

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)

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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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## **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 Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)**

Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) is a neurobehavioral disorder that affects three to five percent of American children and adults. AD/HD is usually diagnosed in childhood, and the condition can continue into the adult years. Many individuals with AD/HD are undiagnosed until adulthood.

The common characteristics of AD/HD are impulsivity, inattention, and/or over-activity. Failure to listen to instructions, inability to organize oneself and work tasks, fidgeting with hands and feet, talking too much, inability to stay on task, leaving projects, chores and work tasks unfinished, and having trouble paying attention to and responding to details are the primary symptoms of AD/HD. Although individuals may have both inattention and hyperactivity symptoms, many individuals predominantly display one symptom more than another. There are three subtypes of AD/HD:

- AD/HD predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type: The major characteristics are fidgeting, talking excessively, interrupting others when talking, and impatience.
- AD/HD predominantly inattentive type: The major characteristics are distractibility, organization problems, failure to give close attention to details, difficulty processing information quickly and accurately, and difficulty following through with instructions.
- AD/HD combined type: The individual with combined type meets the criteria for both hyperactive-impulsive and inattentive type.

## **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) 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 Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)**

People with AD/HD may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. There are some general accommodations that explain how people with AD/HD disregard themselves at work.

General: Individuals with AD/HD are often perfectionists and are hard on themselves. They have trouble setting personal boundaries like knowing when to stop working and they set unrealistic expectations for themselves. Someone who takes work home or stays late to finish work is often given more responsibility or a heavier workload because they appear to be able to get their work done. General accommodations include:

- Help identifying strengths instead of focusing on weaknesses
- Reinforcing creativity
- Pointing out any signs that the individual is overworked – not taking vacations, staying at work late frequently, not eating lunch
- Providing an AD/HD coach to suggest ways to increase productivity and maintain a healthy work-life balance

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. Be aware that not all people with AD/HD 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

##### 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 Restructuring
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- On-site Mentoring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Reminders
- 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
- 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

#### Managing Time

- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Organization/ Time Management
- Color Coded System
- Marginal Functions
- PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
- Reminders
- Timers and Watches
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- Written Instructions

#### Memory Loss

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Apps for Memory
- Electronic Organizers
- Memory Software
- Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
- Reminders
- Support Person
- Verbal Cues
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- Written Instructions

## Organizing/Planning/Prioritizing

- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Organization/ Time Management
- Color-coded Manuals, Outlines, and Maps
- Electronic Organizers
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- On-site Mentoring
- Organization Software
- Professional Organizers
- Reminders
- Supervisory Methods
- Timers and Watches
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- Written Instructions

## **Work-Related Functions**

### Communicate

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Verbal Responses



## Situations and Solutions:

### **A delivery person with AD/HD had difficulty with time management.**

She spent excessive time making deliveries and would forget to return to the warehouse between daily runs. The employer provided a personal organizer watch that could be programmed to beep and display a written message many times throughout the day. This auditory and written prompt helped the employee move quicker from task to task, and helped remind her to return to the warehouse to gather her next load.

### **A journalist with AD/HD experienced sensitivity to visual and auditory distractions.**

The employer provided the individual with a private, high-wall cubicle workspace in a low-traffic area. The employer added an environmental sound machine to mask office noise.

### **A part-time college professor with AD/HD was having difficulty planning new courses he had yet to teach when the schedule changed quickly and he was required to do so under tight time constraints.**

He asked JAN how that could be accommodated. A consultant at JAN recommended he request that he only be put on the new courses that were firmly scheduled ahead of time in order to give him time to prepare. If he were to teach courses that were suddenly added, he asked that those be ones he had previously taught and planned for.

### **An employee in a management position has been successful in his position for quite some time but when a new supervisor comes on board, the standards for written communication are more strictly enforced.**

The employee, who has AD/HD, has difficulty attending to detail. This includes spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors in his written communications that go out to employees and business partners alike. The employee was accommodated with speech recognition software that allowed him to dictate whatever he needed to write. A playback feature allows him an added layer of oversight. He also requested writing/editing software that he can plug his written materials into so they will be checked over for spelling, grammar, and punctuation an additional time.

### **A retail employee with AD/HD often forgot the closing and cash-out procedures, which resulted in missed printouts of daily sale reports.**

The employer created a numbered checklist that identified each step for proper closing procedures and identified which reports to run from cash registers. This accommodation benefited all employees.

### **An office worker with AD/HD experienced impulsivity and often interrupted co-workers by entering offices without knocking.**

The employer helped identify appropriate techniques for approaching co-workers, such as keeping a daily list of tasks to discuss with others, then emailing or calling to set aside time to talk about work-related projects.

**A retail employee with AD/HD often forgot the closing and cash-out procedures, which resulted in missed printouts of daily sales reports.**

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**A social worker with AD/HD had difficulty completing handwritten paperwork in a neat and timely fashion.**

The employer created electronic forms for the employee, which allowed him to type responses. The employer arranged computer files labeled by month to help the employee prioritize open cases. The employer also sent e-mail reminders of deadlines.

**A teacher with AD/HD experienced disorganization in her classroom due to clutter from many years of teaching.**

The employer provided a job coach to help the teacher learn organization techniques, to help separate and store items, and to dispose of previous student work and projects from yesteryear.

## **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.

### **ADD Resources**

1836 Westlake Ave N,  
Ste 303  
Seattle, WA 98109  
Direct: (206) 724-0599  
<http://addresources.org/>

ADD Resources has a long-standing reputation as a trusted resource. Our mission at ADD Resources is to help people with ADHD achieve their full potential through education, support and networking opportunities. Those who use our resources are typically intelligent, creative and highly energetic.

**ADD Warehouse**

300 NW 70th Avenue  
Suite 102  
Plantation, FL 33317  
Toll Free: (800) 233-9273  
Direct: (954) 792-8100  
Fax: (954) 792-8545  
<http://addwarehouse.com>

A.D.D. Warehouse has built the world's largest collection of ADHD-related books, videos, training programs, games, professional texts and assessment products. Because of its tremendous depth, and the quality of the products we carry, our catalog is a recommended source of help in practically every book written on ADHD... and is provided to patients by hundreds of health professionals across the country.

**American Psychiatric Association**

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

**Attention Deficit Disorder & Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder  
Assessment Resources**

<http://www.iser.com/CAADHD.html>

ISER helps parents of LD children / teens find schools, help for attention deficit disorder, educational assessments, therapy, advocacy, teen crisis

**Attention Deficit Disorder Association**

PO Box 7557  
Wilmington, DE 19803-9997  
Toll Free: (800) 939-1019  
Fax: (800) 939-1019  
info@add.org  
<http://www.add.org>

Association (ADDA) is the world's leading adult ADHD organization. We are an international non-profit organization founded twenty-five years ago to help adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) lead better lives. Since its inception, ADDA has become the source for information and resources exclusively for and about adult ADHD. ADDA brings together scientific perspectives and the human experience to generate hope, awareness, empowerment and connections worldwide in the field of ADHD.

**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.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

1600 Clifton Rd  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
Toll Free: (800) 232-4636  
<http://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.

**Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder**

4601 Presidents Drive,  
Suite 300  
Lanham, MD 20706  
Toll Free: (800) 233-4050  
Direct: (301) 306-7070  
Fax: (301) 306-7090  
<http://www.chadd.org>

CHADD is a membership organization, produces the bi-monthly Attention magazine (for members), and sponsors an annual conference. The National Resource Center on ADHD (NRC) is the CDC-funded national clearinghouse for evidence-based information about ADHD.

**LD Online**

2775 S. Quincy St.  
Arlington, VA 22206  
Direct: (703) 998-2060  
<http://www.ldonline.org/>

LD OnLine seeks to help children and adults reach their full potential by providing accurate and up-to-date information and advice about learning disabilities and ADHD. The site features hundreds of helpful articles, multimedia, monthly columns by noted experts, first person essays, children's writing and artwork, a comprehensive resource guide, very active forums, and a Yellow Pages referral directory of professionals, schools, and products.

**Learning Disabilities Association of America**

4156 Library Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1349  
Direct: (412) 341-1515  
Fax: (412) 344-0224  
[info@ldaamerica.org](mailto:info@ldaamerica.org)  
<http://ldaamerica.org/>

LDA is the largest non-profit volunteer organization advocating for individuals with learning disabilities. LDA publishes materials on issues of importance to adults with learning disabilities on adult literacy, parenting, and special populations. A special series of bulletins address civil rights and accommodations in various settings, including college, the workplace and the military.

### **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.



**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 Center for Biotechnology Information**

8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
[pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](mailto: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 Mental Health**

6001 Executive Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Toll Free: (866) 615-6464  
Direct: (301) 443-4513  
Fax: (301) 443-4279  
[nimhinfo@nih.gov](mailto: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.

**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.

**Tourette Syndrome "Plus"**

940 Lincoln Place

North Bellmore, NY 11701-1016

Direct: (516) 785-2653

[admin@tourettesyndrome.net](mailto:admin@tourettesyndrome.net)

<http://www.tourettesyndrome.net/>

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