

MS and the Workplace

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Overview

Common MS symptoms that affect work

Disclosing the diagnosis at work

Job accommodations and resources

Fatigue at work

Fatigue is common and can be hard to treat

Medications for fatigue may not be affective for everyone

Modifications to help with fatigue

- Keeping the workplace temperature cool
- Comfortable furniture and clothing
- Optimize sleep
- Take breaks, do the important things early in the day
- Stay hydrated, avoid afternoon caffeine



Not an actual patient

Cognitive challenges

How cognition is affected

- Memory
- Processing speed
- Attention and concentration
- Planning and executive functions
- Language deficits

Ways to compensate

- Taking notes
- Making lists
- Focus on single/few tasks
- Set reminders
- Keeping a calendar

Talk to your provider

- Identify specific issues
- Referral for cognitive evaluation



Not an actual patient

Health benefits of working

Sustain cognitive and physical activity

Work can build self esteem

Engagement with community

Communicate about work with your provider



Not an actual patient


Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities

MS is a condition covered by the ADA

Right to request reasonable job accommodations

Tiers of disclosure

- Pre-employment: employers cannot ask about disability status
 - Received offer: can require medical information, but cannot revoke job offer unless disability prevention performance of essential job functions
 - Once Employed: employer can request medical information only for business necessity or public safety
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Disclosing your diagnosis

The decision is personal

Advantages

- Reduces stress
- Opportunity to request accommodations
- Chance to educate others about MS

Disadvantages

- Fear or rejection or isolation
- Don't want to be seen as different or weak
- Privacy concerns



Not an actual patient

How to disclose

Be specific, brief, non-apologetic

Explain symptoms and how they affect your job functions

Request appropriate accommodations

Be proactive and positive

Accommodations at work

Job responsibility modifications

Workplace modifications

- Accessible office furniture
- Rest periods during work
- Memory aids or written instructions
- Parking in proximity of office
- Ability to work from home
- Flexible schedules



Not an actual patient

Staying or leaving the workforce

Let your provider know how symptoms affect work

Consider cognitive testing if cognition is an issue

Talk to our social workers



Resources

National MS Society

- <https://www.nationalmssociety.org>
- 800-344-4867

Job Accommodation Network

- <https://askjan.org/>
- 800-526-7234

Social Workers

- Sarah Grim – Outpatient Care Gahanna
 - Kinsey Ludt – Martha Morehouse Outpatient Care
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