

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Alzheimer's Disease

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AskJAN.org



ODEP

Office of Disability
Employment Policy

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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.

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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 Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder named for the German physician Alois Alzheimer who first described it in 1906. Alzheimer's disease damages and eventually destroys brain cells, leading to loss of memory, thinking, and other brain functions. Alzheimer's is not a part of normal aging, but results from a complex pattern of abnormal changes. It usually develops slowly and gradually gets worse as more brain cells wither and die. Alzheimer's is fatal, and currently there is no cure. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of *dementia*, a general term used to describe various diseases and conditions that damage brain cells. Symptoms of Alzheimer's disease progress from mild forgetfulness to widespread brain impairment. Chemical and structural changes in the brain slowly destroy the ability to create, remember, learn, reason, and relate to others.

Early-stage Alzheimer's is when the problems with memory, thinking, and concentration may begin to appear in a doctor's interview or medical tests. Individuals in the early-stage typically need minimal assistance with simple daily routines. However, at the time of diagnosis, an individual is not necessarily in the early-stage of the disease. The term early-onset or younger-onset refers to Alzheimer's that occurs in persons under the age of 65. Younger-onset individuals may be employed or have children still living at home. Early-onset Alzheimer's has been known to develop between ages 30 and 40, but it is more common for someone in his or her 50s to have the disease.

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.

Alzheimer's Disease 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 Alzheimer's Disease

People with Alzheimer's disease may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with Alzheimer's disease 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

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
- Checklists
- Color Coded System
- Electronic Organizers
- Marginal Functions
- PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
- Reminders
- Task Separation
- 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
- Task Identification
- Task Separation
- Timers and Watches
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- Written Instructions

Work-Related Functions

Stress

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

Use Cognitive Function

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Color Coded System
- Counting/Measuring Aids
- Electronic Dictionaries
- Electronic Organizers
- Extra Time
- Job Coaches
- Line Guides
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- On-site Mentoring
- Reassignment
- Reminders

- Service Animal
- Support Person
- Training Modifications
- Uninterrupted Work Time

Situations and Solutions:

A finance manager with Alzheimer's disease had difficulty learning new tasks and staying organizing.

Her physician recommended disability retirement. Her employer took an integrated employment approach and carved out a position for her that had fewer responsibilities, but still allowed her to share her expertise with other employees.

Due to Alzheimer's disease, a project manager for an engineering firm was increasingly unable to keep track of and manage all of the individual components that were involved in the project.

After careful consideration, he spoke to his employer about the difficulties he was having and asked to be placed back into a team position where he would only be involved with one aspect of the project instead of coordinating the entire project. His employer agreed and as it was near to the end of the current project, felt that they could very easily do some restructuring and find a position for him on one of the teams.

A music teacher at a small high school was diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's.

Through meeting with school administration and with help from her doctor, the teacher was able to remain in her position with increased support in the form of accommodations. With the help of a colleague, she was able to better organize her desk and files so that retrieval of information was much easier. Color-coding was used to help her better locate that information. She was also provided with a voice-activated recorder to help her remember verbal instructions and notes from meetings. At the current time, the accommodations were helping her keep her performance at a very high level.

A caller in his late forties contacted JAN to ask about job accommodations related to a recent diagnosis of early-onset Alzheimer's.

The major difficulty he had been having was a compromised ability to find his way around the city. He drove a truck making deliveries and thought a GPS (global positioning system) would help him with the different directions and enable him to navigate the drive to specific locations. With information from his medical provider to substantiate the need for the accommodation, the caller submitted his request.

A human resources manager at a large university had recently been diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease.

The diagnosis came as no surprise to the employee, as he had been struggling for some time with working the long hours involved in managing the tasks. He found that he needed progressively more time to complete tasks and that the same tasks were becoming increasingly more complex. His inability to perform the essential functions of the position prompted him to ask for an accommodation. He requested leave under the ADA so that he could contact his EAP and determine what benefits were available to him.

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
<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.

Alzheimer's Association

225 N. Michigan Avenue
Floor 17
Chicago, IL 60601-7633
Toll Free: (800) 272-3900
info@alz.org
<http://www.alz.org>

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading, global voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care and support, and the largest private, nonprofit funder of Alzheimer's research.

Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center (ADEAR)

PO Box 8250

Silver Spring, MD 20907-8250

Toll Free: (800) 438-4380

Fax: (301) 495-3334

adear@nia.nih.gov

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers>

The National Institute on Aging's ADEAR Center offers information and publications for families, caregivers, and professionals on diagnosis, treatment, patient care, caregiver needs, long-term care, education and training, and research related to Alzheimer's disease. Staff members answer telephone, email, and written requests and make referrals to local and national resources. The ADEAR Website provides free, online publications in English and Spanish; email alerts; an Alzheimer's disease clinical trials database; the Alzheimer's Disease Library database; and more.

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

322 Eighth Avenue

7th Floor

New York, NY 10001

Toll Free: (866) 232-8484

Direct: (646) 638-1542

Fax: (646) 638-1546

<http://www.alzfdn.org>

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America's mission is to provide optimal care and services to individuals confronting dementia, and to their caregivers and families through member organizations dedicated to improving quality of life.

alzheimers.gov

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
Toll Free: (877) 696-6775
<http://www.alzheimers.gov/>

Alzheimers.gov is the government's free information resource about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Here you can find links to authoritative, up-to-date information from agencies and organizations with expertise in these areas.

American Physical Therapy Association

<http://www.moveforwardpt.com/Default.aspx>

MoveForwardPT.com is the official consumer information website of the American Physical Therapy Association.

American Psychiatric Association

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

The American Psychiatric Association is an organization of psychiatrists working together to ensure humane care and effective treatment for all persons with mental illness, including substance use disorders. It is the voice and conscience of modern psychiatry. Its vision is a society that has available, accessible quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment.

American Psychological Association

750 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
Toll Free: (800) 374-2721
Direct: (202) 336-5500
<http://www.apa.org/>

Our mission is to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.

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.

Charlie Foundation for Ketogenic Therapies

515 Ocean Ave.

#602N

Santa Monica, CA 90402

Direct: (310) 393-2347

<http://www.charlifoundation.org/>

The Charlie Foundation for Ketogenic Therapies was founded in 1994 to provide information about diet therapies for people with epilepsy, other neurological disorders and tumorous cancers.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Assistive Technology Project

PO Box 502565 CK

Systems of Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with

Saipan 96950-2565

Direct: (670) 664-7000

Fax: (670) 664-7030

straids@cnmddcouncil.org

<http://www.cnmicdd.org/assistivetech.html>

To enhance the quality of life and opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth, enabling them to become independent, productive, integrated, and fully included in the community through systems change activities which increase access and utilization of Assistive Technology devices and services.

DNA Learning Center: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

Direct: (516) 367-5170

Fax: (516) 367-5182

<http://www.ygyh.org/index.htm>

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) is a private, not-for-profit research and education institution at the forefront of molecular biology and genetics.

DNA Learning Centers educate the public about genetics through the nation's first science centers dedicated to this purpose.

Family Caregiver Alliance

235 Montgomery Street
Suite 950
San Francisco, CA 94104
Toll Free: (800) 445-8106
Direct: (415) 434-3388
<https://www.caregiver.org/>

Family Caregiver Alliance is the first community-based nonprofit organization in the country to address the needs of families and friends providing long-term care for loved ones at home.

FCA, as a public voice for caregivers, shines light on the challenges caregivers face daily and champions their cause through education, services, and advocacy.

The services, education programs, and resources FCA provides are designed with caregivers' needs in mind and offer support, tailored information, and tools to manage the complex demands of caregiving.

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.

Mayo Clinic

13400 E. Shea Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85259
Direct: (480) 301-8000
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

MedlinePlus

8600 Rockville Pike

Bethesda, MD 20894

custserv@nlm.nih.gov

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

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

Created by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

Mental Health America

500 Montgomery Street

Suite 820

Alexandria, VA 22314

Toll Free: (800) 969-6642

Direct: (703) 684-7722

Fax: (703) 684-5968

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

Mental Health America (MHA) – founded in 1909 – is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans. Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, and integrated care and treatment for those who need it, with recovery as the goal.

National Center for Biotechnology Information

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

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

National Institute on Aging

31 Center Drive
MSC 2292
Bethesda, MD 20892
Toll Free: (800) 222-2225
niaic@nia.nih.gov
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>

At NIA, our mission is to discover what may contribute to a healthy old age as well as to understand and address the disease and disability sometimes associated with growing older. In pursuit of these goals, our research program covers a broad range of areas, from the study of basic cellular changes that occur with age to the examination of the biomedical, social, and behavioral aspects of age-related conditions, including Alzheimer's disease.

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.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Toll Free: (844) 698-2311

<http://www.va.gov/>

The Agency is responsible for providing employment, training, educational and reemployment rights information and assistance to veterans, and other military personnel who are preparing to transition from the military. Also provide hearing aids. All World War I veterans are eligible to receive free hearing aids. Other veterans can receive free hearing aids if their hearing loss is at least 50% service-related.

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