



Assisting Job-Seekers with Accommodations

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers to make reasonable accommodations that allow qualified applicants or employees with disabilities to perform the job. Accommodations are considered reasonable if they don't create an undue hardship on the functioning of the business. People with a mental health disability can also qualify for reasonable accommodations. Knowing employee rights and the available resources can be instrumental in supporting job seekers with gaining and maintaining employment. Being aware of what accommodations are available and how to access an accommodation is an important component of employment planning.

Listed below are examples of limitations that may apply to people with mental health conditions and their corresponding accommodations.

Limitation	Accommodation
<i>Maintaining Stamina</i>	<i>Flexible scheduling Allow longer or more frequent breaks Provide additional time to learn new responsibilities Allow time off for counseling</i>
<i>Handling Stress</i>	<i>Allow phone calls to support person Allow employee to take breaks as needed</i>
<i>Difficulty Staying Organized and Meeting Deadlines</i>	<i>Make daily to-do lists Remind the employee of important deadlines Use electronic organizers</i>
<i>Memory Deficits</i>	<i>Provide written instructions Allow additional training time Provide written checklists</i>
<i>Maintaining Concentration</i>	<i>Reduce distractions Allow use of white noise or environmental sound machines Allow employee to play soothing music Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals</i>

Helping Job Seekers Prepare an Accommodation Request

To help job seekers or employees practice requesting an accommodation and describing the limitations caused by their mental health disability, encourage them to write a practice script. Support revision of the script until it is clear and easy for the employer to understand.

Prompts for job seekers/employees to use when preparing their script:



Describe positive attributes and strengths first. Match skills and strengths with job tasks and requirements. These may be job specific hard skills that relate to the tasks outlined in the job description or, they may be soft skills related to interpersonal communication, time management, or problem solving. Describe how the accommodation will benefit the employer by enhancing job performance.



*Identify limitations or challenges resulting from the disability.
Consider any limitations or challenges encountered in past jobs or related settings.
Be specific regarding difficulties experienced.*



Identify accommodations that have worked in the past. Consider supports and resources that helped in previous work settings and the limitations they addressed. These can include specific accommodations or other supports that were assistive.



End the script with positive points. Reiterate the skills and strengths previously identified and highlight positive attributes that meet the employer's needs. Match key skills and work responsibilities from the job description to abilities described.



If the employer is unable to provide a specific accommodation due to undue hardship, come prepared to discuss additional or alternative accommodations that might help.

The tips above provide only a snapshot of the information on employee rights and job accommodations. Fortunately, the Job Accommodation Network provides free resources to assist in understanding reasonable accommodations and making accommodation requests. You can find a sample accommodation request letter specific to mental health conditions at: [bit.ly/3vFb0J2](https://askjan.org/publications/individuals/employee-guide.cfm)

For more information on requesting an accommodation:

[Employee's Practical Guide to Negotiating and Requesting Reasonable Accommodations Under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)
(Job Accommodation Network)

For additional resources and information visit [our webpage with Supported Employment resources](#)

References:

1. Job Accommodation Network's publication "Employee's Practical Guide to Negotiating and Requesting Reasonable Accommodations Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)." Retrieved from: <https://askjan.org/publications/individuals/employee-guide.cfm>
2. Mungovan, A. & Quigley, F. (2013). Regional Disability Liaison Officers: Choosing Your Path, Disclosure: It's a Personal Decision, University of Western Sydney, University of Ballarat
3. Hielscher, E. Waghorn, G. (2016). The thematic congruence of a plan for helping people with severe mental illness manage their personal information in supported employment. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 82(1), 12-26.
4. McGahey, E., Wagnorn, G., Lloyd, C., Morrissey, & Williams, P. L. (2014). Formal plan for self-disclosure enhances supported employment outcomes among young people with severe mental illness. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*, 10, 178-185. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.12196>
5. Swanson, S.J. & Becker, D.R. (2015). *Supported Employment*. Minnesota: Dartmouth PRC-Hazelden