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**WHY COMMUNICATION IS KEY TO THE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS**

Our team at the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) works with everyone involved in the accommodation process—employers, workers, friends and family, legal representatives, and medical providers.   
The situations we encounter and the solutions we help develop vary widely, even among individuals with the same disability or employers in the same industry. There is no accommodation solution that fits every situation. But there is one factor that remains consistent across every scenario, disability, and industry: **the absolute importance of good communication**.  
Below are some tips to help ensure good communication among all parties involved in the accommodation process.

* **Seek to collaborate, not contest.** Rather than approach the accommodation process as adversarial, assume that all parties want the same thing—an effective solution. When parties collaborate to solve problems and address concerns, it's more likely they’ll find solutions that benefit everyone.
* **Be open and honest.** Transparency is crucial for effective communication. Transparency in communication involves being open and honest about decisions, policies, and other information relevant to the accommodation process.
* **Be crystal clear.** Even unintentional misunderstandings can lead to conflict, so don't assume others know what you mean. Communicate clearly so that everyone is on the same page. Be willing to answer questions and provide clarification when needed. This way, differences in perspective can be addressed and issues can be resolved quickly.
* **Be forthcoming.** Loop others into new information and developments as they occur. For example, if you are a worker having trouble getting in to see your health care provider, let your employer know. If you are an employer and there is a delay in processing an accommodation request, reach out to the individual requesting the accommodation so they know the status of their request.
* **Listen actively.** Effective communication requires all parties to listen actively to each other, seek common ground, and show mutual respect for differences in opinions.
* **Stay open-minded.** Sometimes our own perspectives limit our understanding of a situation. Don't assume your way is the only way. Ask questions in good faith rather than rhetorically. Reevaluate at every step and be willing to adjust your viewpoint based on new information. When you are open to the possibility that you might be wrong, you allow for a more constructive interactive dialogue.

There won't be a one-size-fits-all solution for most accommodation situations. But armed with these communication tips, you can build a stronger, more collaborative dialogue that will encourage differing perspectives, help resolve conflicts, and lead to effective job accommodation solutions.