Migraine and the Workplace

“DO NOT JUDGE ME BY MY SUCCESSES. JUDGE ME BY THE NUMBER OF TIMES I FELL DOWN AND GOT BACK UP AGAIN.” – NELSON MANDELA

Dr. Anikah H. Salim

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About Me

- Full-time work
- Love to travel
- Love to eat
- Extroverted
- Community service
- Support group leader

Beneath my smile is an invisible illness. You wouldn’t begin to understand it unless you walked a mile in my shoes.
My Story

- Chronic conditions since childhood
- 2008 – Knee Dislocation Surgery
- 2014 – Procedure for Herniated, Protruding Disk
- 2015 – DX with Chronic Migraine w/ Aura
Advocacy Beats Stigma

• Share your stories to create effective change.
• Visibility is key to reducing stigma.
• The more people see us, the less they can ignore us.

“Better health through better partnerships”

- VADM Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH, U.S. Surgeon General
Disability in the Workplace

A study by the National Organization on Disability indicated that only 13% of companies in the U.S. have reached the Department of Labor’s target of having 7% disability representation in their workplace.
NOBODY

SHOULD HAVE TO DECIDE BETWEEN THEIR HEALTH AND THEIR CAREER
Migraine and My Job

- Prevention
- Curb triggers
- Understand sickness policies
- Know when to talk
- Support system
‘TOP 10’ most commonly used reasonable adjustments to help people with migraine thrive at work

We surveyed over 400 people with migraine about their experience of managing their migraine at work. They told us that they were most likely to use the following kinds of ‘reasonable adjustments’ to help them:

1. Flexible working
2. Time off for medical appointments
3. Changes to overhead lighting
4. Flexible breaks
5. Technological changes, e.g. an anti-glare screen
6. Flexible working from home policy
7. Changes to their desk
8. Changes to their chair
9. Access to drinking water
10. Access to a quiet room
“When asked for a time for a ticket order, he gave the excuse that he was working through a migraine, leading a co-worker to call him a crybaby.... Then, the head chef asked him what was going, which he could not answer properly.... Another co-worker laughed at the situation, and Matt said it was not funny. He explained to the head chef that he did not feel anything in his hands.... so he was kicked out of the kitchen.”

MATT SIGEL
Having migraine disease has made her anxious about when the next one may strike and how it might interrupt her day—or days. "The impact has been fear, basically," she says. "You start to get one and [wonder], is the whole day going to be shot? How do I explain to somebody that I'm in the middle of doing this and I should probably stop? I just want to go in the bed, I just want to go in the closet, but you gotta power through—we don't have a choice."
Advocacy

Being your own advocate does not make you a difficult patient or a difficult person.
Migraine advocacy is more important than ever before.
Good morning,

This email is inform you that the office policy is to maintain a ‘fragrance-minimized’ work environment for staff who suffer adverse health effects from strong scents. This means that:

Fragrant products such as air fresheners, scented candles, potpourri and other similar items are not permitted in the workplace.
Care should be taken by staff to not over-apply fragrant personal products (fragrances, colognes, lotions, powders and other similar products) to a level that becomes easily perceptible to others.

We have colleagues in the office with asthma, easily stimulated allergic reactions, migraines and/or other respiratory disorders caused by exposure to fragrant products. Staff with such sensitivities are more susceptible to effects of these irritants at levels that are much lower than what might cause problems for those in the general population. People with fragrance sensitivity often experience symptoms such as wheezing or worsening of asthma symptoms; headaches; migraines; nausea; hives and other skin irritations; and/or limitations in memory and concentration.

While we cannot eliminate all scents (e.g., cleaning supplies) from the office environment, we do need to limit it to the minimum that is reasonably possible.

Thank you for supporting a ‘fragrance-minimized’ environment to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for your colleagues.
“Just because I could yesterday doesn’t mean I can today. But just because I can’t today doesn’t mean I won’t be able to tomorrow.”

Georgina E. Banks

Hey Warrior, keep going.

Be gentle with yourself. You’re doing the best you can.

you are stronger than you think
Outshine Your Label

YOUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES DON’T DETERMINE WHERE YOU CAN GO; THEY MERELY DETERMINE WHERE YOU START.

Nido Qubein
FIND YOUR VOICE AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO FIND THEIRS

Stephen R. Covey

Each step was legendary. Not for where she was heading, but because she was brave enough to keep walking.

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Thank you!

@Migraine.Doesnt.Win