

# Succeeding at Work

## Requesting An Extended Leave of Absence



Sometimes it's necessary to take off multiple weeks to cope with a psychiatric crisis. The **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** is a law that allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the event of an illness or to help care for a family member who is sick while preserving their job placement and benefits. To learn more about the FMLA, visit the Department of Labor's website at [dol.gov](https://www.dol.gov).

### Accommodations at Work

While you must perform the essential tasks of your job, you are entitled to reasonable accommodations (changes made to company procedures/rules) that will help increase and maintain your job performance. Examples of accommodations include:

- ▶ Flexible work schedules or start times
- ▶ Regular written or verbal feedback
- ▶ Reduced distractions or noise in the work area
- ▶ Flexible break schedule
- ▶ Working from home or telecommuting
- ▶ Private, quiet space to rest during a break
- ▶ Written directions and task lists
- ▶ Use of a job coach

*continued on back side*

### We are here to help

Please call **800-279-1301 (TTY: 711)**  
or visit [ssmhealth.com/mental-health](https://www.ssmhealth.com/mental-health)

# Succeeding at Work

## Requesting An Extended Leave of Absence

### How to Request Accommodations

If you have a behavioral health concern and need accommodation, the first step is to ask. It's up to you to request accommodation. Once you have submitted a request, an employer is required to sit down and talk with you about possible accommodations. Before you get started:

- ▶ **Ask your employer's human resources (HR) personnel on how to request an accommodation.**  
A request process may already be in place.
- ▶ **Talk with your treatment provider and ask if they can provide documentation.**  
Your doctor can write a note, usually in the form of a letter, stating that you have mental illness and need accommodation. It may be helpful to share guidance on workplace accommodations with your provider.
- ▶ **Decide what types of accommodations you need.**  
Be specific. Be ready to explain how the accommodation will help you to perform your job.
- ▶ **Put your request in writing.**
- ▶ **Take detailed notes and keep a written record of any conversations you have with the employer.**  
Keep copies of any emails you send and any forms you complete.
- ▶ **Negotiate.** Be flexible and ready to discuss your options.

If you are in emotional crisis, thinking about suicide, or are concerned about someone who might be, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You can also call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.



**We are here to help**  
Please call **800-279-1301 (TTY: 711)**  
or visit **ssmhealth.com/mental-health**

  
**DeanHealthPlan**  
A member of SSM Health