



**Job Accommodation Network**

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

# Accommodation and Compliance Series

## Accommodation and Compliance Series: Tourette Syndrome

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Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

## Preface

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is funded by a grant from 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 <https://AskJAN.org/soar>.

### **Information about Tourette Syndrome**

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is a neurological disorder that is characterized by brief, sudden, repetitive, and unusual involuntary movements or unwanted sounds called tics. Symptoms can range from mild to severe to debilitating.

The tics associated with TS are classified as either simple or complex. Simple tics involve a limited number of muscle groups. Some of the more common simple tics include eye blinking, nose twitching, mouth movements, and head / shoulder shrugging or jerking. More complex tics involving several muscle groups and may include facial grimacing combined with a head twist and a shoulder shrug, touching objects, hopping, jumping, bending, or twisting. Simple vocalizations might include repetitive throat-clearing, sniffing, or grunting sounds. More complex vocal tics include repeating words or phrases, sometimes obscene or swear words. More intense symptoms may considerably impede communication, daily functioning and quality of life.

Symptoms of TS usually begin in childhood and can be seen as early as two years of age, but are more likely to occur between the ages of six to seven. Males are three to four times more likely than females to develop TS. In most cases, the severity, frequency, and disruptiveness of the symptoms diminish during adolescence and adulthood. In other cases, the symptoms actually disappear entirely, usually by early adulthood. Rarely will the symptoms worsen in adulthood.

Many individuals with TS experience additional related conditions such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), learning disabilities, sleep disorders, and anxiety and mood disorders. JAN's [Accommodation Solutions: Executive Functioning Deficits](#) is a publication detailing accommodations for

individuals with limitations related to executive functioning. These ideas may be helpful in determining accommodations.

## **Tourette Syndrome 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 Tourette Syndrome**

People with Tourette Syndrome 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 who are aging 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

#### 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

#### 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

#### 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

#### **Work-Related Functions**

##### 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

## 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.

### **A library employee who had several fairly severe motor tics very rarely had vocal ones because of Tourette Syndrome.**

After demonstrating one of his rare outbursts, his employer requested medical documentation in order to ascertain the nature of the outbursts and whether they would be an issue in the future. The employer was able to determine that the outbursts were rare indeed, that there really was no accommodation to help reduce them, and that they could handle the outbursts as outlined by the employee's doctor.

### **A parks and recreation worker with Tourette Syndrome worked for a city and had difficulty controlling his vocal tics when he was under the stress and chaos of working with a crew of more than three people.**

He asked for the accommodation of allowing him to work alone, or with just one other co-worker. Although transportation became a little tricky to organize, his employer found no hardship in providing the accommodation for a trial period to see how effective it could be.

### **An insurance salesman, working in a call center, had Tourette Syndrome that was getting more severe.**

No longer able to control his vocal outbursts, it became impossible for him and his coworkers to complete calls. When it was brought to his attention, he shirked it off as his co-workers being too difficult to get along with. He refused to take part in the accommodation process, and refused the move to a more private area with frequent breaks to help him manage the stress that he stated was exacerbating his condition. With no assistance from medical documentation as he refused to cooperate, the employer determined that he was no longer qualified for the position as he was unable to complete the essential functions of his position.

### **An employer who had just hired a new employee with Tourette Syndrome was shocked when he discovered that the employee was making sexually offensive comments to female coworkers as well as passing around lewd pictures he had drawn.**

Meeting immediately with the employee and his job coach, the employer discovered that the employee had Tourette syndrome, had experienced the same issues in previous positions, and was unable to refrain from the comments and the drawings due to his Tourette's. Since no accommodation had previously been found to be effective, the employer terminated this employee.

### **Due to Tourette Syndrome an office employee had vocalizations that disturbed his co-workers.**

He asked for a stress-free environment in order to reduce the vocalizations. In order for

his employer to reduce or eliminate stress, he had to know specifics. The employee was able to explain the day-to-day issues that caused his stress to escalate so the employer could work with him to help reduce it. Effective accommodations included projects with detailed instructions, noise-canceling earbuds to help eliminate conversations/ distractions around him, and the ability to take short flexible breaks.

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

### **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](mailto: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.

**National Center for Biotechnology Information**

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



**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.

**Remedy's Health Communitites**

<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.

**Tourette Association of America**

42-40 Bell Boulevard  
Suite 205  
Bayside, NY 11361  
Direct: (718) 224-2999  
[support@tourette.org](mailto:support@tourette.org)  
<http://tourette.org/>

The Tourette Association is dedicated to making life better for all people affected by Tourette and Tic Disorders. Dedicated to raising awareness and fostering social acceptance, advance scientific understanding, treatment options and care; educate, advocate, and empower.

**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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