#436: Talking to Employers and Medical Staff about Work: An Intervention to Increase Access to Work Accommodations

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Introduction

- **Minimizing employment disruption** during cancer treatment improves long-term job retention and may **reduce cancer-related financial toxicity**.
- Cancer survivors who **receive work accommodations** are **more likely to remain employed** during/after treatment.
- Many cancer survivors are **unaware of available accommodations** and **uncomfortable initiating requests**.
- We developed an English/Spanish intervention based on vocational rehabilitation principles: ***Talking to Employers and Medical Staff about Work*** **(TEAMWork)**

Features

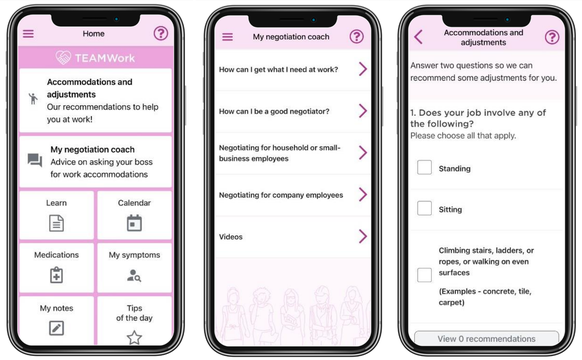
- Education on work accommodations
- Employer negotiation strategies
- Symptom self-management
- Guidance on communicating with clinicians

Methods

- In an **ongoing randomized controlled trial,** we are comparing the efficacy of the TEAMWork mobile app to the booklet as a job retention tool
- Here, we present an **exploratory analysis** of **accommodations requested** among all study participants
- We recruited **420 women** aged 18-65 with stage I-III breast cancer who spoke English and/or Spanish, were **employed pre-diagnosis**, and planning or had started (neo)adjuvant **chemotherapy**.
- Participants were recruited between Oct 2021 – Mar 2025 at multiple New York City sites.
- **Self-reported data on accommodations requested** was assessed at baseline, the midpoint of chemotherapy, and end of chemotherapy

Materials

TEAMWork Intervention Content



Patients were randomized to receive intervention via a mobile application (n=211)

...or a 172-page booklet (n=209)

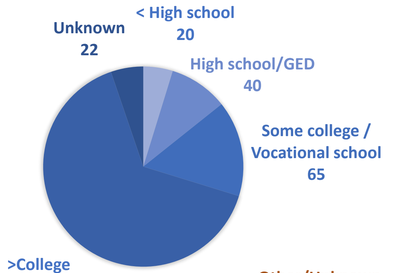


Results

Table 1. TEAMWork Participant sociodemographic characteristics

	TOTAL[1]
	420 (100)
Characteristic	
Age in Years[2]	48 (9.2; 25 – 65)
Race/Ethnicity	
White or Caucasian	218 (51.9)
Black or African-American	76 (18.1)
Asian	42 (10.0)
Hispanic/Latina	76 (18.1)
Other/Unknown	22 (5.2)
Language	
English	374 (89.0)
Spanish	46 (11.0)
Employment Status at Baseline	
Working full or part time	319 (75.9)
Working by the hour/day	9 (2.1)
Stopped working	92 (21.9)

[1] No. (%); [2] Mean (standard deviation; minimum – maximum)



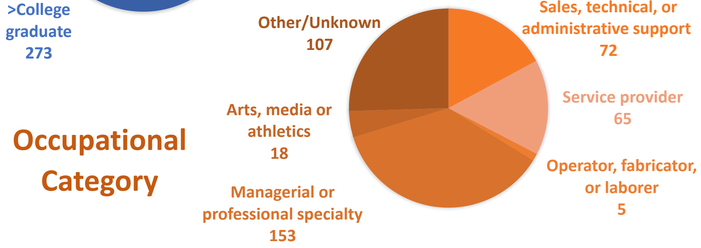


Table 2. Accommodation requests among Mobile App and Booklet Participants

	Mobile App					Booklet				
	Baseline		During Treatment		Difference in Percentage	Baseline		During Treatment		Difference in Percentage
	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
TOTAL	*211*	*100.0*	*191*	*100*		*209*	*100*	*188*	*100*	
Accommodation										
Any accommodation	177	83.9	156	81.7	**-2.2**	177	84.7	160	85.1	**0.4**
Work from Home	60	28.4	81	42.4	**14.0**	63	30.1	89	47.3	**17.2**
Reduced Hours	60	28.4	100	52.4	**24.0**	69	33.0	104	55.3	**22.3**
Change Responsibilities or Tasks	22	10.4	67	35.1	**24.7**	16	7.7	60	31.9	**24.2**
Modified Work Environment	18	8.5	37	19.4	**10.9**	13	6.2	34	18.1	**11.9**
Scheduled or Additional Breaks	25	11.8	64	33.5	**21.7**	23	11.0	59	31.4	**20.4**
New or Modified Equipment	9	4.3	14	7.3	**3.0**	10	4.8	24	12.8	**8.0**
Change in Position	10	4.7	21	11.0	**6.3**	7	3.3	17	9.0	**5.7**
Time Off	102	48.3	106	55.5	**7.2**	111	53.1	117	62.2	**9.1**
Time Off to go to Doctor's Appointments	161	76.3	129	67.5	**-8.8**	158	75.6	142	75.5	**-0.1**

Discussion

- Declines in <u>new</u> requests for time off for doctor's appointments may reflect early awareness or consistent need for this type of accommodation from diagnosis through treatment
- Future research will focus on identifying which intervention formats are most effective for different types of patients.

Conclusions

Both formats of the TEAMWork intervention had promising early results in empowering patients with breast cancer to request work accommodations during chemotherapy.

Contact

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