**Jan**

(Jan)

My name is Jan and I work for Kroger, a grocery store, and I’m a part-time baker. I’m disabled and hadn’t worked for a long time, about 15 years. What changed my mind about going back to work: Financially, I needed the income, I needed the support. And I needed to feel good about myself. I had the understanding that once you tried to go to work, your disability was completely taken away from you. My parents were very concerned, my husband wasn’t really sure I could even handle it.

(Martin)

Jan was great. She was a pleasure to work with. And her husband would also often frequent her appointments. We used the coordinated team approach. We, like I said, got together after the CTA I to meet and work towards, you know, what she would want to do, thinking about that vocational goal, what her interests and aptitudes, what reasonable accommodations might need to be put in place. We did her resume, did a mock interview. She got the job at Kroger.

(Jan)

Krista helped me. I went to Pilates classes to learn to strengthen my core, so I could even stand, walking, things like that, so that I could benefit myself in going back to work and actually do an eight hour shift.

(Coworker)

Working with Jan has been a great experience. She’s a fast learner. She wants to learn everything she can. She’s a hard worker. We get along great. We have great communication. That’s the big part there, communication.

(Jan)

The government, or disability itself, will work with you to help you to find a position that you can do, that you’re capable to do, capable of doing, and help you through it, whether it’s counseling, whatever you need. I worked with vocational rehab, and a lady named Christa Martin, and she was with me every step of the way. And helped me through every step of the way.

(Martin)

Benefits counseling was brought in at the beginning of the process, again with that team approach between myself, the counselor and the benefits counselor. So she had that at the very beginning of the process. And that was very helpful for her, especially, you know, figuring out.

(Jan)

She literally showed me how working would not only benefit me psychologically, but also it would help prolong my benefits more and I wouldn’t end up losing them at all. Emotionally, like I call at any time. Whatever I did for learning, she was, my counselor was on the computer finding jobs and we did mock interviews and we went clothes shopping. And, like I said, Pilates classes. Everything that would help me get back to who I used to be instead of what it was.

(Jan)

Yes it was. Being able to be financially stable, feeling good about myself, actually going back to work and being able to accomplish something. Yeah, it was worth all of it. Able to do things that we couldn’t do before, we’re able to enjoy our life. Now that I’m working and have financial independence, if there was an emergency, I could handle it. If I needed a part for my car, I could fix it. We could go on vacation, you know. I can pay for the things that I couldn’t pay for before. Last words of wisdom, yes, if I had to do it over again, I would have gone to VR ten years sooner.