

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Ataxia

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Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

Preface

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is funded by a contract with the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. JAN makes documents available with the understanding that the information be used solely for educational purposes. The information is not intended to be legal or medical advice. If legal or medical advice is needed, appropriate legal or medical services should be contacted.

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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JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

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 <http://askjan.org/soar>.

Information about Ataxia

Friedreich's, the best known inherited ataxia, and other cerebellar ataxias are impairments of the nervous system, most of which are inherited. They share many of the same symptoms, including unsteadiness and inability to coordinate movement. Friedreich's Ataxia usually reveals itself in childhood while cerebellar ataxia is diagnosed more often in adults. A majority of individuals with ataxia use mobility aids and have difficulty with their speech, although mental abilities are unaffected. Other ataxias are idiopathic, that is, they just occur.

Ataxia and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA does not contain a list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA has a general definition of disability that each person must meet. A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having 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 Ataxia

People with ataxia 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 ataxia 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. Has the employee been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. 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?
7. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

Accommodation Ideas:

Limitations

Decreased Stamina/Fatigue

- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Elevating Wheelchairs
- Ergonomic Assessments
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Job Restructuring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Scooters
- Stand-lean Stools

- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Walkers
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

Handling/Fingering

- Industrial
 - Anti-vibration Gloves
 - Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
 - Compact Material Handling
 - Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
 - Ergonomic Equipment
 - Extra Grip Gloves
 - Grip Aids
 - Vacuum Pickup Tools
- Office Equipment
 - Alternative Input Devices
 - Alternative Keyboards
 - Alternative Mice
 - Articulating Keyboard Trays
 - Book Holders
 - Compact Material Handling
 - Ergonomic Equipment
 - Expanded Keyboards
 - Forearm Supports
 - Grip Aids
 - Keyguards
 - Miniature Keyboards
 - One-Handed Keyboards
 - On-Screen Keyboards
 - Page Turners

- Scribe/Notetaker
- Speech Recognition Software
- Typing / Keyboarding Aids
- Writing Aids
- Other
 - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
 - Money Handling Products
 - Periodic Rest Breaks

Standing

- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Assist Lift Cushions
- Elevating Lift and Office Chairs
- Grab Bars
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Scooters
- Stand Aids
- Stand-lean Stools
- Stand-up Wheelchairs

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

Toileting/Grooming Issue

- Accessible Toilets and Toilet Seats
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Flexible Schedule
- Grab Bars - Toilet Hinged Arm Support
- Grooming and Dressing Aids
- Independent Living Aids
- Modified Break Schedule
- Swing Away Grab Bars
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Toileting Aids
- Transfer Aids
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

Walking

- Scooters
- Walkers
- Wheelchairs

Work-Related Functions

Access Information

- Alternative Input Devices
- Alternative Keyboards
- Alternative Mice
- Enlarged Keyboard Tops and Labels
- Keyguards
- On-Screen Keyboards

Stress

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques

- Counseling/Therapy
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Monitor Mirrors
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Uninterrupted Work Time

Work Site Access

- Accessible Toilets and Toilet Seats
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- Alternative Locks
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Braille and/or ADA Signage
- Building Accessibility Products
- Door Knob Grips and Handles
- Flexible Schedule
- Portable Ramps
- Ramps
- Scooters
- Service Animal
- Support Animal
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Lifts

- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

Work Station Access

- Adjustable and Ergonomic School Desks and Equipment
- Adjustable Desk Top Workstations for Office Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Articulating Keyboard Trays
- Assist Lift Cushions
- Chair Mats
- Chairs for Little People
- Chairs for People who are Tall
- Dual Monitors
- Elevating Lift and Office Chairs
- Ergonomic and Adjustable Office Chairs
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Expanded Keyboards
- Forearm Supports
- Forward Leaning Chairs
- Large-Rated Chairs
- Monitor Mirrors
- Monitor Risers
- Mousing Surfaces
- Stand-lean Stools
- Supine Workstations
- Work Platforms
- Zero Gravity (reclining) Chairs

Situations and Solutions:

A bakery employee with ataxia was stumbling during her shift.

She was self-accommodating with a store shopping cart, but space was limited. The employer purchased a small rollator to help the employee maintain balance while working.

A newspaper reporter with ataxia had difficulty taking notes and processing auditory input during interviews.

The employee had been using recording devices, but called JAN looking for more ideas. The JAN consultant explained the use of the Smart Pen, which was eventually provided as a workplace accommodation.

An employee with ataxia worked in a hotel laundry department.

They were having trouble pulling out the wet bedding and towels from the washing machines. A JAN consultant suggested a simple fix consisting of only pulling small amounts of laundry out at a time and a low stool to limit the bending down movements which was causing dizziness.

A secretary with ataxia was having speech difficulties when speaking on the telephone.

She called JAN looking for accommodation ideas before her performance suffered. A JAN consultant explained speech generative devices with telephone access and the employee was going to request that as a reasonable accommodation.

A writer for a non-profit called JAN looking for accommodations for their ataxia.

They experiences fine motor limitations that made it hard to mouse and keyboard. The JAN consultant sent the employee links to various vendor lists for alternative input devices, which the employee later requested as a reasonable accommodation.

Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <http://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
<http://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
<http://dol.gov/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.

A-T Children's Project

5300 W. Hillsboro Blvd.
Suite 105
Coconut Creek, FL 33073
Toll Free: (800) 543-5728
Direct: (954) 481-6611
Fax: (954) 725-1153
info@atcp.org
<http://www.atcp.org/>

The A-T Children's Project is a non-profit organization that raises funds to support and coordinate first-rate biomedical research projects, scientific conferences and a clinical center aimed at finding a cure or life-improving therapies for ataxia-telangiectasia, a lethal genetic disease that attacks children, causing progressive loss of muscle control, immune system problems, and a strikingly high rate of cancer, especially leukemia and lymphoma.

A-T Ease Foundation, Inc.

217 Thompson Street
Suite 404
New York, NY 10012
Direct: (212) 529-0622
Fax: (217) 404-1001
info@ateasefoundation.org
<http://www.ateasefoundation.org/index.shtml>

A-T Ease Foundation was created to:

- Build awareness of A-T.
- Raise funds to sponsor research into the treatment of, and finding a cure for, A-T.
- Educate the general public and the medical community about A-T.
- Provide A-T children and their families with resources for medical treatment and support services.

A-T Ease Foundation is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt, not-for-profit corporation. All donations are tax deductible.

BabelFAMILY

<http://www.babelfamily.org/en/>

BabelFAMILY is a non-profit organization headquartered in Spain (CIF: G-85711513). We are a worldwide group of volunteers that unite our skills to support the greater FA community of patients, doctors, researchers, scientists and associations in their mission to find treatments and a cure for Friedreich's ataxia.

Friedreich's ataxia is a hereditary, progressive, neurological disorder characterized by serious disruptions in balance, movement and muscle coordination. FA is typically diagnosed in childhood between the ages of 5 and 15. Symptoms include: fatigue, loss of reflexes, aggressive scoliosis, possible heart condition or diabetes, loss of balance and coordination, slurred speech and vision impairment.

Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation

636 Morris Turnpike

Suite 3A

Short Hills, NJ 07078

Toll Free: (800) 225-0292

Direct: (973) 379-2690

TeamReeve@ChristopherReeve.org

http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.ddJFKRNoFiG/b.4048063/k.67BA/The_Christopher_&_Dana_Reeve_Foundation__Paralysis_&_Spinal_Cord_Injury.htm

The Reeve Foundation is dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by funding innovative research, and improving the quality of life for people living with paralysis through grants, information and advocacy.

Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA)

533 W. Uwchlan Ave

Downingtown, PA 19335

Direct: (484) 879-6160

Fax: (484) 872-1402

info@curefa.org

<http://www.curefa.org/index.php#>

FARA's Mission is to marshal and focus the resources and relationships needed to cure FA by raising funds for research, promoting public awareness, and aligning scientists,

patients, clinicians, government agencies, pharmaceutical companies and other organizations dedicated to curing FA and related diseases.

International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society

555 East Wells Street
Suite 1100
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Direct: (414) 276-2145
Fax: (414) 276-3349
info@movementdisorders.org
<http://www.movementdisorders.org/MDS.htm>

The International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society (MDS) is a professional society of over 4,500 clinicians, scientists and other healthcare professionals dedicated to improving the care of patients with movement disorders through education and research.

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://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>

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.

Created by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

Muscular Dystrophy Association

222 S. Riverside Plaza,
Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60606
Toll Free: (800) 572-1717
mda@mdausa.org
<http://www.mda.org/>

MDA provides comprehensive medical services to tens of thousands of people with neuromuscular diseases at some 240 hospital-affiliated clinics across the country. The Association's worldwide research program, which funds over 400 individual scientific investigations annually, represents the largest single effort to advance knowledge of neuromuscular diseases and to find cures and treatments for them. In addition, MDA conducts far-reaching educational programs for the public and professionals.

National Ataxia Foundation

2600 Fernbrook Lane
Suite 119
Minneapolis, MN 55447-4752
Direct: (763) 553-0020
Fax: (763) 553-0167
naf@ataxia.org
<http://www.ataxia.org/>

The National Ataxia Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1957 with the primary mission of encouraging and supporting research into Hereditary Ataxia, a group of neurological disorders which are chronic and progressive conditions affecting coordination. There are more than 45 affiliated chapters and support groups throughout the U.S. and Canada.

National Cancer Institute
BG 9609 MSC 9760
9609 Medical Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-9760
Toll Free: (800) 422-6237
<http://www.cancer.gov>

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is one of 11 agencies that compose the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The NCI, established under the National Cancer Institute Act of 1937, is the Federal Government's principal agency for cancer research and training. The National Cancer Institute coordinates the National Cancer Program, which conducts and supports research, training, health information dissemination, and other programs with respect to the cause, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cancer, rehabilitation from cancer, and the continuing care of cancer patients and the families of cancer patients.

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

MISSION: IMS brings together an international community of health care professionals, researchers, educators, and others to improve care and transform delivery of treatment to those suffering from soft tissue pain through the promotion and exchange of globally recognized research, education, and innovation in patient care.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
P.O. Box 5801
Bethesda, MD 20824
Toll Free: (800) 352-9424
Direct: (301) 496-5751
<http://www.ninds.nih.gov>

The NINDS, an agency of the U.S. Federal Government and a component of the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Public Health Service, is a lead agency for the congressionally designated Decade of the Brain, and the leading supporter of biomedical research on disorders of the brain and nervous system.

National Organization for Rare Disorders

55 Kenosia Avenue
Danbury, CT 06813-1968
Toll Free: (800) 999-6673
Direct: (203) 744-0100
Fax: (203) 263-9938
<http://www.rarediseases.org>

NORD is a unique federation of voluntary health organizations dedicated to helping people with rare "orphan" diseases and assisting the organizations that serve them. NORD is committed to the identification, treatment, and cure of rare disorders through programs of education, advocacy, research, and service.

Pediatric Brain Foundation

2144 E. Republic Rd.
Building B, Suite 202
Springfield, MO 65804
Direct: (417) 887-4242
info@pediatricbrainfoundation.org
<http://www.pediatricbrainfoundation.org/>

Pediatric Brain Foundation's Mission is Three-fold:

- Expedite scientific research to find treatments and cures for the more than 14 million children living with some form of neurological disorder
- Provide families and health care professionals with up-to-date information and resources on the latest discoveries in pediatric neurology
- Educate the public and public officials on the critical importance of funding pediatric neurological research

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