

SELF-CARE WHILE WORKING

Self-care is important in all areas of our lives, but especially while working. Those of us with mental health diagnoses should pay close attention to how we care for ourselves while working, to prevent fatigue, burnout or recurrence of mental health issues. Self-care in the workplace also has a positive impact on productivity and can help you maintain wellness while working.

TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE WORKING

1. Ask for what you need to succeed. Do you qualify for accommodations? What does that look like? See the section below on asking for accommodations
2. Create a routine. Use the checklist provided to organize for your workday.
3. Get enough sleep.
4. Clearly communicate your needs for getting your work complete, being respectful and keeping in mind professionalism and effective communication. Communicate clearly in work communications, knowing how to politely request support or discuss work duties.
5. Use mental health and sick days as needed.
6. Take breaks throughout the day, or even use a timer to keep you focused and reminded of breaks.
7. Exercise. This helps clear your mind and keep your body active and strong.
8. Set boundaries. Clock in and out as expected, only working past your schedule as needed and sparingly (always keeping in mind the expectations of your employer).
9. Find supports at work. Colleagues and others who can provide friendly interactions can be beneficial and support you in doing your best. Find positive, upbeat colleagues to develop work friendships with.
10. Utilize mental health check-ins with your supervisor and anyone you supervise to discuss needs, concerns and overall wellbeing in the workplace.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Reasonable accommodations are required for employers by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will support you in maintaining employment. A need for accommodations is supported by a medical diagnosis showing “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” Accommodations must be related to a medical condition and must be reasonable, meaning that they cannot cause undo hardship on the employer. Requests for accommodations must be supported by medical documentation, which should be provided to the Human Resources department. For more information on accommodations, visit <https://choosework.ssa.gov>.

ASKING FOR ACCOMODATIONS

Choose Work, a program of the Social Security Administration, outlines ways to ask for accommodations:



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1. Keep It Simple. Explain your need, how it will help you complete your job and offer options for accommodations.
2. Put it in Writing. Put the disclosure of your medical information and request for accommodations in writing, along with the date requested. Your employer may have their own forms, so check with them.
3. Talk to the Right People. You can disclose your need to anyone that you'd like, but make sure it's appropriate and relevant. If you do not feel comfortable disclosing to your direct supervisor, reach out to the organization's Human Resource Department or the person that manages HR requests and needs.

WORK CHECKLIST:

Before work:

- Prepare work clothes
- Plan/Eat Breakfast
- Plan/Make Lunch
- Exercise (can also be done before, during lunch breaks or after work)
- Prepare a work bag of items you'll need for the day
- Prepare weather-based accessories (coat, hat, gloves, rain boots, etc.)

At Work:

- List priorities and goals for the day
- Plan breaks
- Finish off the day with setting tasks/priorities for tomorrow

After Work:

- Exercise
- Find a way to unwind
- Prepare for the next day

REFERENCES:

How To Request Accommodations. Ticket To Work, Social Security Administration (2018). <https://choosework.ssa.gov/blog/2018-07-19-how-to-request-accommodations>



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