Love Psychotherapy, LLC

Reasonable Accommodations Worksheet

A neurodivergent-centered guide to asking for what you need

Most accommodation guidance is written for someone who already knows what they need, can describe it fluently on demand, and does not find the asking itself costly. That describes very few neurodivergent folx. The hard part is rarely the paperwork. The hard part is translating a lived, often preverbal sense that something is not working into language a manager or a disability services office will recognize — while managing the very real risk that disclosing anything at all changes how you are treated.

This worksheet is a preparation tool. You fill it in for yourself, at your own pace, before any conversation happens. Nothing here is submitted anywhere. The output is a clearer picture of your own barriers and a draft you can adapt — or decide not to use.

You can stop at any point.
There is no requirement to complete this in order, in one sitting, or at all. Several sections ask you to think about disclosure and risk, which can be activating. Skipping a section is a legitimate use of this document.

Name (optional — this is for you)

Date

Setting

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Before you start: what the law actually asks of you

In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (Title I for employment, Title II and Title III for public entities and public accommodations) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require covered employers and schools to provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship. Autism, ADHD, and co-occurring conditions can qualify. A formal diagnosis is often, though not always, part of establishing that — requirements differ between employment and education.

Three things that surprise people

- You are generally not required to disclose your diagnosis to your supervisor. In most employment settings the diagnosis goes to HR or occupational health, and the supervisor is told only what accommodation is needed. Schools differ; disability services will usually need documentation.
- The request does not have to name the ADA, use the word "accommodation," or be in writing to trigger the employer's obligation. Writing is still better, because it creates a record.
- Once you ask, the employer is expected to engage in an interactive process — a genuine back-and-forth about what would work. They may propose an alternative to what you asked for. They may not simply say no and stop.

What matters is functional limitation, not diagnosis.

An employer is entitled to know how your condition limits a job function and what would reduce that limitation. They are not entitled to your clinical history. The whole craft of a good request is describing the barrier and the fix without handing over more than you meant to.

This worksheet reflects U.S. federal law. State and local protections are sometimes broader. If you are outside the U.S., the structure of the worksheet still applies, but the legal frame will not. Nothing here is legal advice.

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Two routes, and you do not have to choose the formal one

Almost everything written about accommodations describes a single path: disclose, document, request, receive. That is the formal route, and it is the one that carries legal protection. It is not the only route, and for a great many neurodivergent folx it is not the realistic one.

The formal route
Runs through HR or disability services. Generally requires disclosure of a condition and some form of documentation. Creates an enforceable obligation on the employer and a record you can rely on later. Slower, more exposing, and gated behind having a diagnosis in hand.

The informal route
Runs through a manager, a team norm, or a change you make yourself. No disclosure, no paperwork, no diagnosis required. Faster and far less exposing. Carries no legal protection, depends entirely on the goodwill of specific people, and can evaporate when those people leave.

The formal route is gated in a way that excludes the people who most need it.
Assessment for adults is expensive, waitlisted, and in many places simply unavailable. A system that requires a diagnosis before it will adjust anything is a system that filters for money and access rather than need. If you do not have a diagnosis, you are not disqualified from this worksheet — you are using the informal column.

Much of what follows serves both routes. The barrier inventory, the translation work, and the prioritisation are identical either way. What changes is who you take it to and how you frame the ask: a formal request names a disability-related limitation and invokes a process; an informal one describes a working preference and asks for a small change. The same underlying need, two different sentences.

Which route am I working toward?

- [ ] Formal — I have documentation and intend to go through HR or disability services
- [ ] Informal — I will ask my manager directly, without naming a condition
- [ ] Informal first, formal held in reserve if it does not work
- [ ] Self-accommodation only — changes I can make without asking anyone
- [ ] Undecided; I am working this out

What makes that the right route for my specific situation?

A note on informal arrangements.
If an informal accommodation is working, it is worth getting it into writing anyway — even just a confirming email after a verbal agreement. Not to escalate, but because a new manager arrives eventually and "we agreed this in March" is a much stronger position than a memory.

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Step 1 — Barrier inventory

Start with friction, not solutions. For each area, describe what actually goes wrong on a difficult day. Concrete beats tidy. “Open-plan noise means I lose the thread of what I was doing roughly every ten minutes and it takes twenty to get back” is more useful than “I have trouble concentrating.” Leave blank anything that does not apply.

Sensory environment

Noise, lighting, temperature, smells, visual clutter, unpredictable interruptions.

Communication

Verbal-only instructions, ambiguity, tone-reading demands, meetings without agendas, phone calls.

Executive function

Task initiation, sequencing, prioritising, working memory, switching, finishing.

Time and scheduling

Early starts, rigid hours, back-to-back demands, transitions, deadline pressure, time blindness.

Social and interpersonal load

Masking cost, small talk, group work, performance monitoring, social events framed as optional.

Physical environment and access

Commute, desk location, movement needs, food and break access, restroom proximity.

Anything else that does not fit the categories above

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Step 2 — Translating experience into functional language

This is the step most guides skip, and it is the one that decides whether a request lands. Take the entries from Step 1 and restate each one as a functional limitation — a plain description of a task you cannot reliably perform under current conditions. No diagnosis, no self-criticism, no apology.

Worked examples

"I get completely overwhelmed in the office."
"Sustained work in an unpredictable auditory environment reduces my accuracy and output. In a quiet setting I complete the same tasks in roughly half the time."

"I can never remember what people tell me."
"I retain and act on written instructions reliably. Verbal-only instructions are frequently lost, particularly when delivered in passing."

"I shut down when plans change."
"Unannounced changes to my schedule reduce my functioning for the remainder of the day. Advance notice of the same change has no such effect."

Note the structure of each example.
Barrier, then contrast. Naming what you can do under different conditions is what turns a complaint into an accommodation request — it shows the limitation is situational and therefore fixable, which is exactly what the employer needs to hear.

Functional limitation 1

Functional limitation 2

Functional limitation 3

Functional limitation 4

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Step 3 — Accommodation menu

Tick anything worth considering. Ticking is not committing; you will narrow down in Step 4. This list is a prompt, not a limit — the most effective accommodations are often idiosyncratic and specific to one person's actual job.

Applying and interviewing

- [ ] Written or asynchronous alternative to a live interview
- [ ] Interview questions supplied in advance
- [ ] Interview by video rather than in person, or the reverse, whichever suits
- [ ] A working sample or task in place of, or alongside, interview performance
- [ ] Additional time between interview stages
- [ ] A named contact for logistical questions before the day

Other (this category)

Sensory

- [ ] Noise-cancelling headphones or earplugs permitted during work
- [ ] Relocation to a quieter desk, corner, or private space
- [ ] Permission to work with overhead fluorescent lighting off; task lamp instead
- [ ] Access to a low-stimulation room for regulation breaks
- [ ] Advance notice of fire drills, construction, or office events where possible
- [ ] Exemption from open-plan seating or hot-desking
- [ ] A workspace free of strong scents; a fragrance-aware policy
- [ ] Control over temperature, or permission to dress for my own thermal comfort

Other (this category)

Bodily autonomy

- [ ] Stimming, movement, and self-regulation permitted without comment
- [ ] Sunglasses, tinted or blue-light lenses permitted indoors
- [ ] Headphones worn over both ears rather than one
- [ ] Softer-fabric or alternative uniform where a uniform is required
- [ ] Breaks taken as needed, including for regulation rather than only for rest
- [ ] Atypical posture, movement, or pacing during meetings accepted

Other (this category)

Communication

- [ ] Written follow-up after verbal instructions or meetings
- [ ] Agendas circulated in advance of meetings
- [ ] Email or messaging as the default channel rather than phone or drop-in
- [ ] Explicit, literal feedback rather than implied or indirect correction

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- [ ] Permission to keep camera off during video calls
- [ ] A named point of contact for clarifying questions

Other (this category)

Executive function and structure

- [ ] Tasks broken into written, sequenced steps
- [ ] Explicit prioritisation when multiple deadlines overlap
- [ ] Checklists, templates, or written procedures for recurring tasks
- [ ] Regular short check-ins rather than infrequent long reviews
- [ ] Body doubling or co-working arrangements
- [ ] Reduced or batched context-switching between task types

Other (this category)

Time and scheduling

- [ ] Flexible start and end times
- [ ] Remote or hybrid work
- [ ] Advance notice of schedule changes wherever possible
- [ ] A recurring meeting at a fixed time rather than one rescheduled each week
- [ ] Meeting-free blocks for focused work
- [ ] Additional time on deadlines, or deadline renegotiation as a normal option

Other (this category)

Meetings and evaluation

- [ ] Questions supplied in advance for performance reviews
- [ ] Written contribution accepted in place of live verbal participation
- [ ] Recording or transcription of meetings permitted
- [ ] Smaller-group alternatives to large-group discussion

Other (this category)

Role and workplace culture

- [ ] Reduced or removed customer-facing requirement
- [ ] Attendance at optional social events genuinely optional, without consequence
- [ ] Exemption from icebreakers and mandatory team-building
- [ ] Clear written expectations rather than assumed norms
- [ ] Tasks matched to strengths and deep interests where the role allows

Other (this category)

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Step 4 — Prioritise

Requesting everything at once tends to go badly: it reads as a list of preferences rather than a targeted fix, and it gives more surface area for refusal. Pick the small number that would change the most.

Priority 1

Accommodation requested

What specifically it would make possible

Cost or effort to implement, as best you can estimate

Many effective accommodations cost nothing. Saying so is useful.

Priority 2

Accommodation requested

What specifically it would make possible

Cost or effort to implement, as best you can estimate

Priority 3

Accommodation requested

What specifically it would make possible

Cost or effort to implement, as best you can estimate

What is the cumulative cost to you of the current situation continuing unchanged?

Burnout risk, error rate, sick leave, attrition. This is the case for acting now.

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Step 5 — Disclosure decisions

Disclosure is not one decision, and it is not binary. Disability employment practice generally recognises three levels, and the middle one is the one most people do not know exists.

Nondisclosure

You ask for what you need without reference to any condition. There is generally no obligation to disclose anything until an accommodation need actually arises, and ordinary requests — asking for an instruction to be repeated in writing, taking your break alone — require no disclosure at all. Costs nothing, protects nothing.

Soft disclosure

You name the barrier and its effect on your work, and request a change, without naming a condition. "Overhead fluorescent lighting gives me headaches that affect my accuracy by mid-afternoon; a desk lamp instead would resolve it." This is the bridge between the two routes, and for a great many people it is the right level indefinitely. It gets the need on record and into a manager's hands without handing over a diagnosis.

Hard disclosure

You name a condition, usually because a formal accommodation is needed and the process requires it. Direct this to someone who can act on it — HR, occupational health, disability services — rather than to a supervisor by default. Some states restrict what an employer may ask for; California, for instance, limits requests for diagnosis and detailed medical information. Under the ADA, however, an employer may in some circumstances insist on knowing the name of the impairment in order to establish that a covered disability exists.

Confidentiality is legally required, and it is narrower than people assume.
The ADA obliges employers to keep disability-related information confidential and to share it only on a need-to-know basis. Colleagues may notice that you have an accommodation — a different start time, extra breaks — but they are not entitled to know why, and you are under no obligation to explain it to them.

Where I intend to sit, and with whom

- [ ] Nondisclosure — requests framed as ordinary preferences, no condition named
- [ ] Soft disclosure — barrier and effect named, condition not named
- [ ] Hard disclosure to HR or disability services only
- [ ] Hard disclosure to my direct supervisor
- [ ] Hard disclosure to my immediate team
- [ ] Starting soft, escalating only if that fails

If asked directly for a diagnosis, what I plan to say

Risk assessment

What is the realistic worst case if I disclose here?

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What protections exist — union, contract, tenure, documented performance record, other?

Who else already knows, and did that go well?

Retaliation is separately unlawful.
Adverse action taken because you requested an accommodation is prohibited under the ADA, independent of whether the accommodation itself was granted. If the climate shifts after you ask, that is worth documenting from the first instance rather than the fifth.

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Step 6 — Draft the request

Fill this in and it becomes a usable email. Keep it short. The goal is to open the interactive process, not to win an argument in one message.

Going the informal route?
Use the same fields, but drop any reference to the ADA or to disability, and reframe the limitations as working preferences: "I catch details more reliably over email" rather than "verbal-only instructions are a disability-related limitation." Same need, lighter ask, no disclosure. You can always escalate to the formal version later; you cannot un-disclose.

To

Subject line
e.g. "Request for workplace accommodations"

Opening — state plainly that you are requesting accommodations under the ADA

Functional limitations — pull from Step 2. Two or three, no more.

Accommodations requested — pull from Step 4, as a short list

Offer to discuss and to supply documentation as needed
Signalling flexibility here materially improves outcomes.

Send it in writing, and keep a copy outside the employer's system.
A dated written request is the single most useful thing you can have if the process stalls later. Forward it to a personal address, or note the date and time somewhere you control.

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Step 7 — Interactive process log

Record each contact as it happens rather than reconstructing later. Memory for conversational detail is one of the first things stress takes.

Two things are worth capturing precisely.
First, whether a genuine back-and-forth occurred, or whether the request was simply dismissed — the absence of an interactive process is itself significant. Second, any written criticism of your communication style, bluntness, or manner. For autistic employees, feedback of that kind arriving after a disclosure is worth preserving rather than absorbing.

Some people choose to record accommodation meetings. Recording law varies: some U.S. states permit recording with the consent of one party only, while others require all parties to consent, and workplace policy may restrict it further. Check the rule where you are before recording anything. Asking openly for consent to record is itself often useful — it tends to make a meeting proceed more carefully.

DATE	WHO	WHAT WAS SAID / DECIDED
DATE	WHO	WHAT WAS SAID / DECIDED
DATE	WHO	WHAT WAS SAID / DECIDED
DATE	WHO	WHAT WAS SAID / DECIDED
DATE	WHO	WHAT WAS SAID / DECIDED

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If the process stalls

A refusal is not necessarily the end, and a delay is not necessarily a refusal. What follows are the ordinary next moves, roughly in order of escalation.

- Ask for the reasoning in writing. An employer declining an accommodation should be able to say why — undue hardship, or that the accommodation would not enable the essential function. A written reason is both clarifying and, if it is weak, useful later.
- Propose an alternative. The obligation is to provide an effective accommodation, not the one you named. Offering a second option often restarts a stalled conversation.
- Offer a trial period. Time-limited pilots are much easier to approve than permanent changes, and a successful pilot largely settles the question.
- Consult the Job Accommodation Network. JAN provides free, confidential consultation to employees and employers, and can suggest options specific to your role. askjan.org.
- Consider a charge of discrimination. The EEOC handles ADA employment complaints; deadlines are short, commonly 180 or 300 days depending on state. The Office for Civil Rights handles education complaints. Speak to an employment attorney before filing if you can.

Notes on where things currently stand

Next action, and by when

Resources

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
askjan.org — free consultation and a searchable database of accommodations by condition and job function

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
eeoc.gov — ADA employment guidance and the complaint process

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
ed.gov/ocr — Section 504 and education-setting complaints

ADA National Network
adata.org — regional centres offering free technical assistance

This worksheet is educational and general in nature. It is not legal advice, does not create a therapist–client or attorney–client relationship, and is not a substitute for individualized guidance about your circumstances. Employment and education law varies by jurisdiction and changes over time.

Well wishes. ▫

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