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**JAN**

**MONTHLY WEBCAST SERIES - ACCOMMODATING MOTOR IMPAIRMENTS IN OFFICE, INDUSTRIAL, AND HEALCARE SETTINGS**

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>> BETH LOY: Hello, everyone and welcome to the Job Accommodation Network's accommodation and compliance audio and Web Training Series. I'm Beth Loy and I will be the moderator for today's program called ask the JAN Motor Team featuring Lisa Mathess and Matthew McCord on the Motor Team but before we start the program I want to go over through just a few housekeeping items. First if any of you experience technical difficulties during the webcast please call us at 800 526-7234 for voice and hit button 5 or for TTY call 877-781-9403. Second we do plan to answer as many questions as we can during the presentation so please send in your questions at any time during the webcast to our email account, question@askJAN.org or you can use our question and answer pod located at the bottom of your screen. To use the pod just type your question and then submit it to the Question queue.

Also, on the bottom of your screen you'll notice a FileShare pod that you can use if you have difficulty viewing the slides or would like to download them. And finally I want to remind you at the end of the webcast an evaluation form will automatically pop up on your screen in another window. If you don't have your popups blocked. If you do, we'll be sure to send that to you at a later date.

We really appreciate your feedback so please stay logged onto fill out that evaluation form. Now let's start today's program. Matt?

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Hello my name is Matthew McCord. I'm one of the consultants on the Motor Team here at JAN. So let's begin by discussing some of the things that the Motor Team here at JAN does.

The Motor Team specializes in discussing accommodation options for impairments and conditions that impact movement. This can mean conditions that limit the movement that happens inside our bodies like heart disease or gastrointestinal disorders but more often we here on the Motor Team discuss impairments that impact our ability to move our bodies like arthritis, multiple sclerosis and others learning disability on this slide. We'll be focusing on accommodation options for the impairments that impact our ability to move our bodies in this webcast today as we receive more inquiries regarding them but it's important to keep in mind that if you have questions regarding conditions that limit some form of movement then it's likely a condition that we on the Motor Team specialize in.

Now, let's discuss common accommodation options for office settings.

One of the most common accommodation options would have to be adjustable workstations. And this is certainly true for office settings.

I'm sure that many of you that work in Human Resources have received a request for one of these, especially ones that allow alternating between sitting and standing. There are more than just the sit/stand types, though. And they can help with a variety of other limitations like for reaching for instance.

At the bottom of this slide, you will see a link to a JAN publication on addressing requests for sit/stand workstations. We wanted to include that in case you find yourself getting quite a few of those requests and have questions about how to handle them appropriately.

Now let's go over an example.

A secretary who uses a wheelchair due to having paraplegia is unable to access his workstation due to his wheelchair not allowing him to fit under it. He was provided with an adjustable workstation for office settings so that the desk could be adjusted to allow the individual to properly work at his desk.

Another option that may be helpful to consider in this case could be installing some adjustable height table legs. These can allow the desk to be raised up and can be effective if all that is needed is just an increase in height.

If there's any accommodation option that we discuss the most here on the Motor Team, it is probably safe to bet on it being ergonomic chairs. Whether the individual needs more back support, neck support, hip support or maybe just a foot rest, ergonomic chairs help out in many ways because of how popular these are we likewise get a hefty amount of questions regarding them so we wanted to link another one of our publications that provides guidance an handling these requests appropriately as well. You'll find that at the bottom of this slide.

Now to an example.

A courthouse clerk with arthritis in her back has been needing to leave work early due to swelling and pain. She was provided with an ergonomic and adjustable office chair to help provide her with additional back support.

Some other options that may help in this case would be having an ergonomic assessment done on the individual and their workstation. Or allowing periodic rest breaks to utilize some heat or cold therapy treatments on their back as needed.

Now, Lisa will go over some additional options for office settings with you.

>> LISA MATHESS: Okay so looking at speech recognition, this is probably the most discussed and explained piece of software or assistive technology that the Motor Team deals with. Is speech recognition. There are various manufacturers of speech recognition. So are separate products like the picture you see here Dragon by Nuance or there are built-in options that come on your Mac or Windows PC so for the most part whether it's off the shelf or built in speech recognition software operates the same way. So traditionally a computer uses access to the computer with a standard point and click mouse and a QWERTY keyboard named for the top left side of the rows so all of these options basically have the same functionality to enable persons to dictate into the microphone and the computer types out words and sentences this can enable someone with fine motor functioning or somebody with an upper extremity amputation or impairment to still type data into a computer.

So the Motor Team fields a lot of questions about different features and if this product will work with certain databases so we can give you very surface information on this product but for more information in compatibility issues we're always going to refer you to the manufacturer to help you with these nitty-gritty technology related issues.

And then Matt did a writeup on an article on the importance of training on speech recognition with some resources that can help a user. So you'll see that linked at the bottom of the slide.

So let's look at an example to illustrate using speech recognition in the workplace.

A mental health counselor with carpal tunnel syndrome was having difficulty in typing up all of his case notes. He was provided with speech recognition software to allow him to complete his case notes without needing to type on a keyboard.

So we see speech recognition can be used in various work settings. Here we have the example in an office environment. But there are definitely versions for medical, environment, along with legal work settings.

Okay. So moving on.

Looking at padded edging. So just like the name suggests, this is soft edging that you can put along the edges of file cabinets, desks and bookshelves. This can be beneficial to those with balance issues if you suffer from vertigo or dizzy spells and we see it a lot for those with epilepsy or other seizure impairments so if you have tremors or spasms this can help you also not injure yourself.

So basically it cushions the surrounding area for if or when a person is going to go down and may hit their head on the furniture.

So here is an example for padded edging. A research assistant with vertigo was concerned about falling and hurting herself by hitting their head on the edges of the tables in the work area. They were provided with padded edging on those tables to reduce the chance of injury. So also on this slide you'll see a link for an article Matt wrote on common accommodations for vertigo. Lots of good information in there with different products that could be utilized to maintain workplace safety.

Okay. So on this slide we're sort of talking about two products. Sit/stand desks, coupled with monitor risers. So first with sit/stand desks, those are the desks that permit someone to rotate between sitting and standing all day long while still having access to their keyboard and mouse.

Sit/stand desks can also be utilized for folks with in mobility devices so you can raise it a little so they can wheel under and sit comfortably all day and with monitor risers these can be used independently to rise the computer screen so someone who is standing can still see the monitor and be ergonomically correct. So looking at an example.

A 9-1-1 operator with fibromyalgia was having difficulty with chronic pain when he sat at his desk for extended periods of time. He noted that the pain is best managed by alternating between sitting and standing frequently. He was provided a sit/stand desk to enable him to alternate between sitting and standing as needed.

So this illustrates that some of these products and assistive technologies can enable a person to continue working. Which most employers would prefer. Yes, there may be other accommodation ideas that get the same effect such as moving around from sitting to standing by taking periodic breaks but that's taking away time from production.

But we want to be mindful of getting employees with disabilities what they need to be comfortable but also looking at productivity levels.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Now we're going to go over an example from our JAN study. Which involves real people that we speak to and who agree to voluntarily provide follow-up information on the case we discussed with them. So for these examples we will discuss the situation, then the accommodation that we suggest or what the employer let's us know they provided and then the cost and benefits of providing that accommodation.

The university worker had back surgery. Complications included loss of functionality in one hand and damage to his larynx resulting in difficulty speaking the employer called JAN looking for ideas to help the employee with workstation access and communication.

As for the accommodation, the employer bought a posture-enhancing keyboard holder, a voice amplifier, Dragon software and on ergonomic chair.

So the cost of this -- these accommodations was a one-time cost of $5,000. And they were helpful by allowing the employer to maintain compliance with the ADA as well as allowing the employee and the manager to be happy with what was provided.

In this case some other options that may have helped could have been a one handed keyboard. Potentially an alternative input device to replace the mouse. If you're not aware you can get input devices that replace a typical mouse that you control with your feet or your head movements or even your eye movements so those are some additional options that could have been discussed but ultimately weren't provided in this case.

For our next JAN study example a customer service representative for a financial institution was experiencing vision and back issues secondary to Parkinson's disease he called JAN looking for guidance on the accommodation request process of information and assistive technology.

The accommodation that was provided here was requested and received a larger monitor for the vision issues and an ergonomic chair for his back.

The cost of this accommodation was about $525 and the accommodations successfully alleviated the symptoms allowing them to continue to work. In this case, the individual may also -- may also have benefited from screen magnification software or screen reading software due to vision limitations but it's good that simply a larger monitor was all that was needed to help him.

>> LISA MATHESS: JAN offers information on ergonomics in the workplace including publications and resource guides on this slide we have a shot of the JAN a Resource Guide for accommodation in the workplace which could be used as a substitute for this training. Those including those mentioned in the presentation can be found in SOAR. We redid the JAN site earlier this year so we're always fine tuning and adding product learning disabilities to the SOAR page so please check back for newly added items.

All right so switching gears from the office setting to the industrial setting the first product we have is called a stand/lean stool. Stand/lean stools are available to assist individuals who must stand or sit for long periods of time stand/lean stools allow individuals to adjust his or her positioning, release strain by leaning and relieve sitting pressure by leaning. These are useful for brief mini breaks and allow easy to return to an upright position. Stand/lean stools give individuals the ability to work in an upright position with most of their weight resting on the padded seat. A stand/lean stool helps support the body in a standing position and stabilizes the body in an upright position reducing back strain and minimizing leg fatigue.

Some stools swivel and tilt some have back rests and some are made for industrial versus the office environment.

So here we have an employee couldn't stand due to burs its in their hips but the -- bursitis in their hips but the job required them to perform restocking tasks while standing the employer provided them with a stand/lean stool to enable them to reach and accessibility as standing but they weren't bearing their own weight so we like stand/lean stools because they doesn't come off that someone is sitting and slacking off not working. We see cashiers use them a lot behind the counter and unless you're really looking for it you probably can't even tell they are using one so again employers like the idea of stand/lean stools because the employees are still able to do all of the work tasks while alleviating their medical issues.

So we talked about adjustable workstations earlier in the office section. And what you see pictured on this slide basically is the same principle but they are designed for use in the industrial environment. Adjustable between sitting and standing and also the ability to roll under with the mobility aid. So warehouses, factory settings, working around heavy equipment and machines is what we're talking about now. So oftentimes these units have more shelving for tools and places for assembly. It also -- the material is also wipable and more durable than the ones in the office setting.

Looking at an example, we have a carpenter with a neck injury was having difficulties with the amount of reaching needed to gather his tools from the walls and return them each day. He was provided with an adjustable workstation for the industrial settings to make his tools more accessible and to allow him to keep them all in one place so here we see the accommodation it limits the time the employee had to walk across the shop floor to get the tools he needed and limited reach in extension so he wasn't exacerbating his neck impairment.

Similar to the padded edging we saw in the office section here we have machine guards and shields. Which describes a variety of safety products used near industrial or manufacturing equipment. Machine guarding may include safety shields, perimeter guards, quick disconnects, sensor starts or safety signs.

So basically they are all designed to create barriers between traffic areas and the machinery. This can limit people from getting toes or fingers in harms way, limit hard edges in case someone would fall and hit their head and these items are good for the seizure activity, the balance issues, walking limitations and dizzy spells.

Now we have a heavy equipment operator with epilepsy was concerned about her safety should she have a seizure while working. She was provided with a machine shield to provide a barrier between her and the machinery she operated.

Here we see the employer is being proactive and taking safety precautions before an accident occurs. Before the employee had the seizure we went ahead and installed the machine shield we always want to be mindful of safety risks but also not creating assumptions that everybody with a disability is a safety hazard.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Mechanic's seats and creepers are very useful products that people seem to only really consider if the person is working on a car. But they are very useful in many situations that includes sustained postures and getting into awkward places.

A general rule of thumb is that if the individual needs to hold a position for an extended period of time, a mechanics seat or creeper may be able to help them do that.

So a mechanic with a back injury was experiencing severe pain when working due to needing to lean over the engine block for extended periods of time. He was provided with a mechanic's creeper to provide support when needing to hold this posture.

Other than this option, periodic rest breaks may also be helpful to allow the individual to stretch out their back. But the creeper should enable the individual to work for more extended periods without as much pain.

Ladders are one of those devices that we sort of take for granted but they can pose a real problem for people with motor limitations. This is why we'll often suggest rolling safety ladders as a replacement to a traditional ladder they replays the ladder with something more akin to a mobile set of stairs that are not only easier to climb up and down but can also be safer due to handrails that typically come standard with them.

So for this example, an electrician with shoulder injuries couldn't climb a ladder. He had to reach overhead to work on light fixtures. He was provided a rolling safety ladder to enable him to reach the light without exacerbating his shoulders.

For this situation, some other options could be the use of an aerial lift or a work platform to raise the individual up to the appropriate height instead of the rolling safety ladder.

>> LISA MATHESS: Okay. Now that we've gone over some product overviews for industrial settings, let's look at a JAN example. Which Matt explained was from the real JAN data from cases that we have truly helped with. Here we have a mechanic in a plastics manufacturing plant who had bending and climbing restrictions due to a knee impairment his job required that he climb machines 6 to 8 feet high in this case a JAN consultant suggested a portable aerial lifting device.

So for this one, unfortunately we didn't get the cost associated with buying that aerial lifting device. But the employer did report the benefit as the accommodations enabled the employee to continue working while maintaining workplace safety, which is ultimately the goal.

All right. So now let's look at some assistive technologies that can help motor impairments in the healthcare setting. Wheelchair pushers assist in pushing, stopping and steering wheelchairs and their riders. These are for a nurse or medical worker who can't push the weight of a patient that's in a manual chair so these wheelchair pushers hitch to the wheelchair's frame and let the employee push with minimal exertion or force and it can enable a user to push a patient up an incline and make tighter turns.

Now we have a certified nursing assistant with an arm amputation who is having difficulty escorting patients in wheelchairs around the hospital due to pushing restrictions. The employer permitted the employee to use a wheelchair pusher to minimize that amount of pushing needed to escort these patients.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: As we discussed before with the mechanic creepers, sustained postures can be a very painful part of working in any industry and that's true for the healthcare industry, as well. Adjustable exam tables can make that fact easier by allowing the clinician to raise or lower the individual into a position and angle that's more comfortable for them to work with. They also help patients with very limited strength to be able to hold an upright position.

So a dental hygienist with osteoporosis was finding it difficult to examine and clean client's teeth due to the amount of bending required. He was provided with an adjustable exam table so he could adjust the client's position to reduce the amount of bending needed to do his job.

As an alternative, lift tables could be appropriate in some situations. But more lift tables -- but more often lift tables have less functions than your typical adjustable exam tables so they may not be useful in every situation. But it is an option.

Wheelchair tire covers are not a typical item one thinks of when you think of accommodations for a healthcare setting. But individuals who use wheelchairs to help them get around certainly can and do work in the healthcare field and in the healthcare field cleanliness is the top priority. Wheelchair tire covers can maintain that cleanliness by covering the dirtiest part of the wheelchair.

So for this example, a surgical technician with quadriplegia was concerned about the use of her wheelchair in the operating room due to the tires potentially compromising the sterile environment that was needed she was provided with the wheelchair tire cover to use in the sterile environment to reduce the chance of contamination. In this situation, another option can be the use of two separate wheelchairs, one for use outside of the operating chair and another for use inside the operating room that's been sterilized prior to the surgery. However, this option -- surgery. However this option would require most likely for a person with quadriplegia assistance transferring to the new chair so that might not be particularly helpful and a wheelchair tire cover might be simpler.

IVs are a pretty common part of the healthcare industry and all of those IV bags will need a stand for them to hang on however those IV stands can lead to problems for people with restrictions in reaching or lifting items. Power IV stands can be raised and lowered more easily than a non-powered IV stand and thus makes things easier for a person with these types of restrictions.

As an example, a Licensed Practical Nurse with a shoulder injury was having trouble lifting IV bags above chest level. He was provided with a power lift IV stand to allow him to more easily place the IV bags at their required heights.

In this situation, another option could be the usage of a stepstool to raise the individual up and thus not need to adjust the IV stand at all.

Likely one of the accommodation options we discuss the most for healthcare settings, patient lifts help with what it says on the -- which is important because lifting patients is a very daunting task even people without limitations let alone people who do but lifting patients in general they are also useful in helping patients transfer themselves from a wheelchair onto a bed for example.

So for an example, a certified nursing assistant with a back injury was having difficulty lifting patients when needing to change the linens on their bed. She was permitted the use of a patient lift to enable her to change the linens without needing to lift the patient herself.

And if a patient is able to roll over on their own, it may be possible that the linens can be changed by stuffing the linens under the patient and letting them roll over as needed. So not every situation would require an expensive accommodation option. But most of the time simple things like that have already been considered.

>> LISA MATHESS: On this slide we have two links for a two-part blog we did, healthcare workers with motor impairments. A JAN consultant collaborated with a founder of the nonprofit resource network exceptional nurse her name was Dr. Donna Carol Maheti. They discussed some of the more complex accommodation questions that the JAN team consultants were getting at the time so that's a two-part series with question-answer format so I definitely encourage all attendees to read that on the blog here we have another example a pharmacist was having difficulties standing for eight hours a day on a tile floor. We see that often, standing limitations.

And the solution was the work area was carpeted using extra padding, which assisted in reducing fatigue, she also got a sit/stand stool to assist them when they had to stand. And then the employee was also permitted to take frequent rest breaks throughout the day so another pharmacist was available to cover her breaks.

And the cost of this was approximately $2500. And the benefit the pharmacist could continue working without exacerbating their medical condition.

Looking at another example, we have a nursing student with essential tremors who wore a wrist brace to help steady her hand. She entered her clinicals and then the faculty became concerned about the brace and the transmission of bacteria and infections from the brace to her glove and to the patients. So the student covered the brace with a hospital gown but they didn't think that was adequate protection so the school ended up calling JAN looking for some alternatives.

So after some brainstorming and consultation they discussed the use of a disposable sleeve protector and provided information on a variety of options ranging from basic plastic covers to sterile surgical sleeve protectors. Noted that the hospital probably already have some of these products in stock that could be tried without expending a bunch of money. And JAN also referred to exceptionalnurse.com for the student but looking at the cost benefit nothing was reported at the time for the cost but benefit reported was the caller felt better prepared for her upcoming meetings regarding the student.

And then lastly, we're going to open up the floor to some questions. And you can always look up the Web site at askJAN.org.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. So let's go to the questions that we have here.

All right. First question. Would the wheelchair pusher work with very heavy patients in the wheelchair? Do we know what the weight limits are on that?

>> LISA MATHESS: I don't know specifics. I know there are some large rated ones that are designed for heavier patients. It's going to be one of those things. One, I could do research and get more specific information about reaching out to the manufacturer is probably going to be the best bet.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. Then does the stand/lean stool have weight limits.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah most of them do. Some can tolerate more than others. And again, it's just going to be one of those things where you kind of just have to do research and I'm more than willing to do that if you want to send me an email to JAN at askJAN.org.

>> BETH LOY: It's not an uncommon question for us to get questions about weight ratings.

>> LISA MATHESS: Right, exactly.

>> BETH LOY: With a ladder or safety harness.

>> LISA MATHESS: Oh, so many products. But I think manufacturers are kind of evolving and realizing the need for larger rated.

>> BETH LOY: Chairs.

>> LISA MATHESS: Things are available. Products are out there for sure.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: And it's popular enough that we do have some vendor listings specifically for large rated chairs and other common things that we get a lot of questions about.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: Here is a question, is there a dollar figure cap associated with reasonable accommodations.

>> LISA MATHESS: The million dollar question. That's such -- such a case-by-case determination it's not a hard fast number it's what poses a hardship to that company, that employer, the financial resources of the employer so there's not one associated with one specific reasonable accommodation.

>> BETH LOY: Do we know if there are pushers for stretchers? I don't know --

>> MATTHEW McCORD: I don't know specifically for stretchers but I do believe it would be possible to finagle a wheelchair pusher to work with a stretcher.

>> LISA MATHESS: I agree.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: They might -- you might need to, you know, install some things on the stretcher to make it hook up since the wheelchair pusher is usually much lower.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: But it wouldn't be out of the realm of possibilities.

>> LISA MATHESS: I want to say there might be some product -- don't we have a propelled gurney couldn't that be the same principle?

>> MATTHEW McCORD: I think so, yes.

>> BETH LOY: A powered gurney.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: Yeah that would make sense.

Okay. Do we know how Dragon software works with a voice amplifier? I would say if the voice is clearer, it would do well.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Well I think most of the time with a voice amplifier it's because the person has a very soft voice or they can't really produce the volume that would be needed. So the voice amplifier would make the voice louder so that way the Dragon software would be better able to hear it and then dictate it. Obviously not every situation. But that's the one that I get the most questions about whenever the two are combined.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah and I think as long as -- you have to train Dragon to learn your voice so I think as long as you're consistent with the amplifier and it learns it you would be good to go.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: What are the pros and cons of Dragon versus iListen?

>> LISA MATHESS: I know Dragon has a very good customer service line. Nuance is very good about working with employers to bridge any compatibility issues with an employer's database and the Dragon software so I think that's a good pro, selling point. I don't have much experience with iListen.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: I don't, either. I would say that just simply because of the fact that Dragon NaturallySpeaking is the most popular one on the market, it's likely going to have less compatibility issues. But of course every program is going to have its own complications.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. Let's see here. Any suggestions on how to accommodate a caregiver who is not able to work in a location where they may be the only person at the front desk and that causes stress for the employee? Well, this would go to our cognitive and psychiatric team so I would say let's give us a call.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: And we'll have that routed to the cognitive and psychiatric team.

Okay. Are fatigue mats and standing chairs recommended to be automatically included when a sit/stand workstation is purchased for an employee.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: I would say that it never could hard to include those things with it. I would say that it would be helpful to know the specific situation that's warranting the request for the sit/stand desk. Because obviously, you know, the needs of someone with say a knee impairment or back impairment, yeah, I could see that. But if it's more -- it really depends on the situation. But in general I would say it couldn't hurt to look at them as a unit.

>> LISA MATHESS: I agree and you just want to be mindful of ergonomic principles where if you have one of those stand/lean chairs someone is not hunched over. Whenever you use the stand/lean stool you also need to elevate everything else. So just educating people on what's ergonomically sound and not going to exacerbate any underlying issues or make impairments worse.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: When someone does need an accommodation for work but is ensure what type of accommodation is -- unsure what the accommodation is necessary who should the individual look to should the individual look to doctors should the individual contact JAN? Where can an individual go to easily see what type of accommodations are available to them.

>> LISA MATHESS: AskJAN.org. We have a whole site dedicated that an individual can go on, browse by disability, browse by limitation, work-related function, to really kind of steer them of showcasing what's available, what's out there. And seeing if that could be applicable to their specific work environment and conducive to what they have going on. So we definitely encourage all individuals to give us a call. Yeah, healthcare providers and medical providers they can also weigh in and kind of go from the medical standpoint of what an individual may or may not need.

So yeah all of the above I would say.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: I would say that for the doctors, you know the way I always put it is if they are willing to provide suggestions, great. But sometimes the doctor, they might not know what would be helpful in a given situation. So it's always good to explore all of the options that you have. So if your doctor knows what you need and you agree with that, great. But if you're not sure you can always reach out to us.

>> BETH LOY: Next question, what are some accommodations recommended for people with gait or imbalance related issues and disabilities?

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Well typically I would say that most people with those types of issues are probably going to want to use some kind of mobility device like a cane or a walker or things like that. Because that gait problem is likely going to lead to some increased chance of falls. So they probably already have a mobility device like that that they would use but they might not use it all the time so allowing the use of something like that can be very helpful as an accommodation as a starting point.

But at the same time, we also need to look into the work environment. Is this person in an office? Is this person in an industrial area? Because as we have seen maybe some padded edgings might be helpful for an office but in industrial settings we might need to look at machine guards and shields in other places, too.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. Good info.

So regarding the mechanics seats and creepers, is there a product that could help a worker get down to a low shelf and get back up again? The worker has a restriction from bending and crouching.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: I usually suggest in this case a low task chair.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: If the individual doesn't have any real issues with the typical sitting posture like the actual process of getting up and down from a seated position, then a low task chair can allow them to get down to a low shelf without having to crouch or bend over.

>> BETH LOY: In your experience, are there any successful accommodations for individuals with gout? I would say yes to that.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah. Usually gout is a pain related one. So if you look at our accommodations on our A to Z for pain, you're probably going to -- you're probably going to find a lot of things there as well as for standing and walking limitations because usually gout affects the feet so any of those accommodations could be helpful for gout. Naturally, also, periodic rest breaks can also be helpful, too.

>> LISA MATHESS: If you're in an office setting I would say look at the office chairs with foot rests to just alleviate pain.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Elevating the feet is usually helpful for gout too.

>> BETH LOY: Next question what recommendations can you provide for reassignment for the lowest grade housekeeping? The employee has some misguided information that reasonable accommodation can assist with promotion regarding housekeeping.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Hmmm . . . well, I mean, accommodations can be provided to help someone be qualified for a promotion that they would otherwise be able to do. But as a reassignment, those are typically going to be transfers to an equivalent position or potentially a lower position. But you wouldn't need to consider promotion as a reassignment. That usually doesn't go.

>> LISA MATHESS: Promotions are usually competitive where reassignment is a non-competitive slide but yeah of course a person is entitled to accommodations to enable them to perform those tasks in the promotion. But the reassignment is not just going to place them in the promotion.

>> BETH LOY: Next question is there a better software than Dragon for computers in a public setting? I would say it's not really about the software in a public setting is it.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah the public setting like I'm thinking of -- this might not be what they are referring to but I'm thinking of someone using a computer at a library. That particular situation may not be the best one for speech recognition because like we said speech recognition you need to train it how you speak.

So if it's constantly getting different users, it may not work as well. So it might be better to review other options to enable that public computer to be more accessible.

>> BETH LOY: I'll say if a person who is working in a public setting and has his or her own computer, in that case a steno mask would work.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah because if the issue is all of the background noise, yeah a stenography mask would be helpful to block that out.

>> LISA MATHESS: We see that a lot with confidentiality issues. If we're having medical secretaries and there's still the waiting room if you're speaking into a steno mask now all of the other patients aren't hearing your confidential medical records that you're dictating.

>> BETH LOY: We have a couple of questions about cochlear implants. I'm going to punt those to the Sensory Team.

>> LISA MATHESS: I like it.

>> BETH LOY: It's not really a -- this is a motor impairment presentation.

We also have a couple of questions about emotional support dogs and I'm going to punt those to our ADA sessions or psychiatric and cognitive presentations.

Let's see.

Overhead light sensitivity. We do get those on the Motor Team.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah sometimes like for people that have problems with migraines I see that a lot.

>> BETH LOY: What type of accommodations do we have?

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Well if the issue was sensitivity to like you know the very bright overhead lights, obviously allowing the person to work in an area where they can have more lamp oriented lighting, more natural lighting for windows can be helpful.

In a setting where the person is working in a cubical, that can be hard. But I have seen it done by kind of making a pseudo office space by using cubical walls and shields and stuff.

But it's more difficult in that environment for sure.

>> LISA MATHESS: There's also filters you could attach to light fixtures that it limits some of the exposure in different rays, which exacerbates the migraines and light sensitivity.

>> BETH LOY: Under the disability -- A to Z -- we have limitation by visibility all of those should be linked on there we're back to reassignment housekeeping is the lowest position and if there isn't any other vacant position available, what's the next step.

>> LISA MATHESS: If there's not a current vacancy or soon to be vacancy that the person can do, sometimes you could explore leave in hopes that they medically get better and can eventually return to performing the essential functions of that housekeeping job with or without accommodations.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah, one thing that I would say is that typically we would suggest reassignment as something of a last resort option. So you know if we're talking about reassignment, we're going to assume you have already reviewed options to allow the person to more easily be able to do their current position. But if that hasn't been done, we would definitely suggest double backing and reviewing that.

>> BETH LOY: So the gist of it is I usually explain it as a three step process. You look at the existing position. If there isn't anything there, you look for an alternate position. First something that is equivalent as you could possibly get. Then you can go to a lower position, if there isn't anything that's lower, then we move to what Lisa said as in you know is there going to be a position that's going to come open? So it might be leave time until that position does come open.

But if there isn't anything, then you're in a situation where the individual may no longer be qualified for a position with that organization.

So be sure to document your steps when you're going through that Interactive Process.

Okay.

Someone reminded us of the cube shield.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Cube shields can be very helpful especially with the light issue.

>> LISA MATHESS: And that doesn't interfere with your cube neighbor that wants the overhead lights and wants it super bright.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: That's why filters can sometimes be a problem because it's helpful for one person but it's making an issue for another.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. This employer has an employee who has dropped -- who is dropped off at work and then borrows one of the hospital's wheelchairs and asks the co-worker to come get her and wheel her to the department. Is this something the employer needs to allow?

>> LISA MATHESS: Ultimately an employer can control how workers spend their time at work. My first suggestions going to be that an employer wants to sort out liability issues and that's something JAN doesn't touch on. That's legal advice. Then if you realize you're liable you could probably prohibit that because you can control how a co-worker is spending their time. If you want to show good faith effort and do what you can do help the person with the disability and realize you're not liable and the co-worker is comfortable helping and I would have a private talk with the co-worker that's being asked to do this because sometimes co-workers are asked, you know, to help and they don't want to upset anybody or ruffle feathers it comes down to something they don't feel comfortable with as the employer I would talk to the co-worker helping out ensuring they are comfortable and feel confident in what they are being asked to do by the individual with a disability.

So that's again another case-by-case basis. You want to sort out liability. You want to make sure that everyone is trained and feel comfortable and isn't going to hurt themselves. And --

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Potentially reviewing accommodations that might circumvent the process entirely. I mean if she's already using a wheelchair that the employer owns, if the employer is willing to maybe purchase a power chair for her to use, that would completely sort out the liability issue because she could just use the power chair.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah and it takes the co-worker out of it. But if everyone is happy and it works, then, yeah, of course that's fine.

Again it's such a case-by-case basis.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. Next question. Can an employer ask for updated medical information on the disability after a period of time? Example three years even though she has a permanent disability? The employee is currently asking for leave, which it appears is a different accommodation than previous.

>> LISA MATHESS: Okay. So if it's a different accommodation, you're entitled to information that substantiates the need of that new accommodation. If -- you mentioned it's a permanent disability if we have documentation that it is chronic and it is permanent we don't want to be asking for annual documentation of hey do we still have this disability it's been confirmed that they do.

You're always entitled to kind of revisit the accommodation piece but not necessarily the medical piece. Usually with medical documentation, it's two parts. We do have an article on the JAN Web site if you go by topic go to medical exams and inquiry I send this out all the time it's titled medical documentation for long-term accommodations I believe.

And it kind of goes into the dos and don'ts of that process.

>> BETH LOY: What accommodations do you recommend for bad circulation in the legs due to long periods of sitting?

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Foot pedal desk that's the first thing I think of if the issue is they have to sit at that designates and can't get up and move around a foot pedal desk might be the best option.

>> LISA MATHESS: That keeps them working and still alleviates their condition so that sounds good.

>> BETH LOY: We often get requests for an ergonomic chair we already provide the Herman Miller Myra and the body built ergo chair both of which are compel end chairs. What would you recommend we do when someone asks for I guess a different type of chair? Currently we send the product specifications to the doctor and ask them if the chair already provided is sufficient. If not, what else does the chair need to do? I think that's a good way to approach it.

>> LISA MATHESS: I agree.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah, I think that's right on point. You know, the thing that they would need to focus on is if this chair that you would normally provide is not going to work, can you tell us why it's not going to work so we can view options with those specific needs in mind.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: Next question, can we discuss proper documentation we are allowed to request to support an employee's request sit/stand desks are very popular now we have a lot of employees asking for them because their backs hurt but not because of an actual disability or validating need. Can we talk about how we properly distinguish between someone wanting a trendy desk and someone who actually needs one?

>> LISA MATHESS: Yes, if you don't typically give out sit/stand workstations and it is an accommodation request, then you can ask for supporting medical documentation. To identify if a person does meet the definition of an ADA disability and truly needs that accommodation in the workplace.

If it's one of those things that you're not requesting documentation and giving everybody those, then you don't want to single out a person with a disability and make them jump through additional hoops if they would happen to request one.

So if you're going to have a process of asking everyone for documentation then just uniformly apply that process. We have an article that I think Matt mentioned on request for sit/stand desks it kind of goes through the process of when you can request and when you shouldn't.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. We have someone asking about allergies to cleaning agents. That's got to go to the Sensory Team. Not the Motor Team. I'm afraid.

Let's see. Here we have one related to interpreters. That also goes to the Sensory Team, not the Motor Team.

We have a question about recreational marijuana use. And this person says currently medical use is covered as an ADA accommodation. I'm going to tell you that's incorrect.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Maybe as a state-level thing but remember the ADA is a Federal law. And under Federal law, marijuana is still a controlled substance and just like for other controlled substances, yeah, it's not -- it's complicated, guys.

(Chuckles).

>> BETH LOY: It's basically illegal because Federal law trumps state law but this is an extraordinarily complex question related to medical use and recreational use and the ADA versus your state law. And it's not something that we're well versed in because every state is very different.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: So we can give you the general speel on that but I would also suggest you call into the office to get that just to kind of get you started and get you headed in the right direction to find out what you need.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah and to kind of give you an idea of what we would likely talk about, at the end of the day we're probably going to give you a referral to your state-level ADA enforcement agency. Because they would be the ones that are best intuned with your state-level laws that might make things complicated for an ADA case.

>> BETH LOY: So as being one of the former members of the Motor Team, I know that our most common questions relate to back conditions and repetitive strain or cumulative trauma disorders. And a lot of times there's a -- disorders. And a lot of times there's a co-morbidity factor with that. Some have to do with people who have been very active or have very physical jobs and then once that person becomes injured there's depression that goes along with that. So I wanted to get advice from the both of you as to how you handle that when you get calls and questions where those two things cross over.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah I think they definitely cross over.

So while looking at accommodations motor related accommodations, also just running parallel accommodations for depression, looking at time off for Employee Assistance Program, for counseling, for utilizing apps for mediation and inspiring things.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: I've also suggested some schedule modifications. Especially if the person is very active with their therapist, sometimes people find it helpful to be able to take like maybe 20-minute break in order to call their therapist to calm down. Because you know, whenever there's something that's causing depression, it also can be co-morbid with anxiety, too. Being able to work through that anxiety in the moment can be a really big skill that people need to work on. And sometimes they need to call their -- they need to call for support for that.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. So what are some of the most common questions that you get? Let's take back injuries for example. Back when I was on the Motor Team a lot of times it had to do with the healthcare profession and it had to do with office settings. And when it was manufacturing settings, you know, it would be something where they needed like a lifting device.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah, I would say that a lot of the times it comes down to lifting devices, especially nowadays I feel like we get more of that in the office environment. It's not so much a question that we get from industrial as much anymore. But I suggest a lot of like stair climbing trucks ar compact material handling devices and other lifting concerns for those, they have become a lot more popular I think.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. It looks like we have a couple more questions here. One is related to accommodations for interpreters who have repetitive stress repetitive motion injuries.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Like sign language interpreter that has repetitive stranger themselves?

>> LISA MATHESS:

>> MATTHEW McCORD: That's a unique situation.

>> BETH LOY: It's going to be tough because the essential functions of that job require that the individual use fine motor.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah, I will say that in situations like this, I will say that I've never gotten this particular call before. But how I would potentially go about it is periodic rest breaks because you know even someone who does this job without a repetitive stranger you're going to want them to be able to take rest breaks because it's just going to be too much even with someone -- for someone without. Another thing could be if the repetitive strain pain is reduced by heat therapy, maybe wearing some heated gloves might help while they are doing it to kind of reduce that pain and let them do it longer.

But I think the periodic rest breaks thing is what I would key in on because it's probably what they are going to do more of.

>> BETH LOY: And anything related to wearing something. For example like those gloves or something have to come from a physician anyway.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. What do you suggest for controlling hand tremors to make computer use more successful?

>> LISA MATHESS: We have a vendor list with dedicated products that limit tremors.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Yeah tremor limiting mice and stuff like that.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah, that's what they are called.

(Chuckles).

>> MATTHEW McCORD: That one is really useful. Sometimes I will find that people are looking for more of like a glove option. You know so that way if they are using a mouse or using a pen or whatever they are using, the glove option seems to be getting more common nowadays but if it's j you say a mouse we do have a vendor list for tremor limiting mice.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah so just Beth went on the Web site to make sure we knew what we were talking about she typed in tremor limiting alternative mice hyphen limiting tremors came up and also tremor limiting gloves came up so go to askJAN.org and plug those search terms in and it will come up.

>> BETH LOY: And you can go into A to Z by limitation.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yes.

>> BETH LOY: For tremors and you'll see the same listing, as well.

Okay. If there's an employee who reports to work with visible back pain and can barely move around, are we obligated to accommodate if all of our positions require repetitive movement, lifting and standing?

>> MATTHEW McCORD: You would definitely be required to review it. You know, whether or not it's something where there actually is an accommodation that would help is a totally different story. But we don't want to make an assumption and not review accommodations just because it's -- you know you feel like there isn't anything there. Because there very well could be something there. And we don't want to make an assumption and not give something that we could have given.

>> BETH LOY: Okay. If someone has already given -- if someone has already gotten an accommodation from an employer but is no longer -- but it's no longer effective for them and another accommodation from the employer is needed, how much cost would be considered an undue hardship to the employer.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: That's a very specific case-by-case determination one way I would suggest going about this it has to take into account whenever we're solely looking at money we have to look at how much money the employer has larger employers have more resources. They can withstand a higher cost. One of the examples we gave in the presentation, that one-time cost of $5,000. A large employer might very well be able to handle that without any real undue hardship but a small employer of like 30 people that might be too much for them. And it really depends upon the resources they have at the time to cover the cost.

>> BETH LOY: It's really difficult to show undue hardship.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: In general, yes.

>> BETH LOY: In general. If you're the Government, you can forget it. Even though nobody from the Federal Government --

(Audio lost).

(Standing by).

>> BETH LOY: Contact us. And hopefully everybody knows how to do that. But you can find us at askJAN.org. And we do thank you for attending. And thank you, also, to Alternative Communication Services for providing the net captioning. We do hope the program was useful as mentioned earlier an evaluation form will automatically pop up on your screen in another window as soon as we're finished. We do appreciate your feedback. We read it and we take it to heart trying to make improvements so we hope you take a minute to complete the form and this concludes today's webcast.

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