Checklist: Reasonable Accommodations

Example: Ann has decided to work through her cancer treatment, as a cashier at a supermarket. She is having trouble with fatigue and is limited in how long she can stand at a time. She also has to constantly drink water because of the effect of her treatment, and as a result, she has to use the restroom often. The supermarket does not allow employees to have beverages at the checkout stand and she is only allowed breaks every 4 hours. Can Ann use reasonable accommodations at work?

☐ Identify what is challenging at work.
  • Space? Policy? Schedule? Workload? Other things?

☐ Gather information.
  • Your job responsibilities and past job performance
  • Your treatment information (e.g., other possible side effects, schedule, etc.)
  • Workplace policies (e.g., telecommuting, flex time, job sharing, etc.)
  • Workplace culture (e.g., other employee examples, past experiences, etc.)
  • Established process to ask for an accommodation?

☐ Understand your rights. (https://TriageCancer.org/Employment)
  • Federal fair employment law – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
  • State fair employment law (http://TriageCancer.org/statelaws)
  • Understand how these and other laws and benefits can work together
  • Quick Guide to How the FMLA Works with Other Benefits (http://TriageCancer.org/QuickGuide-FMLA-OtherBenefits)

☐ Come up with a plan.
  • Think creatively about what could help address the challenges you are facing at work
    • Everything is on the table (unless it is “unreasonable” or is an “undue hardship” on your employer)
    • Come up with a list of options that might help. They might not pick your first choice, but what they pick has to be effective. Get ideas from the Job Accommodation Network: https://askjan.org/media/Cancer.html
    • You can also get more than one accommodation.
  • Decide who to first approach to ask for your accommodation (e.g., supervisor, human resources representative, etc.)
  • Identify the best time AND best way to ask for your accommodation (e.g., in-person, in writing, does your employer have an established process to ask for an accommodation, etc.)

☐ Make sure everyone is on the same page.
  • Get it in writing. After you request an accommodation it is important to document it. Your employer may have a process for this. It could be as simple as sending an email thanking your employer for having the conversation and agreeing to a specific accommodation(s). This can help avoid miscommunication and issues down the road.
  • Make your disclosure preferences known (e.g., to supervisors, co-workers, etc.)
    • If you chose to go to HR and don’t want your supervisor to know about your medical condition, HR can only share that you have been granted a specific accommodation.
  • Understand the interactive process (https://askjan.org/topics/interactive.cfm)
  • Your needs may change over time. You can ask for new accommodations.

Watch our animated video on Managing Side Effects at Work:
https://TriageCancer.org/Video-SideEffectsatWork

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