



ACCESSIBILITY
CONFIDENT EMPLOYERS
(ACE)

Deciding Whether and How to Disclose: A Tip Sheet for Job Seekers with Disabilities

Why disclosure matters

Disclosure means choosing to share that you are Deaf, Neurodivergent, and/or have a disability. Some people disclose during the job search. Some people disclose after they are hired. Some people never disclose at work.

There is no single right choice. Disclosure is personal. It can depend on the job, the employer, the hiring process, your access needs, your comfort level, and whether you need an accommodation.

You do not usually need to share your diagnosis or personal medical history. In many situations, it is enough to focus on what you need to participate fully in the hiring process or do the job safely and effectively.

What disclosure can include

Disclosure does not have to mean telling an employer everything. You can choose how much to share. You might share:

- that you need an accommodation for the interview
- that you use an assistive device, interpreter, captioning, or communication tool
- that you need instructions in writing
- that you need a predictable schedule or extra processing time
- that you have a disability-related access need
- that a specific workplace barrier may affect how you participate
- that you have lived experience that strengthens your perspective or skills

You can keep the focus on your needs, strengths, and ability to do the work.

For example, instead of saying, “I have a medical condition,” you could say: “I do my best work when instructions and priorities are provided in writing.” Or: “To participate fully in the interview, I need captions enabled.” Or: “I can complete the core duties of the role. I may need some flexibility in how instructions are shared.”

You are allowed to keep some information private

You do not need to share more than is needed for the situation. You can decide what feels safe and useful to share.

In most cases, an employer does not need to know your diagnosis. They may need to understand the barrier, the accommodation you are requesting, and how the accommodation supports your participation or work.

You may want to protect information about:

- your diagnosis
- medications
- treatment history
- trauma history
- detailed medical records
- information that is not connected to the job or accommodation request

If an employer needs more information to respond to an accommodation request, that information should be connected to your functional needs, limitations, or barriers, not unnecessary personal details.

Reasons you may choose to disclose

You may choose to disclose if:

- you need an accommodation for the application, interview, test, or job
- your disability or lived experience connects to your strengths
- you use an assistive device, interpreter, support person, or communication tool
- you want to explain how you work best
- you want to see how the employer responds to accessibility
- you feel comfortable and safe sharing
- the employer has shown signs that they value accessibility and inclusion

Disclosure can sometimes help you get the support you need. It can also help you ask clearer questions about the workplace.

Reasons you may choose not to disclose

You may choose not to disclose if:

- you do not need an accommodation at this stage
- the information is not relevant to the job or hiring process
- you are unsure whether the employer will respond respectfully
- you want to wait until later in the hiring process
- you prefer to focus first on your skills and experience
- you do not feel safe or comfortable sharing

Choosing not to disclose does not mean you are hiding something. It means you are making a decision about your privacy.

When you might disclose

There are different points when disclosure may come up. Each has benefits and risks.

During the application

You might disclose if you need help with the application process or if the employer asks whether you need accommodations. You can keep the request focused on the application barrier.

After being invited to an interview

This is a common time to request interview accommodations, such as captions, questions in advance, an interpreter, step-free access, extra time, or a quiet space.

During the interview

You might disclose if it helps explain how you would do the job, what support you need, or how you work best. You can also ask accessibility-related questions without sharing personal details.

After a job offer

Some people wait until they have an offer before discussing workplace accommodations. This may be useful if the accommodation is connected to how the job will be set up.

After starting the job

Some people disclose once they better understand the workplace, tasks, supervisor, and team. Accommodation requests can happen at any point when a barrier comes up.

How to decide what to share

Before you disclose, ask yourself:

- Why am I sharing this information?
- What do I need from the employer?
- Is this information connected to the interview or job?
- How much do they need to know to respond?
- What am I comfortable sharing?
- Do I want this information in writing?
- Has the employer shown signs of being respectful and accessible?
- Would it help to talk this through with an employment service provider, disability organization, or trusted support person?

A useful approach is to share the need, not the whole story.

Sample language for disclosure

Requesting an interview accommodation

“Thank you for inviting me to interview. To participate fully, I would like to request [specific accommodation]. Please let me know if you need any additional information.”

Sharing how you work best

“I do my best work when expectations, timelines, and priorities are shared in writing.”

Asking for communication support

“To make sure I understand the instructions clearly, could you please provide them in writing?”

Disclosing after a job offer

“I’m excited about the offer and the opportunity to join the team. I would like to discuss an accommodation that would help me perform the role effectively.”

Keeping medical information private

“I do not need to share detailed medical information, but I can explain the accommodation I need and how it supports my work.”

Connecting disability experience to strengths

“My lived experience has helped me build strong problem-solving, adaptability, and communication skills. These strengths are part of what I would bring to this role.”

Green flags and red flags

How an employer responds to disclosure or an accommodation request can tell you something about the workplace.

Green flags may include:

- they respond respectfully
- they focus on removing barriers
- they ask practical questions without prying
- they confirm next steps clearly
- they provide information in writing
- they treat accommodation as a normal part of work
- they focus on your skills and ability to do the job

Red flags may include:

- they pressure you to share more than you want to
- they ask unnecessary medical questions
- they make assumptions about what you can or cannot do
- they suggest accommodations are unfair or inconvenient
- they ignore or dismiss your request
- they use disrespectful language about disability
- they focus more on your disability than your qualifications

A red flag does not always mean you should leave the process, but it can help you decide what questions to ask, what support to seek, and whether the workplace feels safe.

Quick disclosure decision checklist

Before you disclose:

- I know why I am sharing this information.
- I know what I am asking for.
- I have decided how much I want to share.
- I can explain the accommodation or support I need.
- I do not feel pressured to share my diagnosis or medical history.
- I have thought about when to disclose.

- I have considered whether to put the request in writing.
- I have thought about who I can ask for support if I need help.
- I have noticed how the employer responds to accessibility and respect.

Learn more

[The ACE Project](#)

Free accessibility training, tools, and resources to support more accessible, inclusive employment practices.

[Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission: Duty to Accommodate](#)

Explains accommodation under Nova Scotia's Human Rights Act, including how rules, practices, conditions, or requirements may need to be adjusted to meet individual needs.

[New Brunswick Human Rights Commission: Requesting Accommodations in the Workplace](#)

A plain language guide for employees and employers about accommodation conversations and the duty to accommodate under human rights law.

[Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission: Understanding the Duty to Accommodate](#)

A practical workplace guide explaining the duty to accommodate under Newfoundland and Labrador's Human Rights Act.

[Canadian Human Rights Commission: Duty to Accommodate](#)

Explains the duty of employers and service providers to adjust rules, policies, or practices so people can participate fully.