

Workplace Accommodations

Janet works for a child protective service agency. Janet began struggling with vicarious trauma, having symptoms that disrupted her work and home life. Luckily for her the agency she worked for had begun their internal trauma transformation efforts and her supervisors were aware of the effects of trauma, particularly vicarious trauma on their workforce. Janet's direct supervisor was very accommodating, helping her access treatment, lighten her work load, and remove cases from her workload that triggered her, all so she could better manage her stress.

Unfortunately, in order to lighten Janet's workload, her coworkers had to take on the extra cases. These caseworkers were already overloaded and stressed, and they quickly became frustrated with her accommodations. After a few weeks Janet noticed that her coworkers were treating her differently. Understanding that their frustration stemmed from taking on her work, she no longer felt comfortable or safe taking care of herself. Janet was afraid to say anything to her supervisor. She knew she couldn't take on the workload that she previously kept because she wasn't ready to handle it all again, but at the same time she didn't feel right keeping the restrictions in place.

The accommodations were meant to help Janet, yet the added stress and tension did not support her healing. She is considering quitting her job altogether.