



# Social Support

## Workplace Support

Working can provide people with a sense of purpose and stability. While working has its positives outcomes, it can also bring about triggers that can aggravate a mental disorder.

Just like taking care of a medical condition such as high blood pressure or diabetes, mental disorders require care so that you can be mentally well. Some of the workplace challenges that people with mental disorders encounter are:

- Frequent medical appointments
- Work absences
- Medication side-effects
- Trouble concentrating
- Problems following a particular schedule
- Prejudice and discrimination

Despite of all these challenges, many workplaces have accommodations that they must provide to their employees who have a mental disorder. You have rights and laws that can protect you from discrimination on the basis of mental illness.

**Below is a summarized version of the National Alliance for Mental Illness Employment Fact Sheet.**

### Legal Protections

#### American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

The American Disabilities Act is a federal law that protects job applicants and employees with disabilities. The ADA applies to employers that have more than 15 employees. To qualify for protection under the ADA, you must be able to show:

- 1.) You have a condition that if left untreated, interferes with daily or work activities. For people with a mental disorder, psychiatric disability would be used to describe the disorder that interferes with major life activities.
- 2.) You are able to perform the essential functions of your job with or without accommodations. This means that you must show you can complete the tasks and duties of the job for which you applied. Even if you have a psychiatric disability, you still must be able to perform your job with reasonable accommodations.



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### Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act is a federal law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability.

This law requires employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal Department or agency to not deny or exclude individuals with disabilities from an equal opportunity to receive program benefits or services.

### Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

If you believe that you have been discriminated against in the workplace because of your mental illness, you can file a complaint with the EEOC. The claims process can be lengthy, but it will help you keep a paper trail of the legal and administrative actions you take to receive equal treatment by your employer.

For guidance about the claims process, visit this website: <https://www.eeoc.gov/employees/howtofile.cfm>