motor integration activities, and the 'Blob Tree' - a drawing of numbered stick people on a tree representing different feelings that allowed Gordon to easily express himself.

“The most important thing is not just in the planning; it's the joy of doing something fun for the individual. Only occupational therapy is in the position to facilitate that.”

Nichola Shellum
Occupational Therapist

“DID GORDON RETURN TO WORK?”

After a period of specialised support Nichola was able to signpost Gordon to voluntary work while he considered paid roles that would be more suitable to him and his neurodivergent needs.

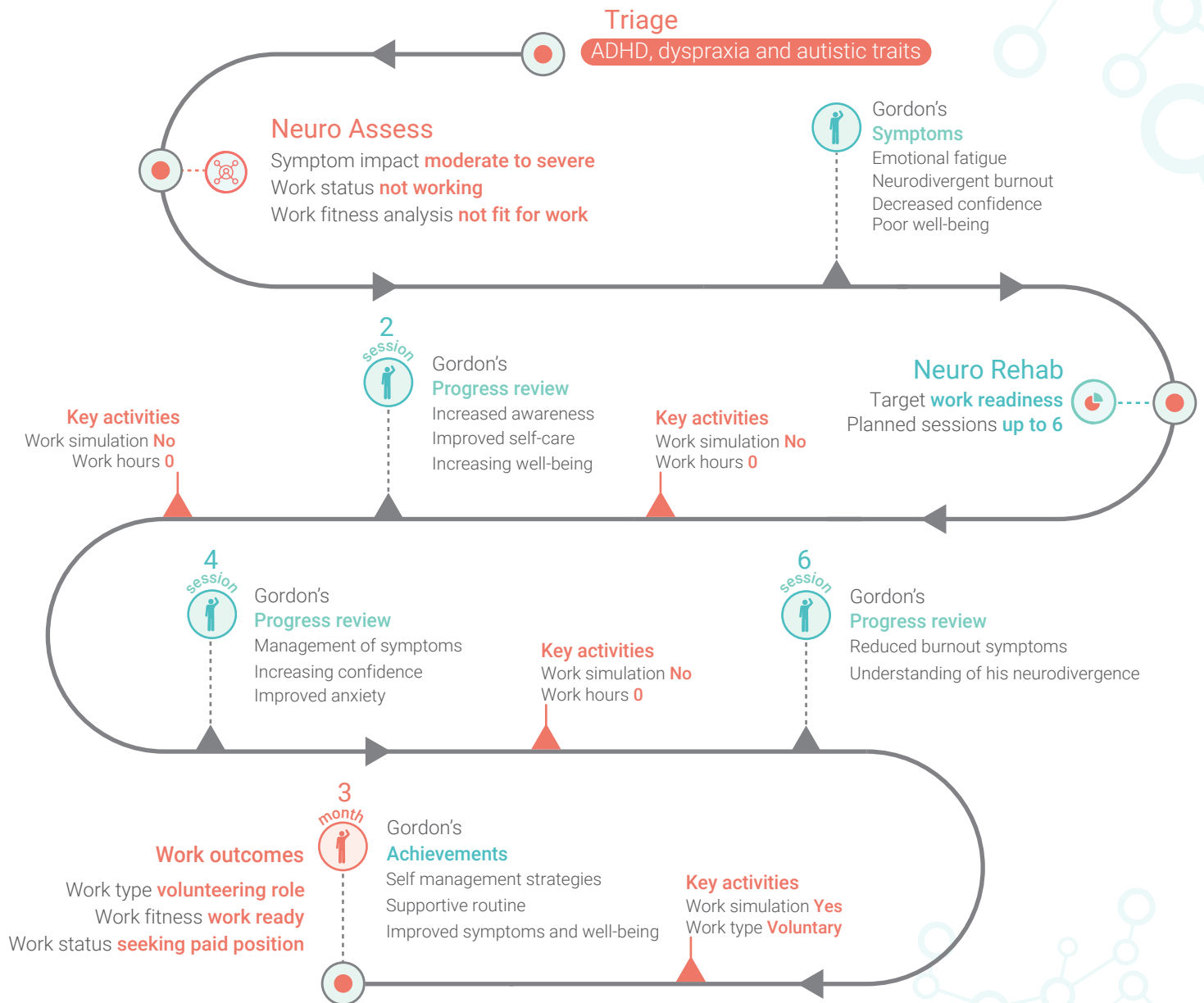
This expert intervention helped Gordon prevent further burnout, and has allowed him to manage his symptoms, as well as gain a better self-understanding of his neurodivergence.



Neuro Respond

Self-care, condition management and work readiness

- What **Assessment and 6 hours of support**
- Programme **Treatment**
- Expected duration of programme **0 - 3 months**



Neuro Logical from Krysalis is a dedicated service for the workplace helping individuals, as well as insurance providers and employers, to understand work capabilities and overcome challenges.

neuro:logical
that makes sense.



“ We understand the brain in all its complexity. We enjoy working with individuals and employers, helping them learn about how the workplace can support individuals realise their potential...”

Nichola Shellum
Occupational Therapist



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