

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success



## Shedding Light on Hidden Disabilities

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# Hidden Disabilities

## Overview

- JAN
- “Hidden Disabilities”
- Accommodation Process
- Examples
- Tips
- Benefits and Costs



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Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

# Hidden Disabilities

## Overview

- Job Accommodation
- Americans with Disabilities Act / Rehabilitation Act
- Entrepreneurship



# Hidden Disabilities

## Overview

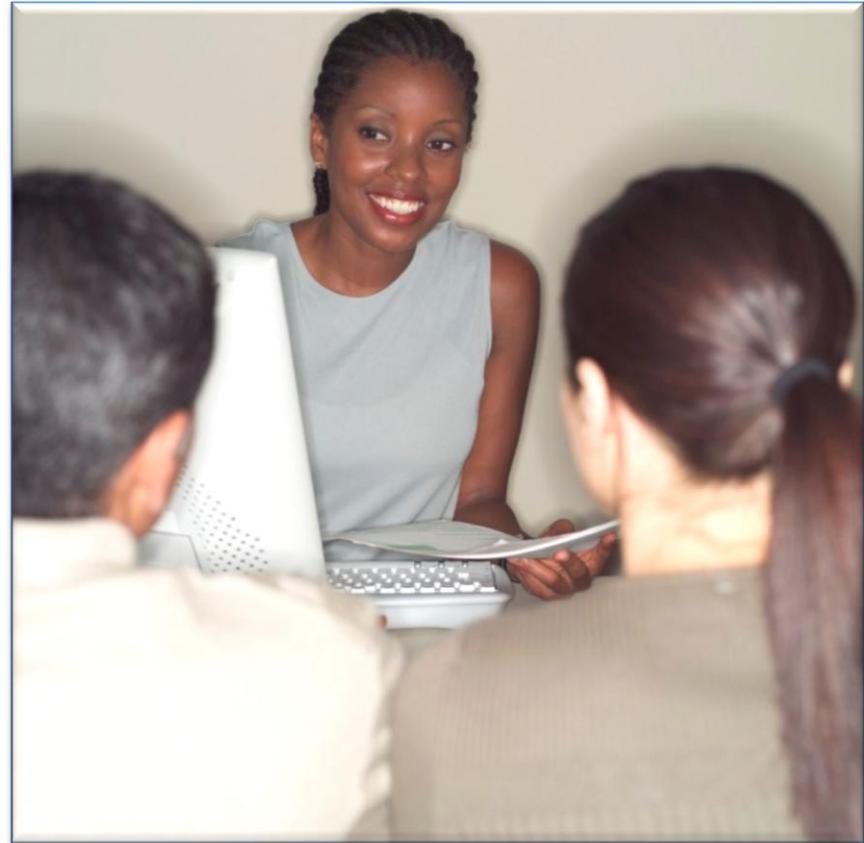
- Over 26 Years of Service
- Experienced
- Free
- National
- Easy to Use



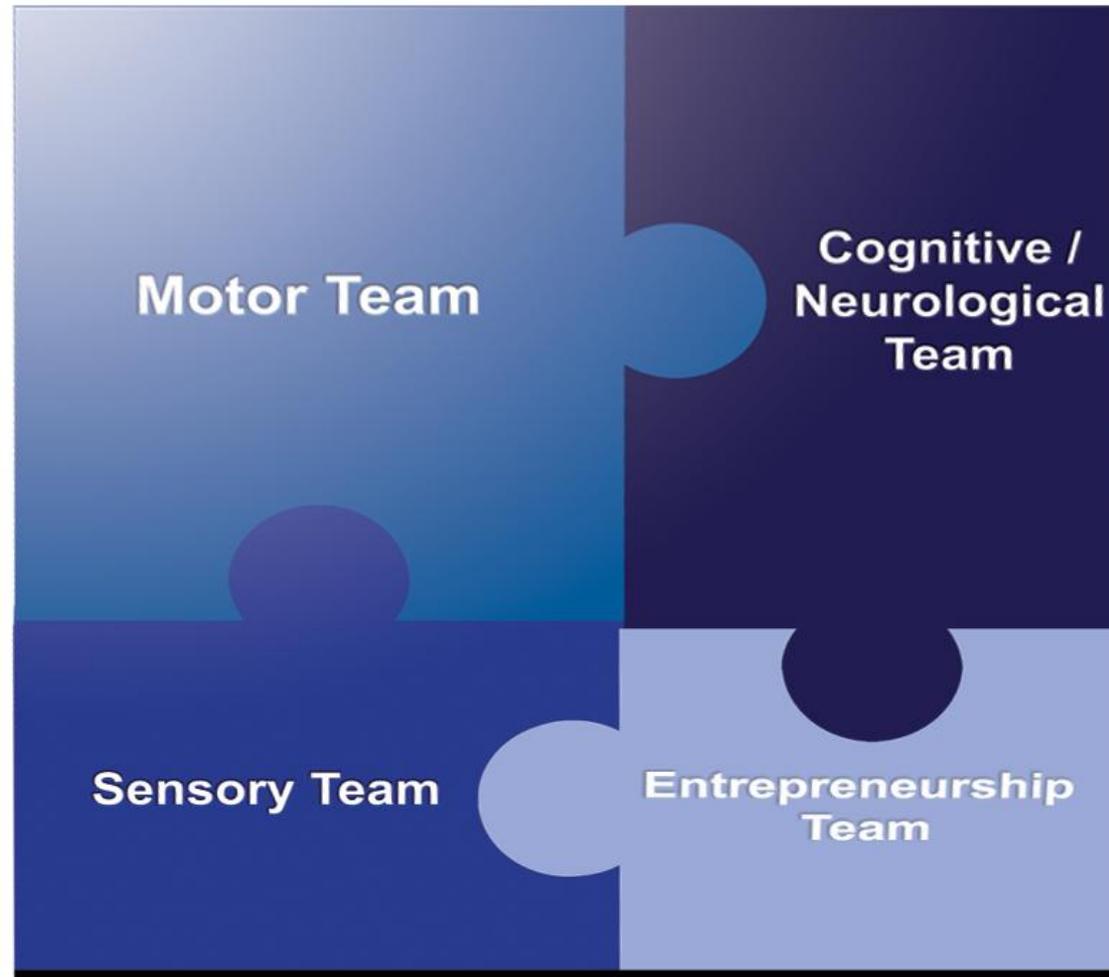
# Hidden Disabilities

## Overview

- Employers
- Individuals
- Service Providers
- Others



# Hidden Disabilities



# Hidden Disabilities

## Overview

- 36,000 contacts per year
  - 10,000 electronic contacts
- 3,200,000 Webpage requests per year



# Hidden Disabilities

## Hidden disabilities can be any impairment causing limitations:

- not obvious to the naked eye;
- not easily discerned by others; or
- not noticeable in one's speech, behavior, or mobility.



# Hidden Disabilities

## Myths

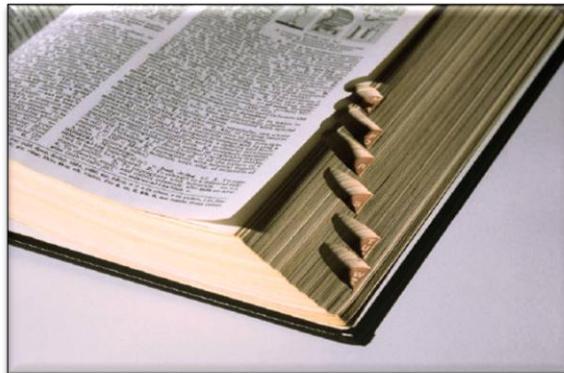
- Hidden disabilities are not believable.
- Hidden disabilities are downplayed – not as severe as obvious disabilities like mobility impairments.
- Hidden disabilities are hard to accommodate because the need is not obvious.
- People with hidden disabilities do not need accommodations.
- Accommodations are expensive.

**False**



# Hidden Disabilities

- HIV/AIDS
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart conditions
- Respiratory impairments
- Vision loss
- Hearing loss
- Epilepsy
- ADD
- Sleep disorders
- Migraine headaches
- Fibromyalgia
- Depression
- PTSD
- Learning disabilities



# Hidden Disabilities

## Cognitive Impairments

- Learning, remembering, concentrating

## Physical Impairments

- Fatigue, gross or fine motor skills, sleeping

## Psychological Impairments

- Irritability, social interaction, managing stress

## Sensory Impairments

- Breathing, seeing, hearing



# Hidden Disabilities

## Limitations

- Attendance
- Concentration
- Fatigue
- Memory
- Organization
- Coworker Interaction
- Working Effectively



## Shedding Light On:

**Concentration - Memory - Fatigue**



# Hidden Disabilities

## Disclosure



# Hidden Disabilities

## Why Disclose

- To ask for job accommodations
- To receive benefits or privileges of employment
- To explain an unusual circumstance



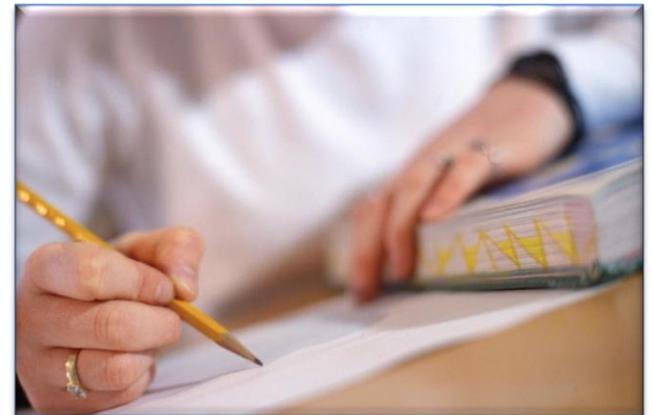
## How to Disclose

The individual must let the employer know:

- an adjustment or change at work is needed for a reason related to a medical condition

To request accommodation, an individual:

- may use "plain English"
- need not mention the ADA
- need not use the phrase "reasonable accommodation"



# Hidden Disabilities

## How to Disclose

### Verbally or in writing, tell the . . .

- Employer,
- Supervisor,
- HR representative, or
- Other appropriate person.



## Accommodation Process



# Hidden Disabilities

1. Define the Situation



2. Explore Accommodation Ideas



3. Choose Accommodation



4. Implement Accommodation



5. Monitor Accommodation



# Hidden Disabilities

## 1. Define the Situation

- Is this an accommodation request?
- What are the person's limitations?
- What is the person's job?
- What is the person having difficulty doing?
- Can medical information be obtained?
- Is the condition progressive?



# Hidden Disabilities

## Example

A retired Army medic has difficulty managing stress in the workplace due to her PTSD. Her stress intolerance was intensified when she heard the emergency medical helicopter arrive and depart from the hospital where she worked as a nurse.



# Hidden Disabilities

## ACCOMMODATION:

The nurse was reassigned to a vacant position on a unit that was far from the heli-pad so she rarely heard the helicopter. During times when the helicopter staff would practice maneuvers in her area she was allowed to work a flexible schedule.



# Hidden Disabilities

## Example

An individual is working at a museum that was undergoing renovations. Interacting with construction workers who were strangers caused the employee extreme anxiety. As a result they we either not coming in or leaving early.



# Hidden Disabilities

## ACCOMMODATION:

The employer temporarily relocated the individuals work station away from the construction. They also created ID badges for the construction workers and required them to sign in and out at a central location.



# Hidden Disabilities

## Attendance:

- Allow flexible work environment:
  - Flexible scheduling
  - Modified break schedule
  - Leave for counseling
  - Work from home/Flexi-place



## 2. Explore Accommodation Ideas

- Does the workplace need modified?
- Does the job need modified?
- Does a policy need modified?
- Does a piece of equipment need modified or purchased?
- Does a service need purchased?
- Is reassignment appropriate?



# Hidden Disabilities

## Example

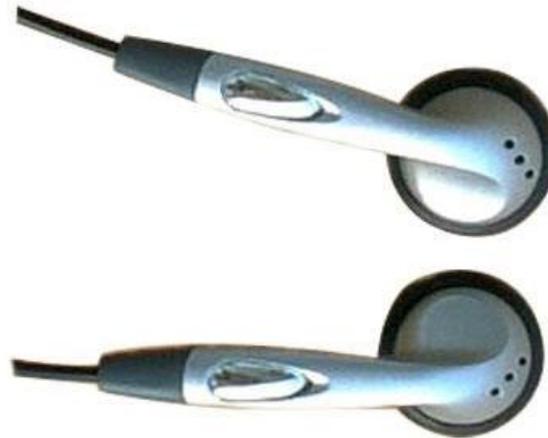
An accountant for a large agency had bipolar disorder. His duties included research, writing, and filing reports. He had difficulties with concentration and short-term memory during very busy periods that required long hours.



# Hidden Disabilities

## ACCOMMODATION:

He was accommodated with a more consistent caseload that did not result in extreme fluctuations in workload. He was provided a work area that was away from noise and given earbuds to listen to music. He also met briefly with his supervisor once a week to discuss workload issues.



## Concentration:

- **Reduce distractions in the work area:**
  - Provide space enclosures, sound absorption panels, or a private office
  - Allow for use of white noise or environmental sound machines
  - Allow the employee to play soothing music using an earbud and computer or music player
  - Plan for uninterrupted work time
  - Purchase organizers to reduce clutter

# Hidden Disabilities

## Concentration:

- Increase natural lighting or provide full spectrum lighting
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals
- Use auditory or written cues as appropriate
- Restructure job to include only essential functions
- Provide memory aids such as schedulers, organizers, or email applications



# Hidden Disabilities

## 3. Choose Accommodations

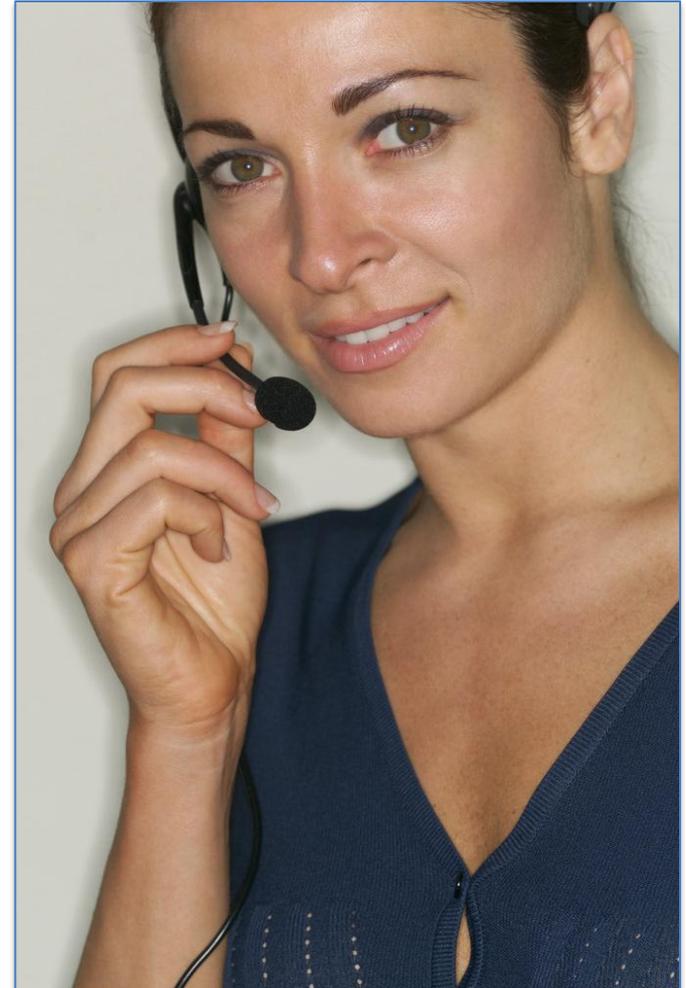
- Does the accommodation meet the person's limitations?
- What is the employee's preference?
- What is reasonable for the business?
- Is the accommodation an undue hardship or direct threat?



# Hidden Disabilities

## Example

A secretary with multiple sclerosis and major depression experienced extreme fatigue during the afternoon.



# Hidden Disabilities

## ACCOMMODATION:

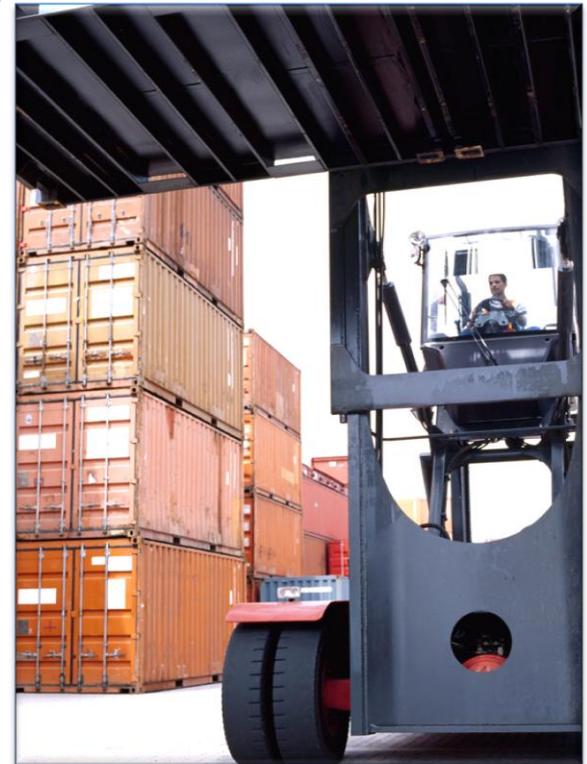
The individual was accommodated with lateral filing cabinets, a wireless headset, forearm supports, and an articulating keyboard tray.



# Hidden Disabilities

## Fatigue:

- Allow flexible work environment
- Provide a goal-oriented workload
- Reduce or eliminate physical exertion & workplace stress
- Implement ergonomic workstation design



## 4. Implement the Accommodation

- What is the installation process?
- Is training necessary?
- Does the accommodation work?
- Has the accommodation been communicated to essential personnel?



# Hidden Disabilities

## Example

An electrician with severe depression needed to attend periodic licensure trainings. The person had difficulty taking effective notes and paying attention in the meetings.



# Hidden Disabilities

## ACCOMMODATION:

The individual was accommodated with notes from a remote Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service.



# Hidden Disabilities

## Memory:

- Allow use of job coach / Provide mentor
- Provide minutes of meetings and trainings
- Use auditory or written cues as appropriate
- Allow additional training time
- Provide written checklists
- Use a color coding scheme to prioritize tasks
- Use notebooks, planners, or sticky notes to record information
- Provide labels/bulletin board to assist in locating items

## 5. Monitor the Accommodation

- Who will be responsible for monitoring effectiveness?
- Is there maintenance?
- Are updates necessary?
- How does the employee communicate changes to the accommodation?
- Have the employee's limitations changed?



# Hidden Disabilities

## Example

A clerk with a learning disability maintained files and had difficulty categorizing and sorting paperwork.



# Hidden Disabilities

## ACCOMMODATION:

The individual's workspace was rearranged to eliminate visual distractions. A checklist was developed to help with task sequencing. The employer also provided reading templates and colored marker tabs for filing.



# Hidden Disabilities

## Organization:

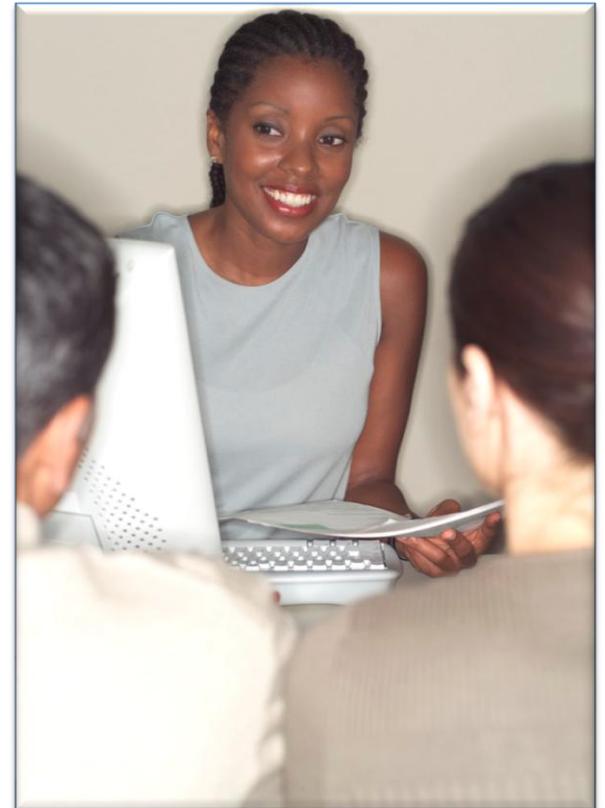
- Use daily, weekly, and monthly task lists
- Use calendar with automated reminders to highlight meetings and deadlines
- Use electronic organizers or mobile devices
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals
- Use a color coding scheme to prioritize tasks



# Hidden Disabilities

## Working Effectively:

- What accommodations will work for individuals when workplaces are implementing substantial changes?
- What accommodations will help supervisors and employees work effectively?
- Many accommodation ideas are born from effective management techniques.



# Hidden Disabilities

## Working Effectively:

- Provide positive praise and reinforcement.
- Develop clear expectations of responsibilities and the consequences of not meeting performance standards.
- Schedule consistent meetings with employee to set goals and review progress.
- Establish written long term and short term goals.
- Develop strategies to deal with conflict.
- Educate all employees on their right to accommodations.
- Do not mandate that employees attend social functions.

# Hidden Disabilities

- Established in 1983 as a national, free service.
- Specialize in job accommodations and the employment provisions of the ADA.
- Assist with the interactive process.
- Give targeted technical assistance.
- Provide comprehensive resources.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Communicate via telephone, chat, text, TTY, relay, email, and social networks.
- Offer live and archived training.
- Work as a partner in making model employers.

# Hidden Disabilities

## Contact

- (800)526-7234 (V) & (877)781-9403 (TTY)
- AskJAN.org & jan@askjan.org



<http://AskJAN.org/landingpage/perspectives2010>