

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Effective Accommodation Practices (EAP) Series

Job Accommodations for the Aging Workforce

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JAN'S EAP SERIES

JOB ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE AGING WORKFORCE

Today, more than 38.9 million Americans are over age 65, and that number is expected to double over the next 30 years as baby boomers age (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008). With the aging of the baby-boom generation, the average age for workers will increase, and the likelihood that more employees will be managing a disability rises. Many individuals will continue to work at full production with no accommodations. However, aging may contribute to limitations that can easily and cheaply be accommodated. Age-related limitations can involve a wide range of conditions, including depression and anxiety, and other cognitive, sensory, and physical limitations.

Individuals may need accommodations related to the psychological aspects of aging, mobility, fatigue, cognitive limitations, and vision and hearing impairments. The following is a quick overview of some of the job accommodations that might be useful. For a more in depth discussion, access JAN's publications at <http://AskJAN.org/media/atoz.htm>. To discuss an accommodation situation with a consultant, contact JAN directly.

Psychological Aspects of Aging (Depression and Anxiety):

- Develop communication strategies between supervisors and employees to deal with situational anxiety
- Allow flexible scheduling for counseling
- Provide information on employee assistance programs
- Allow time off for medical treatment
- Provide clear instructions on how to ask for accommodations

Mobility:

- Modify the work-site with curb cuts, wider routes of travel, accessible restrooms, and power doors
- Provide parking close to the work-site
- Move workstation close to other work areas, office equipment, and break rooms
- Provide mobility aids such as scooters
- Allow work from home during inclement weather

Fatigue/Weakness:

- Reduce or eliminate physical exertion
- Schedule periodic rest breaks away from the workstation
- Allow a flexible work schedule and flexible use of leave time
- Allow work from home

Cognitive Impairment:

- Provide written job instructions
- Prioritize job assignments
- Allow flexible work hours and periodic rest breaks to reorient
- Provide memory aids, such as schedulers or organizers
- Minimize distractions
- Allow a self-paced workload

Vision Impairment:

- Magnify written material using hand/stand/optical magnifiers
- Provide large print material or screen reading software
- Reduce glare by adding a glare screen and blinds
- Install proper office lighting
- Allow frequent rest breaks

Hearing Impairment:

- Provide amplification for meetings, telephone use, and communication in noisy environments
- Use e-mail, instant messaging, and text messaging when appropriate
- Provide visual indicators for alarms and emergency situations
- Reduce background noise
- Use TTYs, assistive listening devices, and interpreters when needed
- Provide clear paths of travel in busy environments

Resources Specifically for People in the Aging Workforce**AARP**

601 E Street, NW, Suite A1-200
Washington, DC 20049
Toll Free: (888)687-2277
TTY: (877)627-3350
Direct: (202)434-7700
Fax: (202)434-7710
member@aarp.org
<http://www.aarp.org>

Alliance for Aging Research

750 17th St., NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20006
Direct: (202)293-2856
Fax: (202)955-8394
info@agingresearch.org
<http://www.agingresearch.org/>

American Society on Aging

71 Stevenson Street
Suite 1450
San Francisco, CA 94105-2938
Toll Free: (800)537-9728
Direct: (415)974-9600
Fax: (415)974-0300
info@asaging.org.
<http://www.asaging.org>

National Council on Aging

1901 L Street, NW
4th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Direct: (202)479-1200
TTY: (202)479-6674
Fax: (202)479-0735
info@ncoa.org
<http://www.ncoa.org>

U.S. Administration on Aging

One Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suites 4100 & 5100
Washington, DC 20201
Direct: (202)619-0724
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aoainfo@aoa.hhs.gov
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