



SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia is a severe and chronic brain disorder that affects around 1 out of every 100 individuals. It may impair a person's ability to think clearly, manage his or her emotions, make decisions, and relate to others.

Schizophrenia can be treated effectively with a combination of medication, education, primary care services, hospital-based services and community support, such as housing and employment.

People with Schizophrenia may suffer terrifying symptoms that often leave them fearful and withdrawn. However, this illness is highly treatable. Early intervention, new discoveries, and treatments are continually improving the outlook and wellness for people with this disorder. There is no known single cause of schizophrenia.

Symptoms may include:

- Delusions, hallucinations, thought disorders
- Lack of motivation, social withdrawal

Persons with Schizophrenia In The Workplace

Accommodation Examples For People With Psychiatric Disabilities
(From The Job Accommodation Network)

Note: People who have psychiatric disabilities will develop some of these limitations, but seldom develop all of them. The degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people who have psychiatric disabilities will need accommodations to perform their job and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following are accommodations available. Numerous other accommodation solutions exist as well.

Maintaining Stamina during The Workday:

- Flexible scheduling
- Allow longer or more frequent work breaks
- Provide additional time to learn new responsibilities
- Provide self-paced workload
- Provide backup coverage for when the employee needs to take breaks
- Allow for time off for counseling
- Allow for use of supported employment and job coaches
- Allow employee to work from home during part of the day, or week
- Part-time work schedules

Maintaining Concentration:

- Reduce distractions in the work area



- Provide space enclosures or a private office
- Allow for use of white noise or environmental sound machines
- Allow the employee to play soothing music using a cassette player and headset
- Increase natural lighting or provide full spectrum lighting
- Allow the employee to work from home and provide necessary equipment
- Plan for uninterrupted work time
- Allow for frequent breaks
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals
- Restructure job to include only essential functions

Difficulty Staying Organized And Meeting Deadlines:

- Make daily TO-DO lists and check items off as they are completed
- Use several calendars to mark meetings and deadlines
- Remind employee of important deadlines
- Use electronic organizers
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals

Working Effectively With Supervisors:

- Provide positive praise and reinforcement
- Provide written job instructions
- Develop written work agreements that include the agreed upon accommodations, clear expectations of responsibilities and the consequences of not meeting performance standards
- Allow for open communication to managers and supervisors
- Establish written long term and short term goals
- Develop strategies to deal with problems before they arise
- Develop a procedure to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodation

Interacting With Coworkers:

- Educate all employees on their rights and responsibilities of accommodation.
- Provide sensitivity training to coworkers and supervisors
- Do not mandate employees attend work-related social functions
- Encourage all employees to move non work-related conversations out of work areas

Difficulty Handling Stress And Emotions:

- Provide praise and positive reinforcement
- Refer to counseling and employee assistance programs
- Allow telephone calls during work hours to doctors and others for needed support
- Allow the presence of a support animal
- Allow the employee to take breaks as needed

Attendance Issues:

- Provide flexible leave for health problems- allow employee to make up time
- Provide a self-paced work load and flexible hours
- Allow employee to work from home



- Provide part-time work schedule

Issues Of Change:

- Recognize that a change in supervision, the office environment or routine may be difficult
- Maintain open channels of communication between the employee and the new and old supervisor in order to ensure an effective transition
- Provide weekly or monthly meetings with the employee to discuss workplace issues and productions levels

Memory Deficits:

- Allow the employee to tape record meetings
- Provide type written minutes of each meeting
- Provide written checklists and instructions
- Allow additional training time

This information was compiled by Open Door Group to assist BC businesses to have successful working relationship with persons with disabilities in our communities.

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