

A Program
for Injured
Workers



PLUS SOCIAL FOR INJURED WORKERS:

A “tree-change” to a better recovery

Corey’s story

Due to a work-related injury two years ago, Corey underwent shoulder reconstruction, hip replacement and hernia operations. Following Corey’s injury, his employer offered him light duties for 12 months. However, on completion of the 12 months, his employment was terminated on medical grounds due to being unable to return to his previous role as an arborist.

“I got left behind and the isolation crept up on me.”

Corey felt frustrated, disappointed and lost as he had spent most of his working life in the tree industry. Corey knew he would need to re-invent himself and felt his biggest loss was the team camaraderie and support network of his work mates.



"I feel better inside. My limitations are under control and I feel a better acceptance of where I'm at."

Overview

After his injury, Corey needed to feel connected, useful and engaged in new things. Plus Social was able to:

- Link Corey to community groups and Plus Social groups according to his interests to reconnect him socially
- Connect Corey with people who had similar journeys, to find common ground and build new friendships
- Support Corey to develop a positive structure to his week and an "I can" outlook to his recovery.

Life after Injury

Corey is still recovering from his operations and has not been able to return to his previous role due to pain, sleeplessness and coming to terms with the limitations of his injuries.

Following his injury, Corey had little contact with his employer and work colleagues even though he had been with the same company for over 12 years.

"The work friends I associated with tended to do physical activities together and now my injury excludes me from those activities," said Corey.

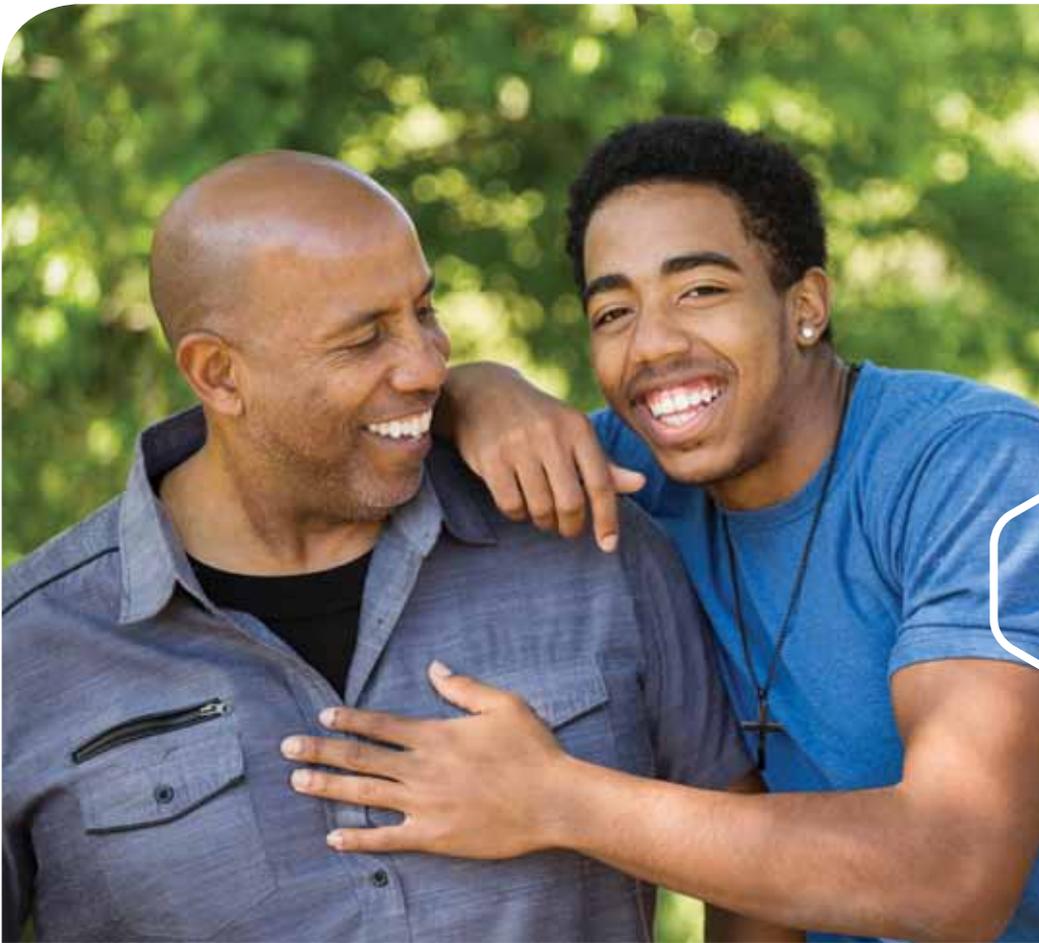
Corey's work injuries also impacted his time with his family and non-work friends. He couldn't participate in the fun activities, including speed climbing, he used to enjoy doing with his family and a regular climbing group. The slow disconnection from his work colleagues, friends and family activities impacted his wellbeing and led to his isolation.

How we helped

With the help of his Primary & Community Care Services Link Worker, Corey was supported to explore his interests and connect to local community groups.

"It's definitely opened my eyes to what's around in my community."

He participated in the Plus Social art, social and relaxation groups, which helped Corey connect with new people to increase his social network, as well as to support the development of new family activities.



"I can see an end point and feel better about my recovery."



Corey's Link Worker also guided him in developing a positive structure to his week, so much so that he now looks forward to what each new week brings.

Before Plus Social, Corey was just sitting at home alone or going to health appointments. Now, he is more social, mobile and content. "I do things now that I like to do. Rather than only the things I have to do, such as medical appointments," Corey reported.

He found that having a Link Worker and meeting new friends meant that he had people on his side who listened and cared. Meeting new people with similar work injury journeys meant that connection was easy, as they could understand his concerns, fears and isolation.

"The program is a little like natural pain relief for your mind and body."

"Plus Social helped me understand that the more my isolation and depression increased, my pain and hopelessness also increased."

What's better

After participating in the Plus Social program, Corey feels he has a more positive mindset.

Communication with his family has improved and new teamwork-based activities such as wood turning and community gardening have brought them all closer. Corey has also gained new friendships and support from the Plus Social and community groups.

Importantly, he has benefitted from having a new 'support crew' which has not only enabled Corey to address his social and emotional needs, but has also given him the confidence to explore a variety of new work opportunities and careers.

"I feel that my recovery is under control and I can start planning for a new future."