

Stories Behind the Cases

Balancing life with FND and Autism

Louise's story



In her 40s, community leader Louise suffered a brain injury from a fall, and was later diagnosed with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND).

Louise returned to work quickly, but over the years, she experienced numerous symptoms affecting her well-being, leading to burnout, periodic work absences and sick leave. Her employer was unsure how to assist her. **What would help?**

The need

After ten years of persevering at work, Louise was in crisis, overwhelmed with symptoms but devoted to the role she loves. On top of that, Louise was diagnosed with the neurodiverse condition of latent autism, confirming suspicions she held since a child.

The brain injury lead to a FND diagnosis. Louise had head shakes and developed a foreign accent in response to loud noises. As stress rose, so did the autism symptoms.

The assistance of Krysalis was requested by the employer to explore Louise's needs and potential for recovery.



The question

Neurological Occupational Therapist, Will, was aware of the intricacies of FND. He knew the condition occurs when there is a glitch in the brain with how messages are sent between the brain and the body. The symptoms are described as 'functional' because it is a disorder of the nervous system.

It is a rare condition, with many people in Louise's life not able to understand it. She experienced prejudices at work and in daily life. Will began to assess how the diagnoses specifically impacted Louise, and how to address the hardest question of all:

"COULD LOUISE GO BACK TO WORK AND IF SO, HOW?"

“Many people poorly understand neurological conditions, any lack of understanding presents a barrier for Louise. If she is to thrive within her role, however, it is vital that other people understand her needs and the support she requires.”

Will Acland
Occupational Therapist



“ I’m beginning to think things are now doable, whereas before it was the opposite. The world is opening instead of shrinking. Now, I’m so happy and so grateful, I could burst! ”

Louise



Seeing the whole picture

When Will started Louise’s assessment, it was clear that working on balancing the FND symptoms and autistic characteristics would be key to her well-being.

Will explained to Louise that her diagnoses of FND and autism led to oversensitive hearing, causing sensory overload and an overwhelmed brain.

Louise was also educated on the intricacies of how a neurodivergent brain works and what this means for her home and work life. She now understands why she needs spaciousness, organised surroundings and feeling comfortable, rather than conforming to people’s expectations.



Specialist support

Strategies were introduced to reduce brain stimulation, reducing the emotional meltdowns and overstimulation. This allowed Louise to gain control of her symptoms.

Will also introduced breathing strategies to reduce stress, a traffic light system to gauge activity demands and fatigue management to lessen FND symptoms and improve Louise’s well-being.

“ Many people living with autistic spectrum disorder experience the world differently. Sensory experiences when doing activities, or engaging in the world around them, can be under or over-processed, and the extent varies between individuals. ”

Will Acland
Occupational Therapist

“DID LOUISE GO BACK TO WORK?”

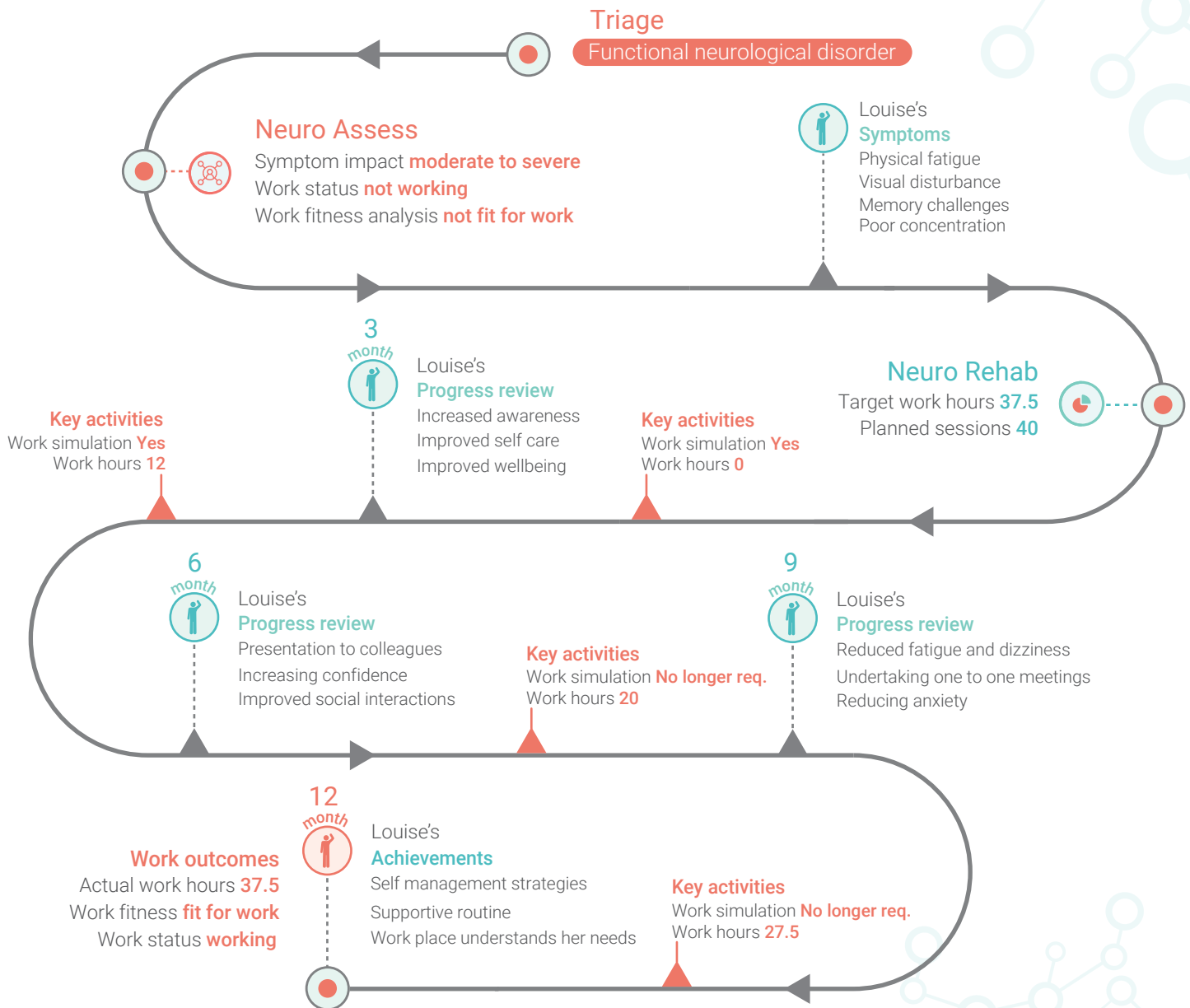
After a period of specialist rehabilitation, Will supported Louise to return to work, guiding her employer through the transition and educating her colleagues about the diagnoses. The specialist intervention helped Louise return to work full time and gain a better understanding of her needs and how to manage the diagnoses.



Neuro Rewire

For individuals with clear work potential at assessment

- What **Goal orientated vocational rehab pathways**
- Programme **Treatment**
- Expected duration of programme **0 - 12 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.

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that makes sense.



66 *The best thing of all, I think, is discovering that there are things people value about me now. That I do have skills and abilities to offer, I am liberated to be myself, and I find people like me better now I am not trying so hard to fit in, with layer upon layer of the masking which was such an effort to maintain.* 99

Louise



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