



# 2024 INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

## SPEAKER

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## TITLE & ORGANIZATION

Headache Specialist  
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## TOPIC

# How To Manage Migraine Stigma at Work

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Migraine is a highly isolating disease, but over 1 billion people in the world suffer from it, so always remember, you are not alone.
- Migraine is often hidden at work due to the stigma associated with the disease.
- Joining a patient advocacy organization or support group can help those with migraine feel less alone and provide a sense of community.
- The Global Patient Advocacy Coalition, the American Migraine Foundation, and Migraine at Work are recommended resources for learning more about migraine.
- Disclosing migraine at work can help fight stigma, and provide validation and understanding, but it's important to consider the work environment and potential consequences before deciding to disclose.
- The appropriate person to speak to about accommodations may vary depending on the organization, but human resources (HR) and immediate supervisors are good starting points.
- Work factors that are difficult for people with migraine include high workload, unnecessary stress, social demands, and shift work.
- Workplace accommodations can include a flexible work schedule; managing lighting and noise; allowing frequent access to breaks, water, restrooms, and medications; providing time-out rooms; and helping with ergonomics.
- Getting reasonable accommodations is a right, but the employer still wants you to be able to do your job if you get those accommodations.
- Finding jobs that allow for flexibility, autonomy, and a migraine-friendly environment can be beneficial for individuals with migraine.

## TREATMENTS CITED

Workplace accommodations

## QUOTES

*"Eighty-nine percent of migraine-related productivity loss is due to presenteeism. So, people come and are present at work, but they're not as productive as they normally would [be] because of all the symptoms of the disease."*

*"People are about 50% as effective as they normally would [be] when they work during a migraine attack."*

*"The thing I hear the most commonly in my practice seeing patients is a fear of being fired or having to quit the job because of all of the symptoms of the disease, but also because of the stigma."*

*"I am very upset when I see that 55% of people with migraine have to change their career goals. I do not think that people with migraine should choose the job because of migraine, but currently because of the situation with the disease, with access to treatment, with workplaces, this is the reality."*

## PRACTICAL STEPS

- Prepare before disclosing your migraine condition at work. Take the time to gather information about your disease, its symptoms, and how it affects you at work.
- Talk to your headache specialist, join support groups, and gather data to present a strong case for why work accommodations are necessary.
- Find allies and support: Seek out people in your workplace who understand and acknowledge your condition.
- When requesting work accommodations, consider what would be helpful for you. Discuss this with the appropriate person, such as someone in HR or your immediate supervisor.
- Be true to yourself: Avoid pushing through and feeling guilty about taking care of yourself. Don't feel pressured to conform to societal expectations if it negatively impacts your health.