

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Eating Disorders

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**ODEP**  
Office of Disability  
Employment Policy

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Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

## Preface

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is funded by a contract with the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. JAN makes documents available with the understanding that the information be used solely for educational purposes. The information is not intended to be legal or medical advice. If legal or medical advice is needed, appropriate legal or medical services should be contacted.

JAN does not endorse or recommend any products or services mentioned in this publication. Although every effort is made to update resources, JAN encourages contacting product manufacturers/vendors and service providers directly to ensure that they meet the intended purposes. This guarantees that the most up-to-date information is obtained.

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## JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

### Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <https://askjan.org/soar>.

### Information about Eating Disorders

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

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

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

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

## **Eating Disorders and the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The ADA does not contain a list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA has a general definition of disability that each person must meet. A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#).

## **Accommodating Employees with Eating Disorders**

People with eating disorders may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with eating disorders will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

## **Questions to Consider:**

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Has the employee been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
7. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

## **Accommodation Ideas:**

### **Limitations**

#### Attentiveness/Concentration

- Alternative Lighting
- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Memory
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- 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

- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Task Separation
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Timers and Watches
- Uninterrupted "Off" Work Time
- Verbal Cues
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
- Written Instructions

#### Control of Anger/Emotions

- Apps for Miscellaneous Mental Health / Control of Anger & Emotions
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
- Employee Assistance Program
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Sun Boxes and Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person

#### Decreased Stamina/Fatigue

- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Job Restructuring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

#### Executive Functioning Deficits

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

#### Stress Intolerance

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person

## **Work-Related Functions**

### Policies

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

## Situations and Solutions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <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)  
<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](mailto:odep@dol.gov)  
<http://dol.gov/odep>

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

**Academy for Eating Disorders**

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

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

**American Psychiatric Association**

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

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

**American Psychological Association**

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

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

### **Anxiety and Depression Association of America**

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

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

### **Binge Eating Disorder Association (BEDA)**

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

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

### **Brain & Behavior Research Foundation**

90 Park Avenue,  
16th Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
Toll Free: (800) 829-8289  
Direct: (646) 681-4888  
[info@bbrfoundation.org](mailto:info@bbrfoundation.org)  
<https://bbrfoundation.org/>

The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation is committed to alleviating the suffering caused by mental illness by awarding grants that will lead to advances and breakthroughs in scientific research.

### **Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation**

940 Commonwealth Ave.

West Boston, MA 02215

Direct: (617) 353-3549

Fax: (617) 358-3066

[psyrehab@bu.edu](mailto:psyrehab@bu.edu)

<http://cpr.bu.edu/>

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

### **Diabulimia Helpline**

Direct: (425) 985-3635

[info@diabulimiahelpline.org](mailto:info@diabulimiahelpline.org)

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

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

### **Eating Disorder Foundation**

1901 East 20th Avenue

Denver, CO 80205

Direct: (303) 322-3373

Fax: (303) 322-3364

[info@eatingdisorderfoundation.org](mailto:info@eatingdisorderfoundation.org)

<http://eatingdisorderfoundation.org>

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

### **Eating Disorder Hope**

Toll Free: (888) 206-1175

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

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

### **Eating Disorders Coalition (EDC)**

PO Box 96503-98807

Washington, DC 20090

Direct: (202) 543-9570

<http://www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org>

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

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

PO Box 11608

Milwaukee, WI 53211

Toll Free: (855) 503-3278

[info@feast-ed.org](mailto:info@feast-ed.org)

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

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

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

**Mayo Clinic**

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

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

**MedlinePlus**

8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
[custserv@nlm.nih.gov](mailto:custserv@nlm.nih.gov)  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>

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

Created by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

**Mental Health America**

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

Mental Health America (MHA) – founded in 1909 – is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans. Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including

prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, and integrated care and treatment for those who need it, with recovery as the goal.

**Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association (MEDA)**

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

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

**National Alliance on Mental Illness**

3803 N. Fairfax Dr.,  
Ste. 100  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Toll Free: (800) 950-6264  
Direct: (703) 524-7600  
<http://www.nami.org>

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, supports and research and is steadfast in its commitment to raise awareness and build a community for hope for all those in need.

**National Association for Males with Eating Disorders (NAMED)**

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

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

**National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, Inc.**

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

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

**National Center for Biotechnology Information**

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

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

**National Eating Disorders Association**

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

The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) is the leading non-profit organization in the United States advocating on behalf of and supporting individuals and families affected by eating disorders. Reaching millions every year, we campaign for prevention,

improved access to quality treatment, and increased research funding to better understand and treat eating disorders. We work with partners and volunteers to develop programs and tools to help everyone who seeks assistance.

### **National Institute of Mental Health**

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

### **Office on Women's Health**

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

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

**Project Heal**

38-18 West Drive

Douglaston, NY 11363

Fax: (718) 709-7787

<http://theprojectheal.org/>

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

**Remedy's Health Communities**

<http://www.healthcommunities.com>

Remedy Health Media is America's fastest growing health information and technology company. We are a leading provider of clinical resources and wellness tools that help millions of patients and caregivers live healthier, more fulfilled lives.

Our mission is to empower patients and caregivers with the information and applications needed to efficiently navigate the healthcare landscape and as a result, to permit better health outcomes through use of our products and services.

**The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness**

1649 Forum Place #2

West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Toll Free: (866) 662-1235

Direct: (561) 841-0900

[info@allianceforeatingdisorders.com](mailto:info@allianceforeatingdisorders.com)

<http://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com>

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

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

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