

DISCLOSURE:

What to Say About Your Disability - and When

Today, more postsecondary graduates with disabilities are entering the workforce. There may be additional things to consider, such as disclosure - if, when and how to tell people about your disability.

It's up to you

Disclosure is an important and complex decision that is entirely yours to make. Federally-regulated employers often offer additional opportunities due to federal employment opportunity laws. You will find that there are human resource professionals who actively recruit and strongly encourage applications from persons with disabilities thus simplifying the decision to disclose.

Whether you mention your disability in your cover letter or resumé, during the interview or at the time of the job offer depends on you and the situation. If you're dealing with a service provider or agency that works specifically with persons with disabilities, you will still have some say in how much is disclosed.

When considering disclosure, here are some things to think about:

- When do you feel most comfortable and confident disclosing your disability?
- Does not disclosing put your safety or the safety of others at risk?
- Asking for accommodations will almost certainly require you to disclose. Do you need accommodations for the interview? Or if you get the job?
- What do you know about this employer's policies and experiences regarding people with disabilities? You may be able to find this information from the employer's website, or from talking to those who work there.

Tips for disclosing

- If the thought of disclosing makes you very uncomfortable, but you would like to, then try practicing with someone you trust – a friend or family member, a Career Advisor or an Accessibility Consultant from Accessible Learning Services.
- A general rule for interviews is to focus on the positive – your skills, your qualifications and your abilities. Prepare examples from your past experiences. Don't present your disability as a weakness.
- Be prepared to address any concerns employers express, even if they're not expressed directly.
- Know what workplace accommodations you may need, including their availability, cost and funding programs the employer can access.
- Anticipate the employer's questions about your disclosure and know how you'll answer them. Use examples.

Adapted from Alberta Learning Information Services website <https://alis.alberta.ca/ep/eps/tips/tips.html?EK=163>

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