



Accommodations for a Party with a Psychiatric Disability

A party may ask for specific accommodations. However, a party may not know enough about the hearing process to know what they need. Examples of a psychiatric disability include: depression, bi-polar disorder, personality disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, seasonal affective disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. No two parties with a psychiatric disability are exactly alike. A party with a psychiatric disability may have impaired thinking, feeling and behavior. A party's capacity to meet deadlines, produce documents, and to prepare in advance for the hearing may be impaired.

Examples of Accommodations

Accommodations and supports that may help individuals with an psychiatric disability include:

- providing a quiet, private space in which to take a break and review notes during an in-person hearing
- using natural light or full spectrum lighting, rather than florescent lights;
- allowing the use of headphones to keep distractions to a minimum when not on the record;
- creating calendars or checklists to record upcoming hearing events, including due dates for filing motions and lists of witnesses and exhibits.
- providing written instructions step-by-step instructions about the hearing process
- assisting the party to access the how-to information on the public website
- allowing more frequent breaks and longer breaks as needed for the party to regroup and refocus
- allowing a party to use a touch pad or other object to manage stress or provide comfort
- allowing the presence of a comfort or emotional support animal