

# The *Discover* Ability Network Disclosure and accommodations

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# Agenda

- Disclosure
  - What is it?
  - Making the decision to disclose
  - Decision-making process
  - How to disclose
- Accommodations

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**What might be different during job search, or when you are employed, if you have a disability?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

# Job searching and employment when you have a disability



What tools you use



How and where you look for jobs



Disclosure – is disability part of your story?



What do you need to do the job?

# Job Search Tools



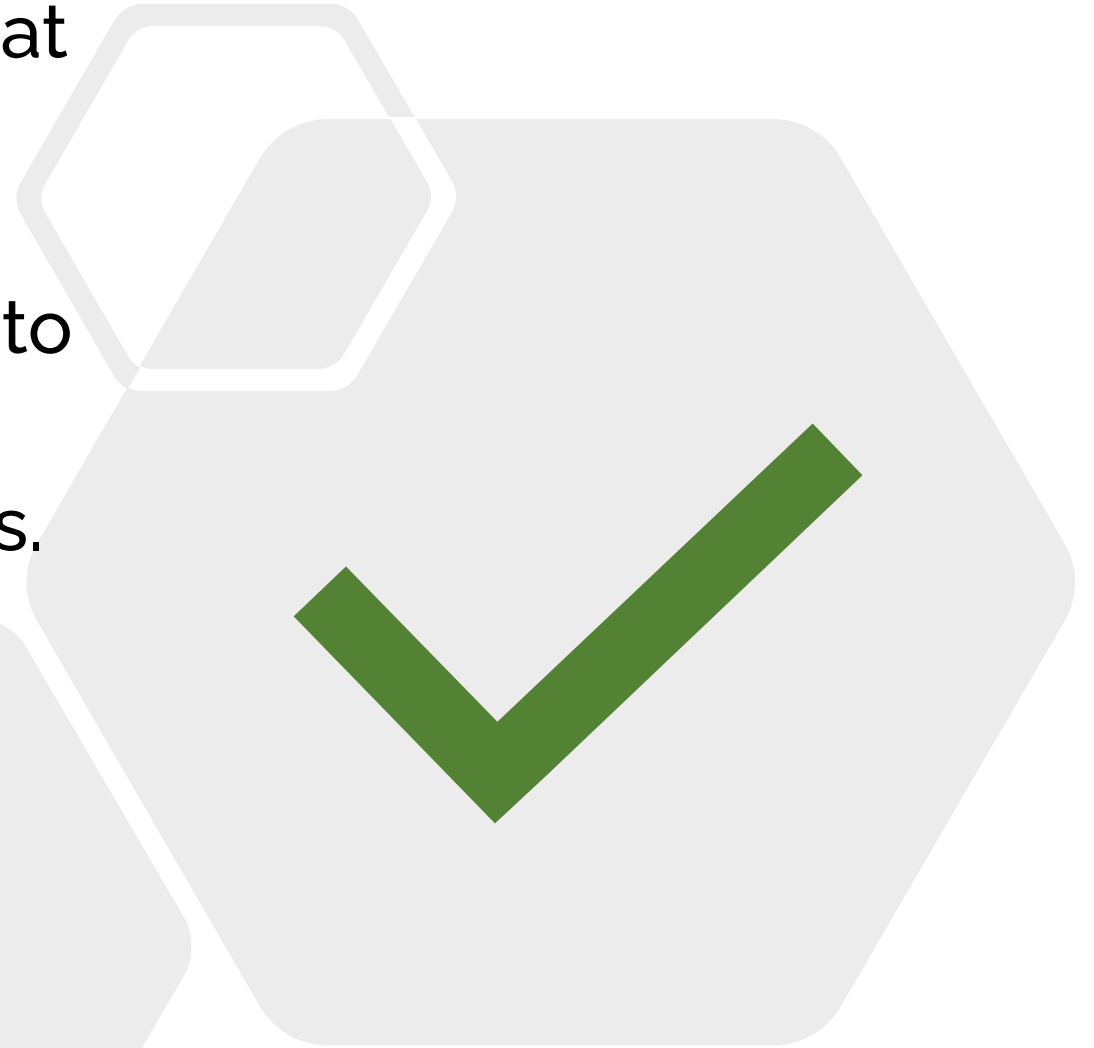
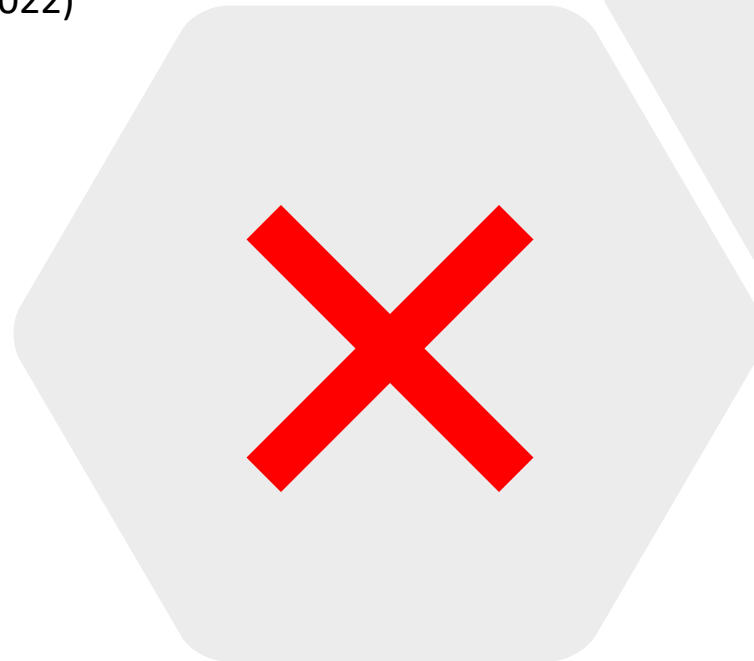
- “Your Story”
- Resumé
- Cover Letter
- References
  
- Networking
- Interview Skills
- Informational interviews
- Mentors
  
- Social Media / website
- Portfolio
  
- *Discover* Ability
  
- Job boards
- Company websites
- Job fairs

- Disclose? Gaps?  
Are references briefed?
  
- Disclose? Ability-focused?  
Mentors with and w/o disabilities
  
- Disclose? Tone?  
Unintentionally sharing information?
  
- Disclose to be matched to opportunities. Unique tool for PwDs
  
- Disclose?

Disclosure is when you tell others that you have a disability or a health condition. You may also ask for changes you need in the workplace to do the main parts of a job. These changes are called accommodations.

(Tomas, V., Ahmed, H., and Lindsay, S., 2022)

Disclosure is not sharing a medical diagnosis or personal health details.



# The decision to disclose is a personal choice

- Is your disability visible or invisible?
- Type of disability
- Severity of disability
- Health status
- Require an accommodation?
- Past experiences
- Context – who is the employer?  
What is the job? What is the workplace environment?





People with a disability are often unwilling to disclose

**60%** of people with a disability stated they are unwilling to disclose any information related to a disability

(Nash, Kate. 2014. Secrets & Big News)



## Providing an accommodation means knowing there is a barrier

To provide an accommodation, an employer first needs to know there is a barrier or issue.

You are the only person that can tell an employer that you require a change.

You are not legally obliged to disclose unless it is related to health or safety, or the ability to do the job.

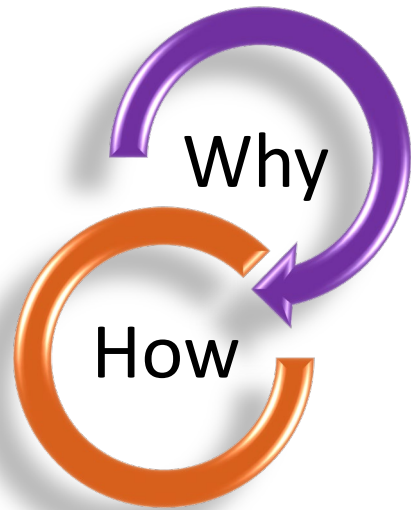
# Are you disclosing if, and when, you mean to?



- Are you intentionally disclosing?  
Are you unintentionally disclosing?
- On social media, information can be shared, forwarded, or copied
- Is your approach consistent across all your job search tools?
- Talk as much about your abilities as your disability

# Disclosure logistics: how and why

(Thomas, V. et al., 2022)



- **Why** - relevance? Will it make you feel better/more authentic? Access an accommodation? Remove a barrier? Help educate someone?
- **How** - tone, body language, and content
  - Be factual, not emotive
  - This a discussion
  - Your employer may be unfamiliar with your disability.

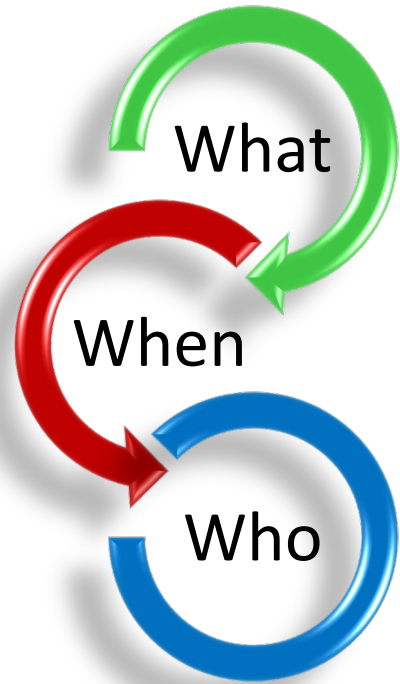
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**If you were to choose to disclose, when would you feel most comfortable?**

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# Disclosure logistics



- **What** – personal choice. That you have a disability. May also share what accommodations are needed or barriers are present.
- **When** – disclosure is a personal decision. It can occur at any time in the talent acquisition process. There is no right or wrong time.
  - before interview, during interview, after job offer, after trial period, or as situation changes
  - legally required to disclose a disability if it relates to doing a job properly or to health and safety
- **Who** - employer, manager, recruiter, Human Resources – perhaps, colleagues

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**What might prevent you from disclosing or asking for an accommodation?**

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## The risks of disclosure

- Fear of unconscious bias/stigma
- Fear of accommodation requests being denied or costs will be too high
- Fear of negative consequences (“I may not get the job / promotion”)
- Your accommodation request may not be what you feel you need
- Fear that you will be treated differently
- Fear that your information will not stay confidential

# The value of disclosure

- Accommodations allow you to do the job – that's your right
- Accommodations allow you to be productive instead of 'making do' <sup>1</sup>
- Feeling valued can positively impact job satisfaction, commitment and productivity
- Companies can plan appropriate resources and support

<sup>1</sup>Nash, Kate. Secrets & Big News; Enabling people to be themselves at work





# Know what you need to do the job...



## Ask yourself:

- Is there a barrier or challenge? What is it?
- What has worked in the past?
- What conditions do you work best in?



## Still not sure what accommodations you need? Ask:

- Employment counsellor
- Accessibility centre
- Disability consultant or specialist
- Job Accommodation Network website [\(JAN\) S.O.A.R.](#)



Accommodations are not ‘extra’ or ‘special treatment’ – they are a right. They allow a person with a disability to do their job. Standards are not lowered.

# What accommodations can you ask for?



## Removal of a barrier, or changes and adjustments that address:

- assumptions or unconscious bias
- communication or accessing information
- tools or assistive / adaptive devices
- work environment and spaces
- processes

# Examples of accommodations

## Situation / Person

Deaf customer service agent

Job seeker with anxiety who is interviewing and needs to complete timed assessments

Employee has chronic back pain

## Barrier

Communicates differently

Interview style/type

Workstation and lack of breaks during the day make the pain more uncomfortable.

## Accommodation

Remote work / Written / Captions / ASL interpreter

No timed assessments. Provide questions before hand.

Ergonomic assessment - sit/stand desk, frequent stretch breaks.

# Disclosing a disability

- 1** State that you have a disability or a health condition

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- 2** Share what the barrier or challenge is, and how an accommodation will let you do the job

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- 3** Discuss alternatives - provide realistic suggestions

# Disclosing a learning disability

**1** I have a disability

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**2** I learn differently than other people, so I require extra time during training. In the past this has allowed me to learn all the material well.

*Discuss the possibilities*

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**3** Yes, I think an additional week would be appropriate. I am happy to come in early every shift to complete the paid training.



# Tailor your message

- You may choose to disclose to some employers, and not to others
- What is your goal – an accommodation? To educate/explain? To feel comfortable?
- Emphasize your strengths and qualities
- Practice disclosing with someone you trust, who will give you honest feedback

# Strategies for disclosing

- Meet someplace private and comfortable
- Be aware of your body language, and your tone
- Clearly identify the barrier. Suggest options but avoid ultimatums. This is a discussion and a process
- Agree on next steps and timing
- Have the employer write your agreement down





# After a person discloses, the interviewer or the employer might ask...

- What are some suggestions you have for accommodations?
- What limits or restrictions are caused by the disability (functional limitations)?
- For information related to providing an accommodation (i.e., doctor's note) to assist in identifying the needed accommodation (*the employer pays for this*)

**Not** entitled to know everything about the medical condition or diagnosis.

# The employer decides on the accommodation

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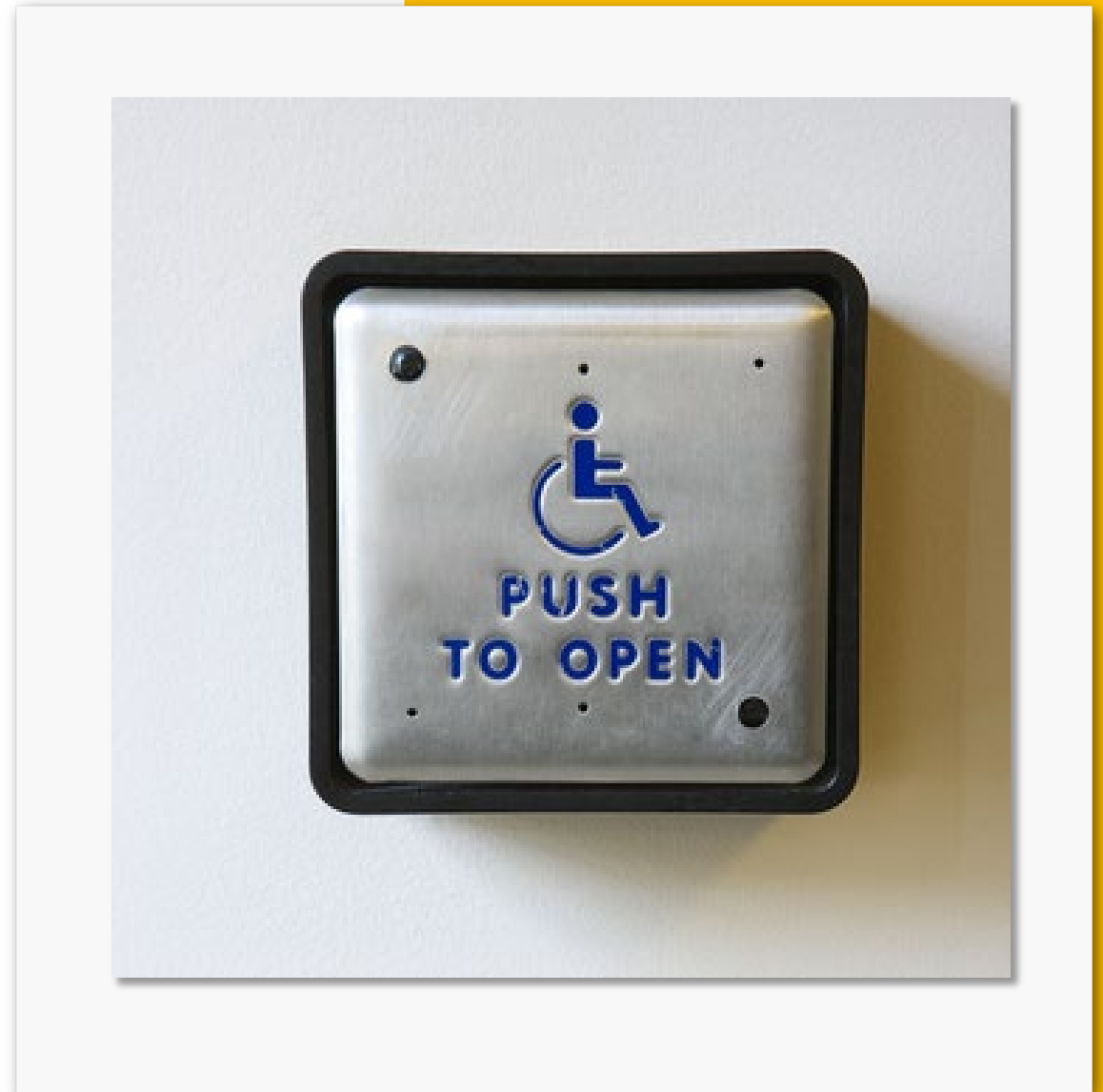
- Be flexible and offer suggestions – this is a discussion
- The employer must provide an accommodation, but gets to decide what the accommodation will be

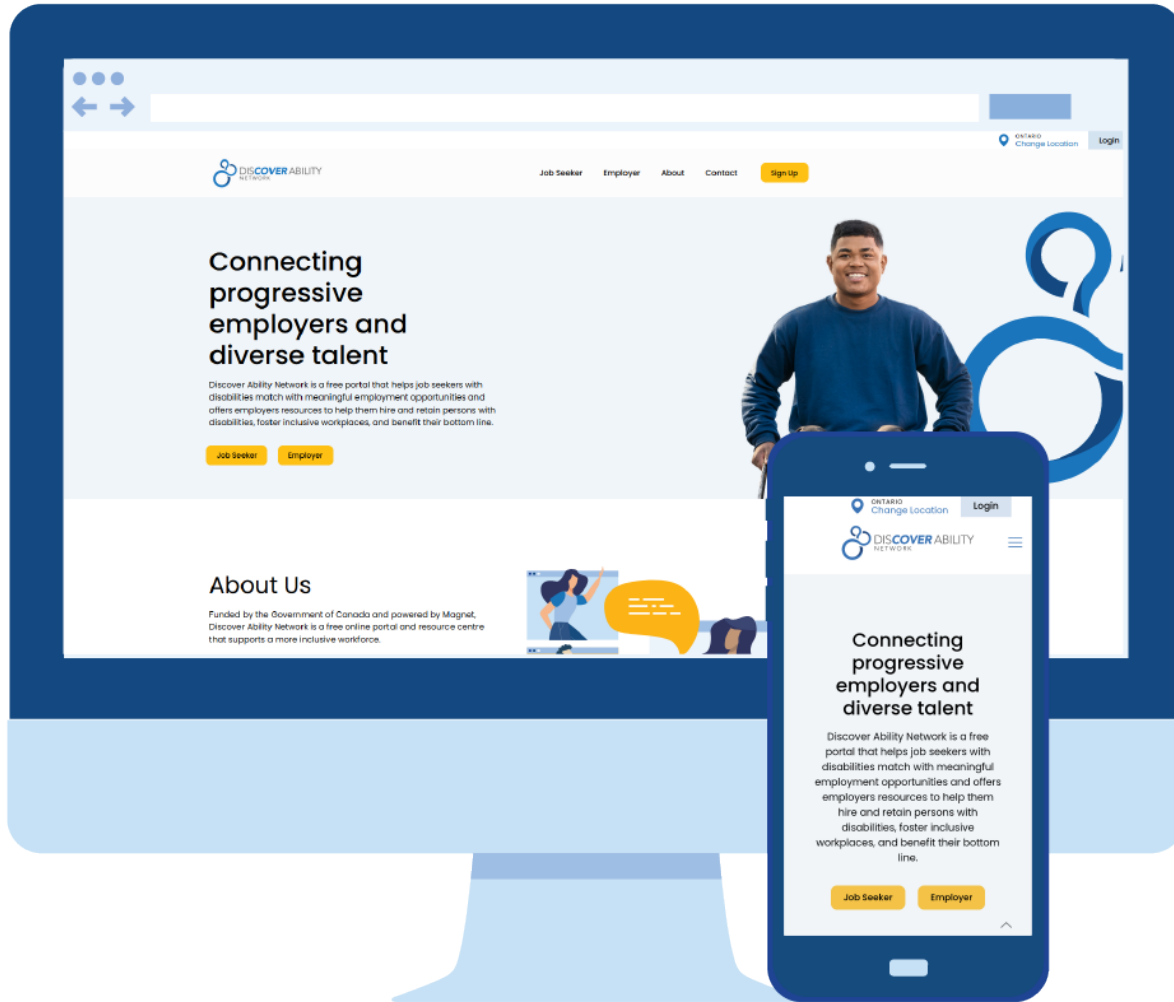


# Is the accommodation working?

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- Accommodations can be an ongoing conversation
- Have a written accommodation plan in place
- Review your workplace accommodation plan with your manager or Human Resources





Connect to over 1,809 businesses who want to hire qualified job seekers with a disability.






Sign up for free at <http://discoverability.network/>

Questions?



# Learn more

Visit <https://discoverability.network/> for more information. For assistance with signing up, please contact Elizabeth Novak at [elizabethnovak@occ.ca](mailto:elizabethnovak@occ.ca) or Boyan Mitrovic at [BoyanMitrovic@occ.ca](mailto:BoyanMitrovic@occ.ca) for more information.

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