

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success



## Job Accommodations for Off-Task Behaviors

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**Concentration:** Individuals may experience decreased concentration, which can be attributed to auditory and /or visual distractions. People report distractions such as office traffic and employee chatter, opening and closing of elevator doors, and common office noises such as fax tones and photocopying.



## Concentration:

To reduce auditory distractions:

- Purchase a noise canceling headset
- Hang sound absorption panels
- Provide a white noise machine, ear buds for music, even a fan
- Redesign employee's office space to minimize audible distractions
- Relocate employee's office space away from audible distractions

To reduce visual distractions:

- Install space enclosures (cubicle walls)
- Reduce clutter in the employee's work environment
- Redesign employee's office space to minimize visual distractions
- Relocate employee's office space away from visual distractions

## Concentration (cont.):

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, and / or apps
- Allow flexible work environment:
  - Flexible scheduling
  - Modified break schedule
  - Work from home/Flexi-place

# Attention and Focus

**Memory:** Individuals may experience memory deficits, which can affect their ability to complete tasks, remember job duties, or recall daily actions or activities.



## Memory:

- Provide written as well as verbal instructions
- Provide written checklists
- Use a wall calendar
- Use a daily or weekly task list
- Provide verbal prompts and reminders
- Use electronic organizers, hand held devices, and /or apps
- Allow the employee to record meetings and trainings
- Provide printed minutes of meetings and trainings

## Memory (cont.):

- Allow additional training time for new duties
- Provide a mentor for daily guidance
- Provide reminders of important deadlines via e-mails, memos, and weekly supervision
- Use notebooks, planners, or sticky notes to record information for easy retrieval
- Provide cues to assist in location of items by using labels, color coding, or bulletin boards
- Post written instructions for use of equipment

**Organization and Prioritization:** Individuals may have difficulty getting or staying organized, or have difficulty prioritizing tasks at work.





## Organization and Prioritization:

- Develop color code system for files, projects, or activities
- Use weekly chart to identify daily work activities
- Use the services of a professional organizer
- Use a job coach to teach/reinforce organization skills
- Assign a mentor to help employee
- Allow supervisor to assign prioritization of tasks
- Assign new project only when previous project is complete, when possible

## Organization and Prioritization (cont.):

- Provide a “cheat sheet” of high-priority activities, projects, people, etc.
- Identify areas of improvement for employee in a fair and consistent manner
- Encourage employees to minimize personal conversation, or move personal conversation away from work areas
- Adjust the supervisory method to better fit the employee’s needs
- Allow the employee to work from home

**Multi-tasking:** Individuals may experience difficulty performing many tasks at one time. This difficulty could occur regardless of the similarity of tasks or the frequency of performing the tasks.



## Multi-tasking:

- Separate tasks so that each can be completed one at a time
- Create a flow-chart of tasks that must be performed at the same time, carefully labeling or color-coding each task in sequential or preferential order
- Provide individualized/specialized training to help employee learn techniques for multi-tasking (e.g., typing on computer while talking on phone)
- Identify tasks that must be performed simultaneously and tasks that can be performed individually

## Multi-tasking (cont.):

- Provide specific feedback to help employee target areas of improvement
- Remove or reduce distractions from work area
- Supply ergonomic equipment to facilitate multi-tasking
- Clearly represent performance standards such as completion time or accuracy rates

**Paperwork:** Individuals may experience difficulty completing paperwork efficiently and effectively. This is due in part to workplace distractions and difficulty with time management, disorganization, or prioritization.



## Paperwork:

- When possible, automate paperwork by creating electronic files
- Use speech recognition software to enter text or data into electronic files
- Save time filling out paper forms by completing information in advance, using pre-filled forms, or adhering pre-printed stickers
- Use checklists in place of writing text
- Supply large quantities of regularly-used forms
- Color-code forms for easy identification
- Re-design commonly used forms
  - Use large font
  - Double space or triple space
  - Provide adequate space for hand-written response

**Time Management:** Individuals may experience difficulty managing time, which can affect their ability to mark time as it passes incrementally by minutes and hours. It can also affect their ability to gauge the proper amount of time to set aside for certain tasks. It may be difficult to prepare for, or to remember, work activities that occur later in the week, month, or year.





## Time Management:

- Divide large assignments into several small tasks
- Set a timer to make an alarm after assigning ample time to complete a task
- Provide a checklist of assignments
- Supply an electronic or handheld organizer, and train on how to use effectively
- Use wall calendar to emphasize due dates
  - Develop a color-coded system (each color represents a task, or event, or level of importance)
  - Allow co-worker or supervisor to add entries on the calendar, or to double-check entries added by the employee with AD/HD

**Heightened Stress / Emotions:** Individuals may experience difficulties with focus and concentration, task completion, and time management due to emotions.



## Heightened Stress / Emotions:

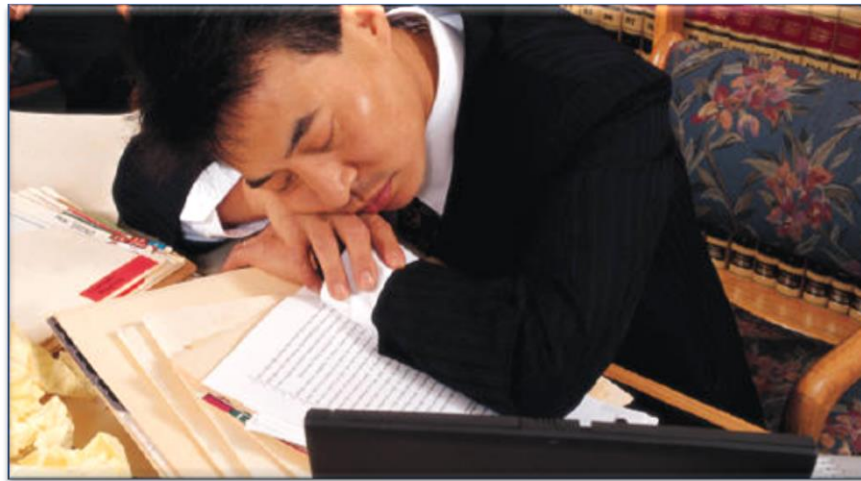
- Encourage use of stress management techniques to deal with frustration
- Allow the presence of a support animal
- Allow telephone calls during work hours to doctors and others for needed support
- Use a mentor or supervisor to alert the employee when his/her behavior is becoming unprofessional or inappropriate
- Assign a supervisor, manager, or mentor to answer the employee's questions Restructure job to include only essential functions during times of stress
- Refer to counseling, employee assistance programs (EAP)
- Provide backup coverage for when the employee needs to take breaks

## Heightened Stress / Emotions (cont.):

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

# Attention and Focus

**Fatigue:** Individuals may experience fatigue from various causes which can affect cognitive functioning, particularly attention and focus.



## Fatigue:

- Reduce or eliminate physical exertion and workplace stress
- Schedule periodic rest breaks away from the workstation
- Implement ergonomic workstation design
- Provide additional time to learn new responsibilities
- Provide backup coverage when the employee needs to take breaks
- Restructure job to include only essential functions
- Allow flexible work environment:
  - Flexible scheduling
  - Modified break schedule
  - Work from home/Flexi-place



## Attention and Focus

The employer created a numbered checklist that identified each step for proper closing procedures and identified which reports to run from cash registers. This accommodation benefited all employees.





## Attention and Focus

A newly hired financial aid counselor at a college felt she could perform the essential functions of the job with no problems. The difficulty came in the training. Due to deficits in her short-term memory and focus associated with a traumatic brain injury, this employee had difficulty moving through the modules at the pace the college had scheduled.

## Attention and Focus

She was accommodated with extended training and a more relaxed schedule for completion of the training. She was provided extra time with the trainer, as well as materials to take home to study, and an extended time frame for completion of each module.



## Attention and Focus

An employee who works outside landscaping has trouble with time management and staying focused on the tasks he needs to complete. He works for a smaller employer who cannot provide the direct supervision he needs. He was using his phone to assist him, but the employer felt it made him look like he was off task.



## Attention and Focus

A JAN consultant recommended a daily written list of tasks, and purchasing a watch with multiple settings that can be programmed to varying amounts of time. The watch was set to vibrate or alarm, and the task needing to be completed or started appeared on the face of the watch. The employee was trained to set the watch for the tasks he has to complete daily.

## Attention and Focus

An administrative aide with PTSD had difficulty taking notes in meetings while trying to focus on what was being said at the same time.



## Attention and Focus

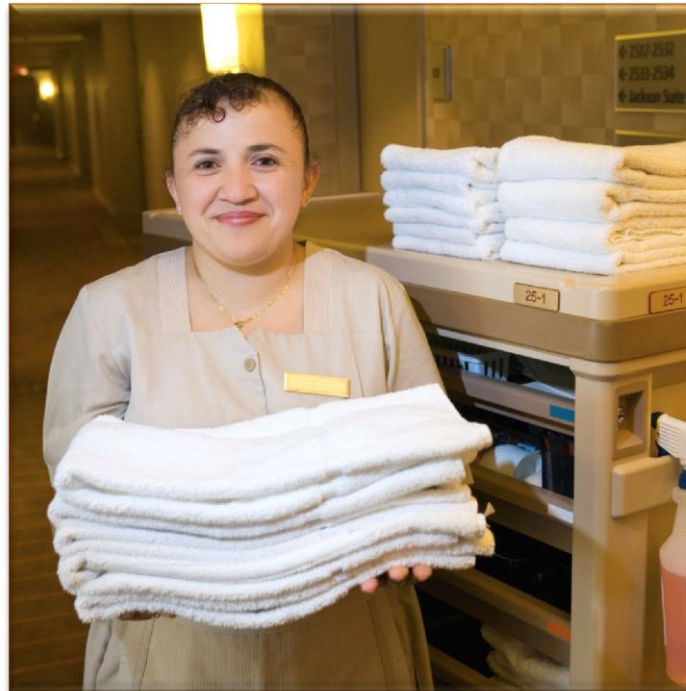
She was provided with a smart pen that recorded the meeting as she took brief notes. This accommodation enabled her to focus on listening to what was being presented in the meetings, while at the same time getting down the important information.





## Attention and Focus

A housekeeper with OCD repeatedly checked and re-checked rooms for supplies. She was not completing the number of rooms required during a shift.



## Attention and Focus

The individual was accommodated with a computerized checklist for each supply listed for each type of room.





## Contact

- (800)526-7234 (V) & (877)781-9403 (TTY)
- AskJAN.org & jan@askjan.org
- (304)216-8189 via Text
- janconsultants via Skype



The screenshot shows the JAN website homepage. At the top, there are navigation links: ADA LIBRARY, PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES, SEARCH ACCOMMODATIONS DATABASE, A-Z OF DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS, and NEWS. Below these is the JAN logo and a search bar. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column features a photo of Thomas, a man in a white shirt and tie, sitting at a desk. To his left is the text: "ASK JAN. If you have a question about workplace accommodations or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related legislation, we can help." Below the photo is a "MEET THOMAS" button. The right column is titled "Connect with JAN" and lists contact information: (800)526-7234 (Voice) and (877)781-6403 (TTY). It also includes links for Email JAN, Live Help, Subscribe to Newsletters, Link to Us, Share Through Your Social Networks, RSS Feed, Newsletter, and Webcasts. Below this are sections for "FOR EMPLOYERS" (Private Employers, Federal Employers, State & Local Government), "FOR INDIVIDUALS" (Employees, Job Seekers, Entrepreneurs), and "FOR OTHERS" (Rehabilitators & Medical Professionals, Union Representatives, Attorneys & Legal Representatives). At the bottom of the page, there are links for "About JAN", "Frequently Asked Questions", and "Training". The footer includes the ODEP logo, a statement of affiliation with the U.S. Department of Labor, the "What can YOU do?" logo, and social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter.