JAN
Job Accommodation Network
Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Schizophrenia

ODEP
Office of Disability
Employment Policy

Preface

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JAN does not endorse or recommend any products or services mentioned in this publication. Although every effort is made to update resources, JAN encourages contacting product manufacturers/vendors and service providers directly to ensure that they meet the intended purposes. This guarantees that the most up-to-date information is obtained.

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Updated 02/07/2024.

Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at https://AskJAN.org/soar.

Information about Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder that interferes with a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others. People with schizophrenia may seem like they have lost touch with reality. Although schizophrenia is not as common as other mental disorders, the symptoms can be incapacitating.

The symptoms of schizophrenia, include:

- **Hallucinations** include a person hearing voices, seeing things, or smelling things others can't perceive. The hallucination is very real to the person experiencing it, and it may be very confusing for someone else to witness. The voices in the hallucination can be critical or threatening. Voices may involve people that are known or unknown to the person hearing them.

- **Delusions** are false beliefs that don't change even when the person who holds them is presented with new ideas or facts. People who have delusions often also have problems concentrating, confused thinking, or the sense that their thoughts are blocked.

- **Negative symptoms** diminish a person's abilities, and include being emotionally flat or speaking in a dull, disconnected way. People with the negative symptoms may be unable to start or follow through with activities, show little interest in life, or sustain relationships. Negative symptoms are sometimes confused with clinical depression.

- **Cognitive issues/disorganized thinking** involve struggling to remember things, organize thoughts, or complete tasks. Commonly, the individual with schizophrenia is unaware that he has the illness, which can make treating or working with him much more challenging.

Schizophrenia and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA does not contain a definitive list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

Accommodating Employees with Schizophrenia

People with schizophrenia may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with schizophrenia will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

Questions to Consider:

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?

2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?

3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?

4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?

5. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?

6. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

Accommodation Ideas:

Limitations

Attentiveness/Concentration

- Alerting Devices
- Alternative Lighting
- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Memory
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Calendars and Planners
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Electronic Organizers
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Personal On-Site Paging Devices
- Professional Organizers
- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Task Separation
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Timers and Watches
- Uninterrupted "Off" Work Time
- Verbal Cues
- Visual Schedulers
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

- Written Instructions

Control of Anger/Emotions

- Apps for Miscellaneous Mental Health / Control of Anger & Emotions
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
- Employee Assistance Program
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Social Skill Builders
- Strobe Lights
- Sun Boxes and Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person

Disruptive Behavior

- Apps for Miscellaneous Mental Health / Control of Anger & Emotions
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
- Employee Assistance Program
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Habit Monitoring
- Job Coaches

- Job Restructuring
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- On-site Mentoring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Reminders
- Social Skill Builders
- Strobe Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Training Modifications
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
- Written Instructions

Erratic/Inconsistent Behavior

- Apps for Miscellaneous Mental Health / Control of Anger & Emotions
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
- Employee Assistance Program
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Habit Monitoring
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- On-site Mentoring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Reminders

- Social Skill Builders
- Strobe Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Training Modifications
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
- Written Instructions

Executive Functioning Deficits

- Apps for Concentration
- Apps for Memory
- Calendars and Planners
- Checklists
- Color Coded System
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Extra Time
- Flexible Schedule
- Form Generating Software
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Earbuds
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- On-site Mentoring
- Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
- Reminders

- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Speech Recognition Software
- Sun Boxes and Lights
- Sun Simulating Desk Lamps
- Timers and Watches
- Written Instructions

General Cognition
- Counseling/Therapy

Managing Time
- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Organization/ Time Management
- Calendars and Planners
- Checklists
- Color Coded System
- Electronic Organizers
- Marginal Functions
- PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
- Personal On-Site Paging Devices
- Reminders
- Task Separation
- Timers and Watches
- Written Instructions

Mental Confusion
- Electronic Organizers
- Job Coaches
- Marginal Functions
- On-site Mentoring
- PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
- Professional Organizers
- Reminders

- Social Skill Builders
- Supervisory Methods
- Training Modifications
- Written Instructions

Non-compliant Behavior

- Apps for Miscellaneous Mental Health / Control of Anger & Emotions
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
- Employee Assistance Program
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Habit Monitoring
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- On-site Mentoring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Reminders
- Social Skill Builders
- Strobe Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Training Modifications
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
- Written Instructions

Organizing/Planning/Prioritizing

- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Organization/ Time Management
- Calendars and Planners
- Color-coded Manuals, Outlines, and Maps
- Electronic Organizers
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- On-site Mentoring
- Organization Software
- Personal On-Site Paging Devices
- Professional Organizers
- Reminders
- Supervisory Methods
- Task Identification
- Task Separation
- Timers and Watches
- Visual Schedulers
- Written Instructions

Stress Intolerance
- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal

- Support Person

Unable to Work Alone

- Alerting Devices
- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Apps for Memory
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
- Employee Assistance Program
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Plan of Action
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person

Work-Related Functions

Communicate

- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- On-site Mentoring
- Scribe/Notetaker
- Verbal Responses
- Word Prediction/Completion and Macro Software
- Writing/Editing Software

Policies

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule

- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Physical/Social Distancing Signage
- Policy Modification
- Reassignment
- Service Animal
- Sleep Alerting Devices
- Strobe Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Touchless Faucets

Stress

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Monitor Mirrors
- Odor Control
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Strobe Lights
- Supervisory Methods

- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Uninterrupted Work Time

Use Cognitive Function

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Color Coded System
- Counting/Measuring Aids
- Electronic Dictionaries
- Electronic Organizers
- Extra Time
- Fractional, Decimal, Statistical, or Scientific Calculators
- Job Coaches
- Line Guides
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- On-site Mentoring
- Personal On-Site Paging Devices
- Professional Organizers
- Reassignment
- Reminders
- Service Animal
- Social Skill Builders
- Support Person
- Training Modifications
- Uninterrupted Work Time

Situations and Solutions:

The following situations and solutions are real-life examples of accommodations that were made by JAN customers. Because accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, these examples may not be effective for every workplace but give you an idea about the types of accommodations that are possible.

Ben is a draftsman with schizophrenia who is generally very good at his job tasks, but has had difficulty getting along with others socially.
He has episodes where he talked to himself, though others could hear him, about things that often were not based on reality. Although this often made coworkers uncomfortable, he was not threatening or considered dangerous. At Ben's request, the employer provided a semi-private workspace for him where he would have less contact with his coworkers, but still be part of the department.

Larue, who was recently diagnosed with schizophrenia, worked as an administrative assistant to a busy college dean.
It became apparent over time that something was happening to him. He started to isolate himself from others in his department and his work performance deteriorated over time. His employer then began noticing that his appearance had been neglected: Larue had stopped shaving, bathing, and wearing clean clothes. Once Larue began to say peculiar things during the workday, his supervisor pulled him aside for a private counseling to find out what was wrong. Larue didn't feel that anything was wrong even after he had heard the concerns. His employer requested he go to the doctor to get information that could help them better understand what was going on and how they could assist him in the workplace.

Shirley, a clerical employee with schizophrenia who sat in the middle of a rather large office, was in constant turmoil because she believed that her coworkers were plotting behind her back.
Although the employer could find no evidence to support this claim, it was very real to Shirley. She was having difficulty functioning as the office centerpiece. The employer could get no medical information because Shirley didn't believe she had a disability or medical condition, nor did she feel that she had any issues. The employer moved Shirley to a location on the outside perimeter of the large circular office area where she could have her back to the wall and face the other employees. This helped Shirley tremendously in getting her work completed.

Mario, who had schizophrenia, was scheduled to start work an hour later than the majority of his coworkers, and always had a suspicious feeling that they had been talking about him in the hour before he arrived.
The supervisor verified that it wasn't the case, but Mario still felt awkward and embarrassed. The supervisor asked Mario what might be a better solution/schedule for him. He felt that working the same times as most of the employees would help him to be there at the start of the day and ensure that there was no talking behind his back. The employer modified Mario's schedule on a trial basis for two weeks to see how it would

work for both of them. After the two-week trial period, Mario was a much happier and productive worker, so the employer allowed him to work the earlier schedule on a more long-term time frame.

Kim, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia, was unable to do her job because she felt that everyone in her new department was out to get her.
She wouldn't even come into the part of the office where she did her filing – the primary essential function of her position because of the presence of her coworkers. She had just been moved into her current position from one where the very same issues had surfaced. The employer could find no proof that there were issues with co-workers in either department, so he began addressing the issues with Kim as performance: she was refusing to work.

Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at https://AskJAN.org/soar is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.

Resources

Job Accommodation Network
West Virginia University
PO Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234
TTY: (304) 293-7186
Fax: (304) 293-5407
jan@askjan.org
https://askjan.org

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

Office of Disability Employment Policy
200 Constitution Avenue,
NW, Room S-1303
Washington, DC 20210
Toll Free: (866) 633-7365
odep@dol.gov
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

American Psychiatric Association
1000 Wilson Blvd
Suite 1825
Arlington, VA 22209-3901
Toll Free: (888) 357-7924
Direct: (703) 907-7300
apa@psych.org
https://www.psychiatry.org/

The American Psychiatric Association is an organization of psychiatrists working together to ensure humane care and effective treatment for all persons with mental illness, including substance use disorders. It is the voice and conscience of modern psychiatry. Its vision is a society that has available, accessible quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment.

American Psychological Association
750 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
Toll Free: (800) 374-2721
Direct: (202) 336-5500
http://www.apa.org/

Our mission is to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.

Brain & Behavior Research Foundation
90 Park Avenue,
16th Floor
New York, NY 10016
Toll Free: (800) 829-8289
Direct: (646) 681-4888
info@bbrfoundation.org
https://www.bbrfoundation.org

The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation is committed to alleviating the suffering caused by mental illness by awarding grants that will lead to advances and breakthroughs in scientific research.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd
Atlanta, GA 30333
Toll Free: (800) 232-4636
https://www.cdc.gov/

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of people - at home and abroad, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships.

Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center (GARD)
P.O. Box 8126
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8126
Toll Free: (888) 205-2311
Fax: (301) 251-4911
https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/

The Genetic and Rare Diseases (GARD) Information Center is a program of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) and funded by two parts of the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NCATS and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). GARD provides the public with access to current, reliable, and easy to understand information about rare or genetic diseases in English or Spanish.

International OCD Foundation Inc.
PO Box 961029
Boston, MA 02196
Direct: (617) 973-5801
Fax: (617) 973-5803
info@iocdf.org
http://iocdf.org/

The International OCD Foundation is a donor-supported nonprofit organization. Founded in 1986 by a small group of individuals with OCD, the Foundation has grown into an international membership-based organization serving a broad community of individuals with OCD and related disorders, their family members and loved ones, and mental health professionals and researchers around the world. We have affiliates in 25 states and territories in the US, in addition to global partnerships with other OCD organizations and mental health non-profits around the world.

Mayo Clinic
13400 E. Shea Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85259
Direct: (480) 301-8000
http://www.mayoclinic.org/

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

MedlinePlus
8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20894
custserv@nlm.nih.gov
https://medlineplus.gov

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

Mental Health America
500 Montgomery Street
Suite 820
Alexandria, VA 22314
Toll Free: (800) 969-6642
Direct: (703) 684-7722
Fax: (703) 684-5968
https://www.mhanational.org

Mental Health America – founded in 1909 – is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans. Their work is driven by their commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, and integrated care and treatment for those who need it, with recovery as the goal.

National Alliance on Mental Illness
3803 N. Fairfax Dr.,
Ste. 100
Arlington, VA 22203
Toll Free: (800) 950-6264
Direct: (703) 524-7600
http://www.nami.org

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, supports and research and is steadfast in its commitment to raise awareness and build a community for hope for all those in need.

National Center for Biotechnology Information
8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20894
pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/

The National Center for Biotechnology Information advances science and health by providing access to biomedical and genomic information.

National Institute of Mental Health
6001 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852
Toll Free: (866) 615-6464
Direct: (301) 443-4513
Fax: (301) 443-4279
nimhinfo@nih.gov
http://www.nimh.nih.gov

NIMH offers a variety of publications and other educational resources to help people with mental disorders, the general public, mental health and health care practitioners, and researchers gain a better understanding of mental illnesses and the research

programs of the NIMH. All publications and educational materials are written by science writers, in collaboration with NIMH scientists and outside reviewers.

Remedy's Health Communites
http://www.healthcommunities.com

Remedy Health Media is America's fastest growing health information and technology company. We are a leading provider of clinical resources and wellness tools that help millions of patients and caregivers live healthier, more fulfilled lives.

Our mission is to empower patients and caregivers with the information and applications needed to efficiently navigate the healthcare landscape and as a result, to permit better health outcomes through use of our products and services.

Suicide Prevention Resources
https://afsp.org/suicide-prevention-resources

Visit the https://afsp.org/suicide-prevention-resources">American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's website for a list of resources for suicide prevention for you or someone you know. They also provide resources supporting https://afsp.org/mmhresources">diverse communities and https://afsp.org/lgbtqresources">the LGBTQ community as well.

World Health Organization
525 Twenty-third Street
N.W.
Washington, DC 20037
Direct: (202) 974-3000
Fax: (202) 974-3663
http://www.who.int/en/

We are the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations' system.