

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Eating Disorders

Job Accommodation Network
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AskJAN.org



ODEP
Office of Disability
Employment Policy

Funded by a contract with the Office of Disability
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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Updated 11/26/2018.

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 Eating Disorders

A significant number of men and women experience a eating disorders at some time during their lives. Many cases are probably not reported. Many more people may not meet the criteria for an eating disorder diagnosis, but have difficulty around dissatisfaction with their bodies and distorted beliefs and behaviors about eating. Eating disorders are characterized by a continual disturbance of eating or eating-related behavior that results in changes in eating patterns that significantly impairs physical and mental health. Although there are many eating disorders, JAN hears about those that are most prevalent:

- **Anorexia nervosa** is a serious, potentially life-threatening eating disorder characterized by restriction of energy intake (food consumption) and excessive weight loss. Symptoms include resistance to maintaining body weight at or above a minimally normal weight for age and height; intense fear of weight gain; disturbance in the experience of body weight or shape; undue influence of weight or shape on self-evaluation, or denial of the seriousness of low body weight; and loss of menstrual periods in girls and women post-puberty. Anorexia nervosa typically appears in early to mid-adolescence and it has one of the highest death rates of any mental health condition.

- **Bulimia nervosa** is a serious, potentially life-threatening eating disorder characterized by a cycle of bingeing and compensatory behaviors designed to undo or compensate for the effects of binge eating. Its presence is indicated by regular intake of large amounts of food accompanied by a sense of loss of control over eating behavior; regular use of inappropriate compensatory behaviors such as self-induced vomiting, laxative or diuretic abuse, fasting, and/or obsessive or compulsive exercise; and extreme concern with body weight and shape. Bulimia nervosa is frequently associated with symptoms of depression and changes in social adjustment.
- **Binge eating disorder (BED)** is a type of eating disorder not otherwise specified and is characterized by recurrent binge eating without the regular use of compensatory measures to counter the binge eating. It is characterized by frequent episodes of eating large quantities of food in short periods of time; feeling out of control over eating behavior during the episode; and feeling depressed, guilty, or disgusted by the behavior. Behavioral indicators of BED include eating when not hungry, eating alone because of embarrassment over quantities consumed and eating until uncomfortably full. BED is often associated with symptoms of depression.

JAN's [Effective Accommodation Practices \(EAP\) Series: Executive Functioning Deficits](#) is a publication detailing accommodations for individuals with limitations related to executive functioning. These ideas may be helpful in determining accommodations.

Eating Disorders 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 Eating Disorders

People with eating disorders 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 eating disorders 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

Attentiveness/Concentration

- Applications (apps)
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Electronic Organizers
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Coaches
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Timers and Watches
- 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 Restructuring
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Sun Boxes and Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person

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

Executive Functioning Deficits

- Apps for Concentration
- Checklists
- Color Coded System
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Form Generating Software
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Speech Recognition Software
- Timers and Watches
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- 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

Work-Related Functions

Policies

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Flexible Schedule
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Policy Modification
- Reassignment
- Service Animal
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

Situations and Solutions:

A nineteen-year-old grocery store worker who mainly completed on floor tasks, such as pricing and packaging, had been complaining of feeling very exhausted from standing and walking all day long.

She disclosed to her employer that she was seeing a counselor for an eating disorder and the counselor suggested that she request an accommodation to help with her fatigue while she addressed her health needs. She requested to work as a cashier and to be allowed to sit while working. Because one of the grocery store's cashiers recently resigned, the employer was able to reassign her to this position and allowed her to sit while she worked.

A customer service representative for a physician's office is currently undergoing treatment for an eating disorder.

One of his therapeutic tasks is to integrate many small meals into his daily routine. His office has a strictly-enforced policy that employees can only eat in the break room, out of sight from the patients. In order to keep from disrupting his production level and to aid in his recovery, his supervisor modified the workplace policy and allowed the employee to eat snacks at his desk.

A bank branch manager started receiving complaints from multiple employees that one of the company's bank tellers was taking excessive bathroom breaks and rarely requested backup.

On certain days, she left multiple customers waiting for over 15 minutes while other tellers were waiting on customers. After witnessing her behavior himself, he decided to give her a warning for inappropriate use of time. Upon receiving the warning, the employee disclosed that she has experienced bulimia for over a year and wanted to start seeing a counselor. She requested an accommodation of a modified work schedule in order to see a counselor two times per week. Although the employer did not have to lift the warning, the employer granted the accommodation so the employee could comply with company policies in the future.

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.

Academy for Eating Disorders

12100 Sunset Hills Road
Suite 130
Reston, VA 20190
Direct: (703) 234-4079
Fax: (703) 435-4390
info@aedweb.org
<http://www.aedweb.org>

The Academy for Eating Disorders is a global professional association committed to leadership in eating disorders research, education, treatment, and prevention.

American Psychiatric Association

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

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

8701 Georgia Ave.
Suite #412
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Direct: (240) 485-1001
Fax: (240) 485-1035
<http://www.adaa.org/>

ADAA is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention, treatment, and cure of anxiety and mood disorders, OCD, and PTSD and to improving the lives of all people who suffer from them through education, practice, and research.

Binge Eating Disorder Association (BEDA)

637 Emerson Place
Severna Park, MD 21146
Toll Free: (855) 855-2332
Fax: (410) 741-3037
<http://bedaonline.com/>

The Binge Eating Disorder Association (BEDA) is a national organization focused on providing leadership, recognition, prevention, and treatment of BED and associated weight stigma. Through outreach, education and advocacy, BEDA facilitates increased awareness, proper diagnosis, and treatment of BED.

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://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.

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

940 Commonwealth Ave.
West Boston, MA 02215
Direct: (617) 353-3549
Fax: (617) 358-3066
psyrehab@bu.edu
<http://cpr.bu.edu/>

The Center is a research, training, and service organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons who have psychiatric disabilities. Our work is guided by the most basic of rehabilitation values, that first and foremost, persons with psychiatric disabilities have the same goals and dreams as any other person. Our mission is to increase the likelihood that they can achieve these goals by improving the effectiveness of people, programs, and service systems using strategies based on the core values of recovery and rehabilitation.

Diabulimia Helpline

Direct: (425) 985-3635
info@diabulimiahelpline.org
<http://www.diabulimiahelpline.org/>

A non-profit organization dedicated to education, support, and advocacy for diabetics with eating disorders, and their loved ones.

Eating Disorder Foundation

1901 East 20th Avenue
Denver, CO 80205
Direct: (303) 322-3373
Fax: (303) 322-3364
info@eatingdisorderfoundation.org
<http://eatingdisorderfoundation.org>

The mission of The Eating Disorder Foundation is to be an effective resource in the prevention and elimination of eating disorders through education, support, and advocacy.

Eating Disorder Hope

Toll Free: (888) 206-1175

<http://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/>

Eating Disorder Hope's mission is to offer hope, information and resources to individual eating disorder sufferers, their family members and treatment providers. The organization began with the help and advice of colleagues, professors, and other organizations specializing in eating disorders.

Eating Disorders Coalition (EDC)

PO Box 96503-98807

Washington, DC 20090

Direct: (202) 543-9570

<http://www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org>

The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States.

Families Empowered and Supporting Treatment of Eating Disorders (F.E.A.S.T)

PO Box 11608

Milwaukee, WI 53211

Toll Free: (855) 503-3278

info@feast-ed.org

<http://www.feast-ed.org/>

Families Empowered and Supporting Treatment of Eating Disorders is an international organization of and for caregivers of eating disorder patients. F.E.A.S.T. serves families by providing information and mutual support, promoting evidence-based treatment, and advocating for research and education to reduce the suffering associated with eating disorders.

F.E.A.S.T. believes that empowered caregivers are essential to the recovery process and to advocating for evidence-based treatment and research. F.E.A.S.T. has over 5,500 members on four continents and is run entirely by volunteers and supported through individual donations.

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

Mental Health America

500 Montgomery Street
Suite 820
Alexandria, VA 22314
Toll Free: (800) 969-6642
Direct: (703) 684-7722
Fax: (703) 684-5968
<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>

Mental Health America (MHA) – 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. Our work is driven by our 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.

Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association (MEDA)

288 Walnut Street
Suite 130
Newton, MA 02460
Direct: (617) 558-1881
<http://www.medainc.org>

MEDA's mission is to prevent the continuing spread of eating disorders through educational awareness and early detection. MEDA serves as a support network and resource for clients, loved ones, clinicians, educators, and the general public.

National Alliance on Mental Illness

3803 N. Fairfax Dr.,
Ste. 100
Arlington, VA 22203
Toll Free: (800) 950-6264
Direct: (703) 524-7600
Fax: (703) 524-9094
<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 Association for Males with Eating Disorders (NAMED)

164 Palm Dr. #2
Naples, FL 34112
<http://namedinc.org/>

NAMED's mission is to provide support for males affected by eating disorders, provide access to collective expertise, and promote the development of effective clinical intervention and research in this population.

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, Inc.

750 E Diehl Road #127
Naperville, IL 60563
Direct: (630) 577-1330
anadhelp@anad.org
<http://www.anad.org>

ANAD advocates for the development of healthy attitudes, bodies, and behaviors. ANAD promotes eating disorder awareness, prevention and recovery through supporting, educating, and connecting individuals, families and professionals.

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 Eating Disorders Association

165 West 46th Street
Suite 402
New York, NY 10036
Toll Free: (800) 931-2237
Direct: (212) 575-6200
Fax: (212) 575-1650
info@NationalEatingDisorders.org
<http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) is the leading non-profit organization in the United States advocating on behalf of and supporting individuals and families affected by eating disorders. Reaching millions every year, we campaign for prevention, improved access to quality treatment, and increased research funding to better understand and treat eating disorders. We work with partners and volunteers to develop programs and tools to help everyone who seeks assistance.

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.

Office on Women's Health

Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 712E
Washington, DC 20201
Toll Free: (800) 994-9662
Direct: (202) 690-7650
Fax: (202) 205-2631
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/>

The Office on Women's Health (OWH), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), works to improve the health and sense of well-being of all U.S. women and girls. OWH serves as the focal point for women's health activities across HHS offices and agencies and leads HHS efforts to ensure that all women and girls achieve the best possible health.

Project Heal

38-18 West Drive
Douglaston, NY 11363
Fax: (718) 709-7787
<http://theprojectheal.org/>

We provide grant funding for people with eating disorders who cannot afford treatment, promote healthy body image and self esteem, and serve as a testament that full recovery from an eating disorder is possible.

Remedy's Health Communities

<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.

The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness

1649 Forum Place #2
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Toll Free: (866) 662-1235
Direct: (561) 841-0900
info@allianceforeatingdisorders.com
<http://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com>

The Alliance offers educational workshops and presentations, free support groups for those struggling and for their loved ones, advocacy for eating disorders and mental health legislation, national toll-free phone help line, and referrals, support and mentoring services. All services offered by The Alliance are free-of-charge, therefore, making it accessible to everyone. Since its inception in October 2000, The Alliance has offered presentations on eating disorders, positive

body image, and self-esteem to more than 250,000 individuals throughout Florida and nationwide.

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