

TRUST: Workplace Disclosure

A Resource for Community Agencies and Job Seekers with Disabilities

The following resource is designed to provide you with information and considerations regarding workplace disclosure, not legal advice. There is no right or wrong way to disclose. Every situation is different and deserves serious thought and deliberation. Remember it is your decision, so be sure to have all the facts.

What is Disclosure?

For those with disabilities, disclosure occurs when an applicant for a job informs his or her employer or potential employer about a disability. Disclosure isn't limited to disability; it can also include social or religious practices. During the job search and hiring process you are under no obligation to disclose your disability.

Know Your Rights

- A person with a disability cannot be discriminated against because of his or her disability.
- A person with a disability cannot be denied an interview, refused hiring or firing due to his or her disability (as long as the disability does not affect performance).

Know Your Responsibilities

- If your disability could affect workplace safety you do have a responsibility to disclose.
- You do have to disclose your disability for the benefits of life insurance. Insurance companies are required to keep your personal information confidential.

Please see the resource 'Know Your Rights: A Resource for Trainers and Persons with Disabilities,' which can be found in the Toolbox, for additional information regarding your rights in an employment relationship.



Opportunities for Disclosure: Key Considerations

Timing is important as you consider disclosing your disability. Consider all your options carefully. If you choose to disclose you have the opportunity to have your STP[®] trainer or an employment counsellor discuss your disability and accommodation needs with an employer. This individual can advocate on your behalf to indicate that your disability will not hinder your ability to perform your job.

- *On the resume or job application* – As a rule, disclosing at this point is not beneficial. Allow your resume to showcase your qualifications, and capabilities. Disclosing your disability at this point might disqualify you as a potential employee at the outset.
- *Before the interview* – If a disability is visible, disclosing ahead of the interview may be beneficial. Necessary accommodations can be identified ahead of time, showing potential employers you are comfortable with managing your needs. Disclosure before an interview can showcase your problem solving and organization skills while promoting trust with a potential employer.
- *During the interview* – Often seen as the most common time to disclose, interviews can be an opportunity for both the potential employer and prospective employee to ask questions. Disclosing during an interview gives you the opportunity to respond briefly and positively to any questions an employer might have. This option also allows you as a job seeker to showcase your capabilities and qualifications. Some suggest discrimination is less likely in a face-to-face meeting.
- *After a job offer has been made* – Often considered the time for negotiation, disclosing after a job offer has been made can be an opportunity to discuss accommodations if required. However, there could remain a need for you to assure employers of your ability to succeed in the job.
- *After you start working* – If you are considering informing an employer about your disability after you've started your job, there are some considerations to be aware of. This option won't allow you the opportunity to access accommodation at the outset of the



employment contract. Relationships you establish with co-workers may be damaged if they feel misled upon disclosure at a later date. On the other hand, disclosing after you start working may be an opportunity to prove yourself on the job without fear of discrimination.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure at an early date can foster a sense of trust between a person with a disability and his/her employer. It also contributes to an open and communicative relationship. • Employers must provide accommodations for an individual with a disability, short of undue hardship. • Disclosure ensures your protection under anti-discrimination and Human Rights legislation. • Disclosure promotes greater freedom to communicate and identify possible means to reduce stress levels and optimize performance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may treat you differently or regard you with curiosity. • Disclosure may lead to discrimination or differential treatment. • Disclosure can be uncomfortable and personally challenging. <p><i>As a job seeker with a disability, disclosure demands a high level of comfort and self-awareness.</i></p> |

