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Fall 2019

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Led nationally by the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a diverse workforce inclusive of their skills and talents. The 2019 theme is “The Right Talent, Right Now” reflecting a commitment to a robust and competitive American labor force.



### What Can Your Center Do To Celebrate NDEAM?

- **31 Days of NDEAM:** Check out ODEP’s suggestions for daily ways to celebrate: [31 Days of NDEAM](#).
- **Hold a discussion:** NDEAM presents an opportune time to discuss the topic of disability employment with students; one easy way to do so is to use the [What Can YOU Do Campaign](#) ideas and materials.
- **Ask a Disability Program Partner to Present:** NDEAM presents an opportune time to invite a community partner on center to discuss a disability topic with students and staff.
- **Create a display:** NDEAM is a great time to freshen up bulletin boards. Start by putting up this year's NDEAM [poster](#), which will be available in both English and Spanish. Include materials with positive images featuring people with disabilities in various community and employment settings.
- **Organize an event:** Another option is to hold a disability-related event. Such an event might feature local disability service organizations and/or people with disabilities in various professions willing to talk about their jobs, interests, and experiences and activities for students such as a poster contest or disability awareness activities.
- **Participate in Disability Mentoring Day:** Disability Mentoring Day promotes career development for youth with disabilities through hands-on programs, job shadowing, and ongoing mentoring. The nationwide observance is the third Wednesday of each October, but centers may choose to host their own events on any day of the month (or year for that matter). The American Association of People with Disabilities offers [information to assist in implementing a Disability Mentoring Day event](#).



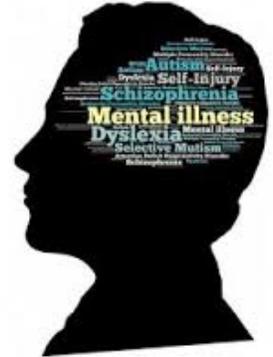
Loring Job Corps Center’s 2018 NDEAM Poster Contest

# Supporting Students with Mental Health Disabilities

## Mental Health Disabilities

The [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) defines a mental health impairment as a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life. Common mental health disabilities in the Job Corps population include:

- Anxiety (Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD))
- Mood (Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder)
- Personality (Antisocial, Boderline)
- Psychotic (Schizophrenia)



## Functional Limitations and Accommodations

The following table outlines some common functional limitations and possible accommodations to support students with mental health impairments.

<p><b><u>Functional Limitation</u></b></p> <p>Stress Intolerance</p> <p><b><u>Accommodations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Allow for frequent breaks</li><li>➤ Modify/restructure schedule</li><li>➤ Provide a pass to access supportive adult/mentor...</li><li>➤ Allow the use of headphones and/or phone apps for the use of calming music/apps</li><li>➤ Establish written long-term and short-term goals</li><li>➤ Provide a quiet work area for completion of independent work, assignments, tasks</li><li>➤ Break assignments, tasks, projects down into smaller sections/parts</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Functional Limitation</u></b></p> <p>Maintaining Concentration</p> <p><b><u>Accommodations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Reduce distractions in the work area</li><li>➤ Provide space enclosures or a private area to work</li><li>➤ Allow for use of white noise or environmental sound machines</li><li>➤ Allow the student to play soothing music using a headset</li><li>➤ Increase natural lighting or provide full spectrum lighting</li><li>➤ Plan for uninterrupted work time</li><li>➤ Allow for frequent breaks</li></ul>
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# Supporting Students with Mental Health Disabilities (cont'd)

<p><b><u>Functional Limitation</u></b></p> <p>Difficulty with Planning/Organizing/Prioritizing</p>  <p><b><u>Accommodations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Allow the use of organizational support tools (e.g., apps, timers, calendars)</li> <li>➤ Provide advance notice/prompts of topics to be discussed to help reinforce planning, preparation</li> <li>➤ Provide extended time on assignments, responses, tasks, tests</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Functional Limitation</u></b></p> <p>Self-Control</p>  <p><b><u>Accommodations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide positive examples of self-control</li> <li>➤ Provide praise and positive reinforcement when student demonstrates self-control</li> <li>➤ Allow student/staff cues for need of time-out or break to redirect or decompress</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Functional Limitation</u></b></p> <p>Difficulty with Change</p>  <p><b><u>Accommodations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintain open channels of communication between the student and the instructors in order to ensure an effective transition</li> <li>➤ Provide weekly or monthly meetings with the student to discuss classroom, workplace, or center issues and production levels—avoid surprising them with negative feedback</li> <li>➤ Use timers/reminders to prepare students for upcoming transitions</li> <li>➤ Practice key transitions with the student (e.g., moving from one assignment/task/class to another; changes in rules/expectations...)</li> <li>➤ Provide a mentor/buddy to help with key transition times</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Functional Limitation</u></b></p> <p>Lack of Social Skills</p>  <p><b><u>Accommodations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Teach replacement behaviors and reinforce with praise, privileges, tangibles</li> <li>➤ Provide specific, positive feedback when student demonstrates appropriate social skill behaviors</li> <li>➤ Provide peer mentors or role models</li> <li>➤ Provide video examples of appropriate social skills and behaviors (e.g., YouTube)</li> <li>➤ Teach acceptable social behaviors in different contexts (academics, career technical, recreation, residential)</li> <li>➤ Allow the student a pass to access supportive adult (e.g., counselor, mentor, Center Mental Health Consultant, another instructor...) when behavior is escalating</li> </ul>

# Spotlight on Assistive Technology: UDL

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## PTSD Coach

The [PTSD Coach app](#) assists people who suffer from—or who may suffer from—challenges related to post-traumatic stress disorder. It offers a self-assessment to help determine whether the user may be suffering from PTSD, resources on how to reach out and get professional care, and tools to help manage the stresses of day-to-day life. There are relaxation exercises to help with anger management as well as positive self-talk.



## Panic Relief

The [Panic Relief app](#) is designed to help people in the midst of high anxiety or a panic attack. The app uses short video clips to guide the user through the sensations that accompany panic and helps them stay calm during an attack. Resources are included to help the user understand what is happening in their body during high anxiety, as well as visualization exercises to help calm and decompress.



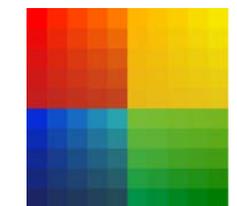
## Happify

The [Happify app](#) is designed to help people overcome stress and negative thoughts, and build resilience. The app helps users to identify patterns, become conscious of their thoughts and feelings, and begins to steer their mind and behaviors towards happiness. The app offers exercises, activities, and games that help train the user's mind and get them practicing patterns that generate positive feelings.



## Mood Meter

The [Mood Meter app](#) helps people build their “emotional intelligence” skills. By using prompts, reminders, and reports, the app helps the user learn what is causing feelings over time, use strategies, to regulate feelings, and learn how their feelings are affecting decisions, relationships, and performance.



## Habit Bull

The [Habit Bull app](#) helps people break negative health patterns (e.g., break an addiction), and helps users establish new, healthy patterns like exercising or meditating. The app helps users track the patterns—allowing them to see them while addressing them head on. Included are inspiring quotes, progress charts, reminder notifications that hold the user accountable to goals.



# Disability Resources

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## 2019 Customized Disability Partnership Tools

2019 Customized Disability Partnership Tools were emailed to each center Disability Coordinator in August. This tool is customized for each center (i.e., provides information about disability organizations that are located in the local area) and can be used to begin developing resources and partnerships. This tool should be available during Disability Program Compliance Assessments to document efforts to establish partnerships.

## Sample Applicant File Review Tracking Log and Guidance Document

The sample AFR Tracking Log has been recently updated. The updated sample log has been further simplified, but still contains all the policy-required components. The technical assistance (TA) built into each of the column headings as comments, has been updated and provides guidance information regarding the intent and purpose of each field. The TA is also now available as a separate guidance document. Both documents are available on the Job Corps Disability Website or from your Regional Disability Coordinator.

## Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)

[Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion \(EARN\)](#) has specific resources for supporting people with mental health impairments in the workplace. Included on the webpage are topics such as awareness, accommodations, assistance and access. EARN's [Mental Health Tool Kit](#) provides background, tools and resources that can help employers learn more about mental health issues and cultivate a welcoming and supportive work environment for employees who may be facing mental health issues.

### Upcoming Webinars

- [Disability Coordinator Orientation: Part 3](#)
- [Service and Assistance Animals](#)
- [Mastering the Center Applicant File Review Process](#)
- [UDL Part 3](#)

#### To register:

- [Go to WebEx](#)