



Mineral



Question of the Week

JUNE 21, 2023

Question

What is the interactive process?

ANSWER

The interactive process is a term most often associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal law that requires organizations with 15 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants and employees who have a disability. The **interactive process** involves working with an applicant or employee to explore effective accommodations so they can perform the essential functions of the job and have equal access to the benefits and privileges of employment. The interactive process should begin when you become aware of the need for a reasonable accommodation. An employee or applicant doesn't need to use any specific word or phrase, or even mention the ADA. Because of this, it's important that managers recognize when a request is being made or an accommodation would be appropriate.

Sometimes, the accommodation needed is easy to provide and not much discussion is needed. In other situations, you may need to analyze the application process or job functions with the individual to understand their limitations and what accommodations will help. Additional resources, such as the [Job Accommodation Network](#), may also help you brainstorm effective accommodations. In some cases, you may need to get input from the applicant or employee's medical provider to best understand what accommodations make sense.

Next, you would choose an accommodation from the options explored, considering which accommodation the employee prefers, but, most importantly, selecting one that is *effective*. If it's not clear whether an accommodation would be effective, you can implement it for a trial period. If that accommodation doesn't work, you can try a different one. Circumstances may change after implementing the accommodation, so it is important to keep an open dialogue with the employee to see if adjustments are needed throughout the employment relationship.

You can find more information about the ADA and the interactive process on the platform.

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.