



ASSESSING NEEDS FOR SUPPORTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Many individuals on the autism spectrum struggle to find jobs and succeed in them. Job accommodations and adaptations help many autistic adults to be more productive while on the job. Depending on your circumstances, federal law may require that an employer provide you with reasonable accommodations.

Job accommodations and adaptations are modifications of a job, job site, or the way in which a job is done so that a person with a disability can have equal access to do the work. Accommodations and adaptations should be tailored to the autistic individual who requires them.

Some employers may be willing to offer accommodations and adaptations if you ask for them and if you explain how they may benefit you. However, other employers may want you to prove that you have a need for accommodations. If you do not yet have a job, you may want to determine ahead of time if you need accommodations.

For students receiving special education services, the need for accommodations can be determined while the student is still in high school. This should be a part of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). (Federal law requires transition to begin at age 16; however, many states, including Pennsylvania, begin transition at 14. Students with IEPs may stay in high school until they graduate or turn 21.)

Once an individual is no longer enrolled in public school, the need for accommodations will be determined by an evaluator from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). There are age limitations to the receipt of OVR services, so make sure to check with your local office to determine if you qualify.

Tools to make the determination of a need for accommodations may include formal and/or informal tests and work "try-outs," also known as job sampling. A team,

which consists of the individual, the individual's family, and the evaluator, discuss the outcomes of the evaluation process. If you do not yet have a job, the team will develop a plan to help you obtain employment.

Once it is determined that an individual needs accommodations to be successful at work, the team must decide which accommodations and adaptations are most appropriate. Accommodations and adaptations must be individualized and determined on a case by case basis. Both the prospective employee's individual needs and the employer's ability to make the accommodation(s) need to be considered. It is often helpful for the job seeker to suggest what he or she needs and to discuss these potential accommodations with the employer. A job coach can be very helpful suggesting appropriate accommodations to the job seeker as well as practicing workplace skills and individual job skills.

What if you do not know you have a disability or that you need accommodations when you first apply for a job? Some people learn about their disability and need for accommodations after they have been hired. If difficulties at work arise, it is within the individual's legal rights to request accommodations after being hired.

Related Articles:

- [The Role of a Job Coach](#)
- [Workplace Accommodations and Supports for Individuals with ASD](#)
- [The Right to Accommodations in the Workplace](#)
- [IEP Requirements Related to Transition to Adulthood](#)

Recommended Link:

- [CAR Resource Directory \(Select Vocational Programs\)](#)

Additional Resources:

- [On-the-Job Accommodations, from the National Center for Learning Disabilities](#)
- [Ideas for Writing an Accommodations Request Letter](#)
- [An Autistic View of Employment](#)

