



TTW2021 Employment Preparation Workshops for Persons with Disabilities - May 2021

Session 1: Disclosing Your Disability - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Question	Response
Is it a legal requirement for me to disclose my disability to an employer?	No. You do not have to disclose your diagnosis to an employer, and it is against the law for employers to ask candidates if they have a disability. However, if you do inform an employer that you live with a disability, they can ask questions about how that might impact certain job responsibilities (such as how much weight can you lift, whether you can stand all day, etc.). That is why we recommend using a Disclosure Script presented in the TTW2021 workshop that focuses on your strengths and abilities, lists any limitations you may face on the job as a result of your disability, and propose accommodations to an employer. At the end of the day, you only want to disclose early if you feel that your disability may impact your job performance, or if there is any concern around health and safety in the workplace.
If I live with more than one disability, should I disclose them all?	As alluded to in the question above, you will only want to disclose your disabilities if you feel that one or more of your conditions may impact your job performance. When you do disclose, it is important to focus on your strengths, the value you can add to a company, and come forward with some accommodations that you think will work for you.
I was told that in for nursing jobs, I should be disclosing my disability. Is this true?	Nursing is a profession that is continually on the edge of change. With the high standards nurses are held to, along with the many skills they are required to master and the tasks they accomplish on a daily basis, those in the nursing profession with disabilities may need reasonable accommodations to effectively perform their jobs. You can use a Disclosure Script to highlight your strengths and abilities, identify any disability-related limitations, and couple that with a clear accommodation request. There are a number of accommodation ideas for essential nursing duties that you can explore. (reference = https://askjan.org/topics/Nurses.cfm)
I live with a Learning Disability and during my interview I had to write a test which I struggled to finish	If you know that your Learning Disability affects your speed and fluency of your writing and you need more time to process and express your thoughts in writing, then next time it would be a good idea to request additional time for any interview-related tests. Many employers mention that accommodations are available during interviews as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) so you

<p>on time. How should I have handled that?</p>	<p>would want to reach out to the person arranging interviews in advance.</p>
<p>I have a gap in my work history that is related to my disability. How do I explain that to potential employers?</p>	<p>Sometimes it can be tricky to explain any gaps in your work history during an interview, especially if they are related to a mental illness. Many people living with a mental illness are worried that those gaps will count against them. Please check out these tips on how to manage resume gaps. (reference - https://www.talkspace.com/blog/9-tips-managing-gaps-resume-due-mental-illness/)</p>
<p>I know that when disclosing my disability, I should focus on my strengths. What is the difference between soft skills/strengths and hard skills?</p>	<p>That's right - A good disclosure is one where you convey your accommodation needs confidently, while highlighting your strengths and abilities. Feel free to review the disclosure script and resources presented in workshop 1.</p> <p>When it comes to your strengths, you want to think about all the soft skills you have developed, along with all the hard skills you have learned through school, past work or volunteer opportunities, and through living in an able-bodied world as a person with a disability (you have much to offer!).</p> <p>Soft skills are transferable skills and character strengths, not specific to a job, and shows how well you interact with others and usually revolve around teamwork, problem solving, communication and work ethic.</p> <p>Hard skills, on the other hand, are specific to a job or industry which are teachable, measurable, and quantifiable. It's important to mention all relevant soft and hard skills in an interview and give examples of how you have demonstrated them.</p>
<p>Can I see a picture of Jeff's cat who made an appearance during the TTW event?</p>	<p>Meet Molly, my senior kitty who is 20 ½ years old and charming as ever!</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>

Creating Your Disclosure Script

Just like your “elevator pitch”, that provides a concise overview of your skills and future goals, your “disclosure script” is a brief summary of how your disability impacts your work and provides accommodation solutions. Having a “script” and practicing it with friends, relatives, and mentors will help you when it comes time to disclose in the employment process. This activity is designed to help you positively advocate your strengths and confidently communicate to employers that your disability will not impact your workplace performance once the accommodations you need are implemented. Let’s get started!

1. Describe your disability in simple terms that most people could understand.

2. What are your top strengths and abilities that relate to this position?

3. What are the job duties that could be difficult for you to perform?

4. Now, think about possible accommodations. Are there strategies or tools you have used in the past that have allowed you to overcome similar problems? Research your options if this is an issue you have not previously encountered.

Now combine all of these points into a cohesive dialogue that you feel comfortable sharing with potential employers. Here is a **sample disclosure script** that you could use:

“Although I don’t anticipate any problems, I did want to mention that I do have (preferred term for your disability). I do believe that my (one or two strengths) will allow me to excel in this position, however sometimes (indicate your functional limitations) might interfere with my ability to (describe the duties you may have difficulty performing). In the past, I have found that I can overcome this issue with (describe specific accommodations you need). I wanted to let you know so we could address any potential concerns at this time.”