



Discover How to Work with Multiple Sclerosis

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**JAN is a service of the U.S. Department of Labor's
Office of Disability Employment Policy.**

Overview

- About JAN
- ADAAA
- Working with MS
- Disclosure
- Situations & Solutions
- Resources



Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

About JAN

Discovery Series - MS

Overview

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



Discovery Series - MS

Overview

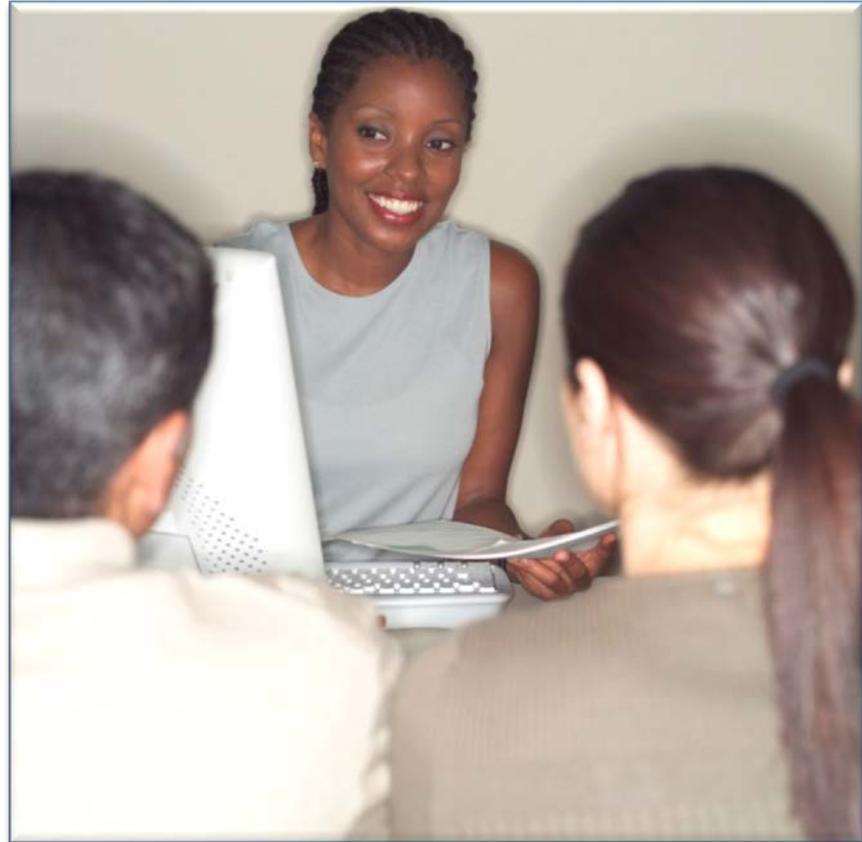
- Over 30 Years of Service
- Experienced
- Free
- National
- Easy to Use



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Overview

- Employers
- Individuals
- Service Providers
- Others



ADAAA



Definition of Disability: Same as the Old Definition

An individual who:

- has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- has a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

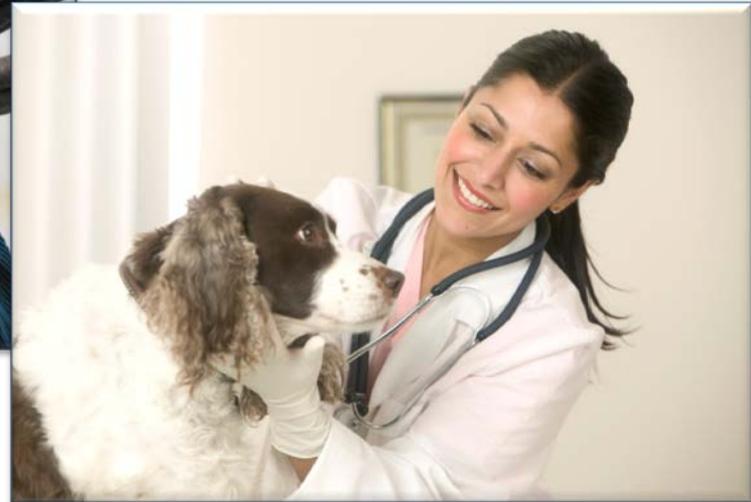
Broader Definition of Disability =
More Focus on Reasonable
Accommodation



Employers:

- can choose among effective accommodation options
- do not have to provide accommodations that pose an undue hardship
- do not have to provide personal use items needed in accomplishing daily activities both on and off the job
- do not have to make an accommodation for an individual who is not otherwise qualified for a position
- do not have to remove essential functions, create new jobs, or lower production standards

Working with MS



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- MS is thought to be an *autoimmune disease* that affects the central nervous system (brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves)
- Its name is derived from the *scarring* caused by inflammatory attacks in *multiple* sites in the central nervous system
- Myelin sheath is what gets affected
- Is not fatal, contagious, directly inherited, or always severely disabling
- Cause unknown – possibly genetic predisposition, environmental factor (virus, bacteria)
- No cure – treatments available, however
- Hallmarks of MS is its *unpredictability* and *variability*

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- Fatigue (most common)
- Vision problems
- Stiffness (spasticity)
- Cognitive changes (memory, attention, processing)
- Walking difficulties
- Emotional changes (depression, mood swings)
- Bladder/bowel dysfunction
- Sensory problems (tingling/numbness)
- Heat sensitivity
- Speech/swallowing difficulties
- Pain
- Tremor

Discovery Series - MS

- Fine Motor
- Gross Motor
- Vision
- Fatigue
- Temperature Sensitivity
- Cognitive



FINE MOTOR

- Implement ergonomic design
- Provide alternative computer and telephone access
- Provide arm supports
- Provide writing and grip aids
- Provide page turner and book holder
- Provide note taker or recorder



GROSS MOTOR

- Modify the worksite to make it accessible: parking, entrance, restroom, break room, etc.
- Modify the workstation to make it accessible: adjust desk height, move equipment/work materials within reach, accessible office equipment, chairs, etc.



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VISION

- Magnify materials with hand/stand/optical magnifiers
- Provide large print material
- Provide screen reading/magnification software
- Control glare with glare screen
- Install proper lighting
- Allow frequent rest breaks



FATIGUE

- Reduce/eliminate physical exertion and stress
- Schedule periodic rest breaks
- Allow flexible schedule or leave time
- Allow work from home
- Provide scooter or other mobility aid
- Implement ergonomic workstation design



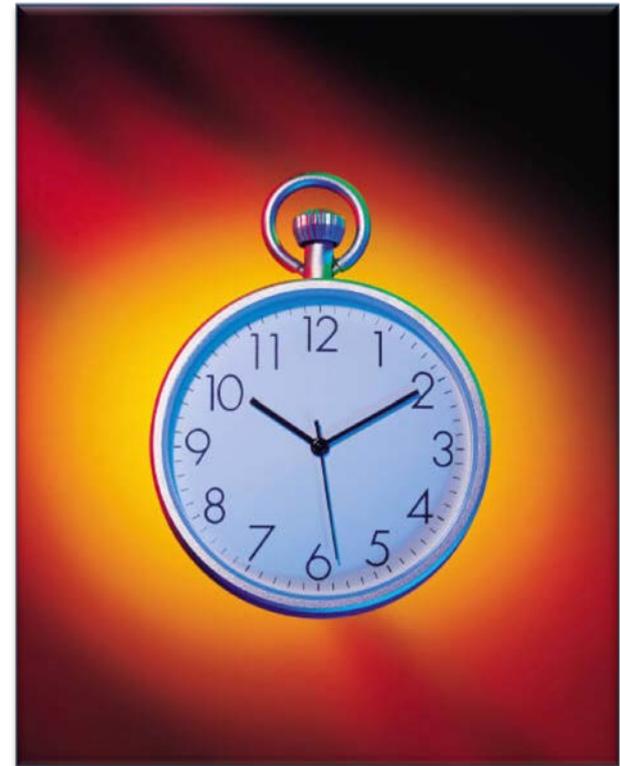
TEMPERATURE SENSITIVITY

- Reduce work-site temperature
- Use cool vest or other cooling clothing
- Use fan/air conditioner at the workstation
- Allow flexible scheduling and leave time
- Allow work from home during hot weather



COGNITIVE

- Provide written job instruction
- Prioritize job assignments
- Allow flexible work hours
- Allow periodic rest breaks
- Provide memory aids
- Minimize distractions
- Allow a self-paced workload
- Provide more structure



Disclosure



Tips

- Disclosure may be even more stressful – create an environment of openness and support
- Variability of symptoms may require accommodations from time to time
- May disclose for disclosure sake but no need for accommodations at present time
- Importance of confidentiality for managers/supervisors
- Flexibility/creativity with accommodation strategies

Situations & Solutions



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Example

A retail employee with concentration and memory issues due to multiple sclerosis often forgot the closing and cash-out procedures, which resulted in missed printouts of daily sale reports.



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ACCOMMODATION:

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 benefitted all employees.



Lock-up Checklist

On first floor:

- Check all coffee pots and space heaters to make sure turned off and un-plugged.
- Check the downstairs side door to make sure it's locked from the outside.
- Walk through hall and make sure individual office lights are turned off.
- Make sure no one is still in their offices on that floor.
- When sure, make sure doors entering downstairs are latched and locked.
- In downstairs hallway, check and make sure front door is locked.

On second floor:

- Check all coffee pots and space heaters to make sure turned off and un-plugged.
- Check the upstairs side door to make sure it's locked from the outside.
- In kitchen, make sure the office copier is turned off.
- Walk through hall and make sure individual office lights are turned off.
- Make sure no one is still in their offices on that floor.
- Make sure main hall lights are turned off before going downstairs.

Final lock-up:

- Check to make sure everyone is in downstairs hall and ready to leave.
- Determine who will do the final alarm procedures.
- Have everyone else leave the building through the side door.
- Once everyone has left, set alarm, turn off last lights, and leave the building.
- Check front door one more time from the outside to make sure it's locked.

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Example

An employee with fatigue and depression as a result of his MS, was having difficulties working in a busy central banking office. He needed to manage a large staff of workers, provide customer service, and oversee the daily office management.



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ACCOMMODATION:

As an accommodation, he requested and received a reassignment to a smaller and less busy branch office. The employee maintained his salary and the responsibilities of his leadership role.



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Example

An administrative assistant in a social service agency has multiple sclerosis. Her duties include typing, word processing, filing, and answering the telephone. Her limitations include difficulties with concentration and short-term memory.



ACCOMMODATION:

Her accommodations included assistance in organizing her work and a dual headset for her telephone that allowed her to listen to music when not talking on the telephone. This accommodation minimized distractions, increased concentration, and relaxed the employee. Also, recorded meetings were held with the supervisor once a week to discuss workplace issues.

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Example

An office manager with MS was unable to meet crucial deadlines. He had difficulty maintaining his concentration and staying focused when trying to complete assignments. He discussed his performance problems with his supervisor.



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ACCOMMODATION:

Accommodations were implemented that allowed him to organize his time by scheduling "off" periods during the week where he could work without interruptions. He was also provided a flexible schedule that gave him more time for counseling and medical appointments. The supervisor also provided information about the company employee assistance program.

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Example

An attorney with MS was going through a period of exacerbation of her symptoms and found it difficult to complete her regular workload.



ACCOMMODATION:

Her employer transferred several of the marginal functions of her job to another employee until the symptoms remitted. This accommodation allowed the employee to use her reduced levels of energy, memory, and concentration to complete the essential functions of her job.



Discovery Series - MS

Example

A day care worker requests that she be allowed to change her hours from 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. because her cognitive functioning, due to her MS, was sharper later in the morning into the afternoon.



ACCOMMODATION:

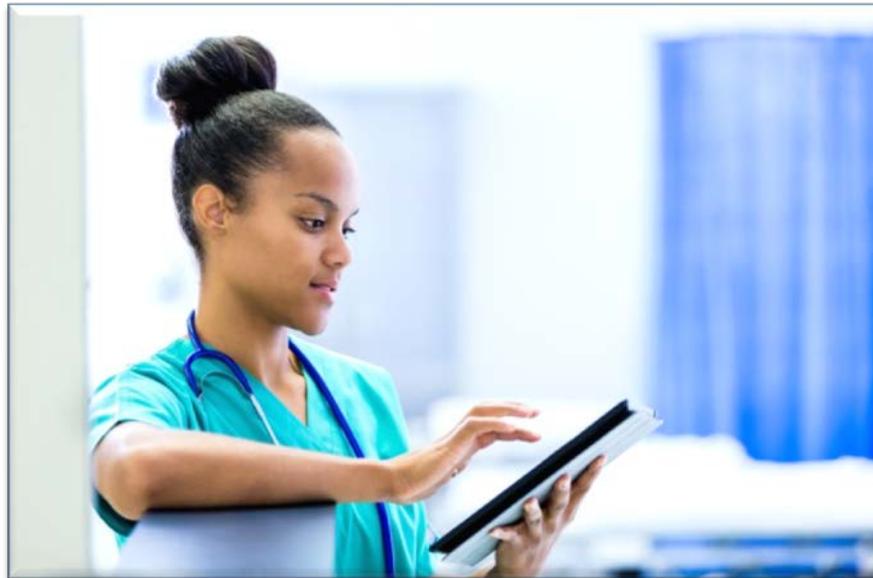
Because the day care center is open from 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. and will still have adequate staffing at the start of the morning, her employer granted the accommodation.



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Example

A resource nurse with MS was having difficulty accessing her workstation.



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ACCOMMODATION:

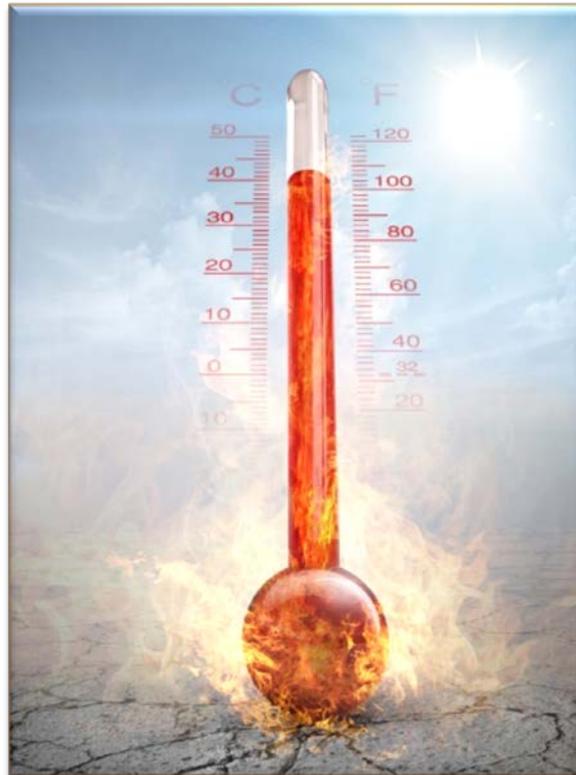
Her employer widened the floor space in her workstation to allow her easier access from her wheelchair and added an adjustable keyboard tray, monitor holder, and telephone tray. In addition, the employee was provided a flexible schedule so she could continue her medical treatment.



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Example

An engineer with MS was experiencing heat sensitivity.



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ACCOMMODATION:

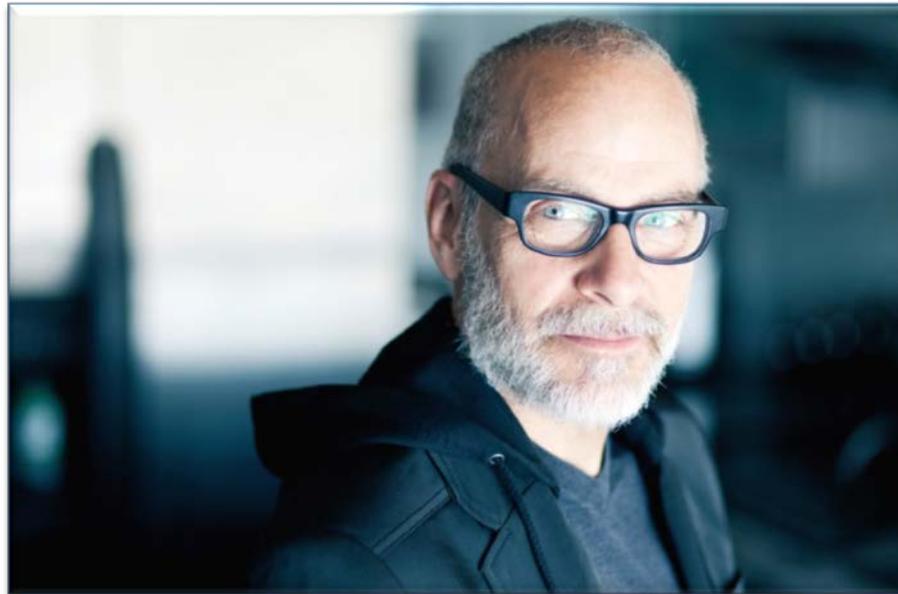
She was provided a private office where the temperature could be lower than in the rest of the facility. She was also encouraged to communicate with coworkers by telephone or email when possible to reduce the amount of walking she had to do.



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Example

A claims representative for a government agency was having difficulty reading files due to vision impairment caused by MS.



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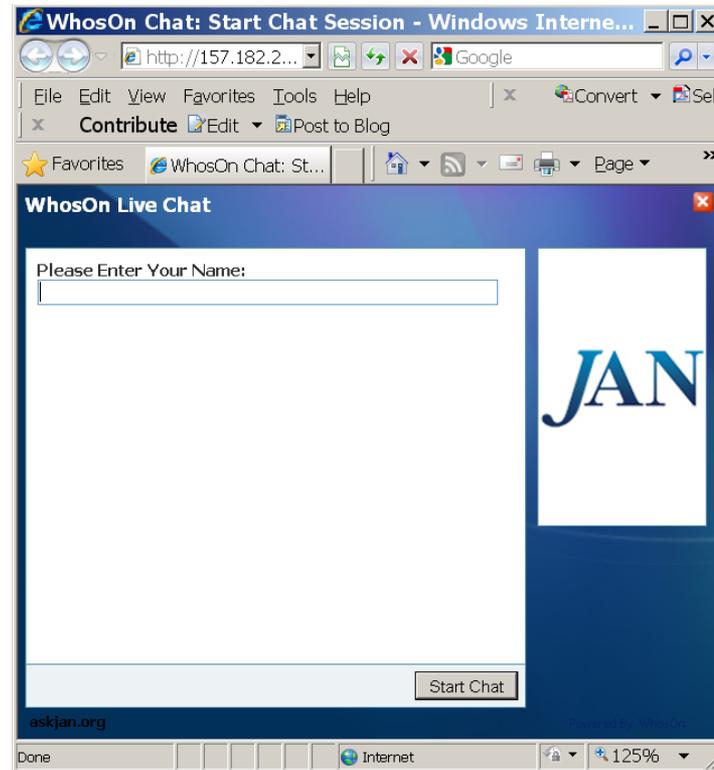
ACCOMMODATION:

His employer purchased a stand magnifier and added task lighting to his workstation.



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- Over 200 Publications
- Comprehensive Website
 - SOAR
 - ADA Library
 - A to Z
 - JAN on Demand
 - JAN en Español
 - JAN Updates
 - JAN Chat
 - Social Networks



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Questions? AskJAN.org

The screenshot shows the AskJAN.org website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: ADA LIBRARY, PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES, SEARCH ACCOMMODATIONS DATABASE, A-Z OF DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS, and NEWS. The main header features the JAN logo and a search bar. Below the header, there are links for Hot Topics, How to Use this Site, JAN en Español, Print this Page, and Text Size. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a section titled 'ASK JAN' with a photo of a man in a white shirt and tie sitting at a desk. The text reads: '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. To the right of the photo is a 'Connect with JAN' section with contact information: (800)526-7234 (Voice) and (877)781-9403 (TTY). Below this are links for Email JAN, Live Help, Subscribe to Newsletters, Link to Us, Share Through Your Social Networks, RSS Feed, and Newsletter. Further down are sections for 'FOR EMPLOYERS' (Private Employers, Federal Employers, State & Local Government), 'FOR INDIVIDUALS' (Employees, Job Seekers, Entrepreneurs), and 'FOR OTHERS' (Rehabilitation & Medical Professionals, Union Representatives, Attorneys & Legal Representatives). At the bottom, there are three red buttons: 'About JAN', 'Frequently Asked Questions', and 'Training'. The footer contains the ODEP logo, a service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, and the 'What can YOU do?' logo for The Campaign for Disability Employment. Social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email are also present, along with links for Accessibility, Copyright, Disclaimer, Privacy Statement, and Site Map.

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Contact

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

