

Navigating Success at Work: A Guide for Individuals with Short Bowel Syndrome



Empowering Strategies and
Practical Tips for Balancing
Short Bowel Syndrome and
Professional Life



SBSE

Short Bowel Syndrome Foundation

www.shortbowelfoundation.org

Medical Advice Disclaimer

The Short Bowel Syndrome Foundation (SBSF) is committed to providing educational resources, support, and advocacy for the community we serve.

The information we provide is intended solely for educational purposes. It should not be used for self-diagnosis or to make medical decisions without first consulting with your healthcare provider. Please note that SBSF does not provide medical advice.

If you have any health-related questions or concerns, we strongly encourage you to reach out to your healthcare provider.



Having Access to the Restroom

Managing diarrhea in Short Bowel Syndrome (SBS) patients often requires a personalized approach, as what works for one patient may not work for another. It is important to be open and honest with your employer.

Discussing personal health matters, especially conditions like Short Bowel Syndrome (SBS), with your boss can be a sensitive issue. Here are some steps to guide you:

- **Plan Ahead:** Before the conversation, outline the key points you want to discuss. This could include explaining what SBS is, how it affects you, particularly the management of symptoms like diarrhea, and how it might impact your work.
- **Choose the Right Time and Place:** Schedule a private meeting to ensure confidentiality and your boss's undivided attention.
- **Be Open and Honest:** Explain your condition and its implications honestly. You don't have to share every detail, but provide enough context so your boss understands your situation.
- **Discuss Your Needs:** If managing diarrhea requires specific accommodations (like frequent breaks or a flexible schedule), be clear about these needs.
- **Highlight Your Commitment:** Reassure your boss that you're committed to your job and that you're taking steps to manage your SBS effectively.
- **Provide Resources:** Consider sharing resources from reputable sources like the SBS Foundation, which can help your boss better understand your condition.

Remember, it's your right to discuss your health needs at work!

Most employers appreciate open communication and are willing to work with you to create a supportive work environment.



Advantages of Remote Work

Remote work allows individuals to tailor their schedules to better fit their personal lives, creating a more harmonious balance between professional and personal responsibilities. By eliminating the daily commute, employees save valuable time and reduce stress, which can be redirected towards family, hobbies, or self-care



By embracing remote work and its nuances, companies can build a resilient, adaptable, and forward-thinking workforce ready to meet the demands of an ever-evolving world.



Additionally, many find that the comfort and familiarity of their home environment lead to increased focus and efficiency, often resulting in heightened productivity levels. This flexibility also opens doors to a more diverse talent pool, as geographic constraints are no longer a barrier, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic workforce.



Employers can tap into a wealth of skills and perspectives from around the globe, enriching their teams and driving innovation. Furthermore, remote work encourages the development of digital communication and collaboration tools, enhancing overall connectivity and teamwork.



DRAWBACKS TO REMOTE WORK

Working remotely from home, while offering many benefits, can also present several challenges and disadvantages:



- **Increased Isolation:** Remote work can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness as it lacks the social interaction that a traditional office environment provides.
- **Home Office Costs:** Setting up a home office can be costly. This includes the cost of a suitable desk, chair, computer, software, and high-speed internet.
- **Risk of Overworking:** Without the clear boundaries between work and personal life, remote workers may find themselves working longer hours and struggling to switch off.
- **Risk to Productivity:** Distractions at home, such as children, pets, or household chores, can impact productivity.
- **Workplace Disconnect:** Remote workers may feel disconnected from their colleagues and the company culture, which can impact team cohesion and collaboration.
- **Disproportionate Work-Life Balance:** The blurring of work-life boundaries can lead to a disproportionate work-life balance, causing stress and burnout.
- **Communication and Collaboration Challenges:** Remote work relies heavily on digital communication tools, which can sometimes be less effective than face-to-face communication.
- **Career Progression Concerns:** Some remote workers worry about career progression, as they may miss out on opportunities for informal leadership development.
- **Technical Issues:** Remote workers are often responsible for troubleshooting their own technical issues, which can lead to lost productivity.
- **Health Issues:** Sitting for long periods and not moving around as much as you would in an office can lead to health issues.

It's important to note that these challenges can vary greatly depending on the individual's specific circumstances. Employers should strive to understand and accommodate the unique needs of their remote employees to create a more inclusive and productive work environment. Working remotely from home, while offering many benefits, can also present several challenges and disadvantages:

REMOTE LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Individuals with Short Bowel Syndrome (SBS) working remotely show resilience by balancing health needs with work responsibilities. They establish routines accommodating frequent meals and hydration breaks. Online resources and virtual training aid in learning and development at their own pace. Participation in online support groups fosters emotional well-being and professional growth for individuals with SBS in remote work settings.



ADVANTAGES & CHALLENGES

Remote work and learning pose unique challenges for individuals with Short Bowel Syndrome (SBS).

Balancing health routines with work, combating fatigue, and dealing with isolation can be tough. Finding suitable learning resources, handling tech issues, communicating effectively, and pursuing professional development remotely can also be challenging.

Despite these hurdles, many SBS individuals successfully navigate remote environments with resilience, adaptability, and support from healthcare teams, employers, and online communities.

Advocacy, support-seeking, and self-care are crucial for their success.



SETTING UP YOUR HOME WORKSPACE

Establishing a productive remote workspace while living with Short Bowel Syndrome (SBS) requires strategic planning and thoughtful organization. Here are some suggestions:

Tranquil Environment: Designate a serene workspace to minimize disruptions during work or virtual meetings.

Adaptable Schedule: Accommodating the care needs of SBS patients may necessitate a flexible work schedule, allowing you to juggle caregiving responsibilities alongside your professional commitments.

Open Communication: Maintain transparency about your circumstances with your team, fostering an environment of support and understanding.

Optimized Workspace: Ensure your workspace is inviting and well-lit, equipped with all necessary tools within arm's reach, including a reliable internet connection for uninterrupted remote work.



Scheduled Breaks: Prioritize regular breaks, not only for your wellbeing but also to attend to the SBS patient as needed.

Emergency Preparedness: Establish a contingency plan for medical emergencies, which may include having crucial contact numbers readily available and keeping your employer informed about potential situations that may demand your immediate attention.

Supportive Network: Cultivate a support network that can provide assistance when you need to concentrate on work. This could comprise other family members, friends, or professional caregivers.

Remember, each situation is distinct, so tailor these suggestions to best suit your circumstances. The ultimate goal is to strike a balance that fosters productivity while ensuring the wellbeing of the SBS patient.

MASTERING TIME MANAGEMENT

Effective time management at work is key to productivity and work-life balance. Prioritize tasks based on their importance and urgency. Set achievable goals for each day or week to stay focused. Instead of multitasking, concentrate on one task at a time. Use digital tools for scheduling and reminders. If you're overwhelmed, delegate tasks to others. Regular breaks and a clean workspace can boost your productivity. Lastly, try to minimize distractions. Remember, it's about finding what works best for you.

- **Set Clear Boundaries:** It's important to establish a clear separation between your work and personal life. This could mean setting specific work hours and strictly adhering to them. It also involves consciously disconnecting from work-related activities outside these hours, such as resisting the urge to check work emails or take calls.
- **Prioritize Tasks:** Understanding the difference between urgent and important tasks can significantly improve your productivity. Use tools like the Eisenhower Matrix to help prioritize your tasks. Remember, it's not about being busy, but about being effective.
- **Take Breaks:** Regular breaks are essential to maintain your mental and physical health. These breaks can be short, such as a 5-minute stretch every hour, or longer breaks like a lunch break away from your workspace. Breaks can help refresh your mind and prevent burnout.
- **Exercise Regularly:** Regular physical activity has numerous benefits, including stress reduction, improved mood, and increased energy levels. Find an activity you enjoy, whether it's yoga, walking, cycling, or dancing, and make it a part of your daily routine.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Mindfulness involves being fully present in the moment and can help reduce stress and improve focus. Techniques can include meditation, deep-breathing exercises, or simply taking a few moments to observe your surroundings.
- **Seek Support:** Don't hesitate to ask for help when you're feeling overwhelmed. This could be delegating tasks at work, asking family members for help with household chores, or seeking advice from a mentor or coach.
- **Time for Yourself:** Personal time is crucial for maintaining work-life balance. This is the time to engage in activities that you enjoy and that help you relax and recharge. It could be reading a book, pursuing a hobby, spending time in nature, or simply doing nothing at all.

Contact SBSF



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