514-0301 or visiting www.ada.gov.

Taking time off

While it’s important to use your support network to help cope with job-related problems, it’s just as important to take care of your health. Take advantage of paid sick leave or vacation time if your symptoms become severe. If you don’t have enough leave time, you have some other options.

Short- or long-term disability insurance is offered by some employers. These policies allow employees to take time off with a percentage of their pay if they are ill or injured. Look through your employee manual or check with your Human Resources department to find out what your workplace offers. You may also be able to buy a policy on your own.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a law that allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during a year if the employee or a family member becomes seriously ill. FMLA is a complex law; research it to see if you can benefit from it. For more information, call 1-866-487-9243 (TTY 1-877-889-5627) or visit www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are government benefits paid to people who can’t work because of physical or mental disability. You can apply for SSDI at your local Social Security Administration office, by phone or online. Call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or visit www.ssa.gov to learn more about SSDI.

Activities during recovery

When you are recovering from an episode of mania or depression, you may need to spend some time with no demands on your time or energy. Later, when you start to feel better, you may want something to occupy your time. Volunteering may be an option. Contact charity organizations in your area to find out what type of assistance they need. Helping your local DBSA group or forming a new group can also be rewarding.

As you recover, pace yourself to keep from becoming over-stressed. When you go back to work, you might want to work part-time until you are sure your symptoms are stabilized.

Going back to work

If you have quit a job or been fired, or if you are unable to find a job, you are not alone. Getting back to work right away if you haven’t been working for awhile, may take some time. Having ideas about your goals and skills can help. Ask a talk therapist or employment counselor for help identifying your skills and planning your search. Look for community-based services with sliding fee scales.

Make a list of your skills and the qualities that make you a good employee. Are you creative? Hard working? Friendly? Considerate? What life experiences have you had, and what have you learned from them? All these things are assets you can bring to a job.

Then list the things you want from a job. Do you like to work alone or with a large group? Do you prefer a quiet environment or one with a lot of activity? Do you prefer simple work or solving complicated problems? Do you like to be given directions or do you prefer to work on your own? What time of day do you prefer to work? How far are you able to commute?

For help writing your resume and cover letter, look for helpful articles in the business section of your newspaper and on job search web sites. You can also check your local library or bookstore for books on finding a job. Ask people you know, including those in your DBSA group, if they know of any available jobs. Don’t give up hope, even if it takes some time to find a job. Don’t let past setbacks or bad job experiences keep you from pursuing your goals.

Job Resources

The following organizations and others listed in this brochure may provide additional help with job-related issues. DBSA assumes no responsibility for the content or accuracy of the material they provide.

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
(Provides information but cannot give individual legal advice.) www.bazelon.org

Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center
1-800-949-4232 (TTY) http://www.adata.org/

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
1-800-669-4000/1-800-669-6820 (TTY) www.eeoc.gov

Job Accommodation Network
1-800-526-7234 (TTY) http://www.jan.wvu.edu/

National Association of Protection and Advocacy
1-202-408-9514 www.napas.org

National Center on Workplace and Disability
1-888-886-9898 (V/TTY) www.onestops.info

National Partnership for Workplace Mental Health
www.workplacementalhealth.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)
1-800-789-2647 or 1-866-889-2647 (TTY) www.mentalhealth.org

This page provides a very brief introduction the Americans with Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act and Social Security Disability Insurance. The information provided should not take the place of a consultation with the appropriate agency or professional. Decisions regarding leave, disability or other important employment issues should not be based solely on the information on this or any other web site.