



Tips for disclosing:

- ◆ Prepare a script for disclosing and practice it with friends, family members or a counselor.
- ◆ Make sure you focus on your abilities and skills.
- ◆ You don't have to give every detail about your disability.
- ◆ Be prepared to answer questions.
- ◆ Take information on your disability and accommodations.
- ◆ Review your job description and be ready to discuss the essential functions of your job.

Laws and Regulations:

There are certain laws and regulations that protect your right to disclose. They are:

- ◆ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- ◆ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ◆ Maryland Human Relations Law

You can learn more about these laws and regulations in the fact sheet entitled *Disability Employment Law*.

This fact sheet and others can be found at www.mdod.maryland.gov and www.mdworkforcepromise.org.

Questions?

Contact the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

Disclosure

What is Disclosure?

Disclosure is telling someone something that they did not know about you, such as having a disability. There are several things you need to consider:

- ◆ Why should you disclose?
- ◆ Who should you disclose to?
- ◆ When should you disclose?
- ◆ What should you disclose?
- ◆ How should you disclose?

The decision to disclose is personal, and you have the right to disclose or not disclose. This fact sheet will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing and give you suggestions on how to disclose.

Disclosure and Work

If you make the decision to disclose, there are things to keep in mind about what kind of information you want to tell. It is important and helpful to tell information about:

- ◆ how your disability affects your ability to do your job, and
- ◆ the environment, supports and services you will need to do your job.

Be prepared to provide medical documentation related to your disability.

When should you disclose? You will need to disclose to receive an accommodation. If you do not require an accommodation, you do not need to disclose. There are several points in the employment process when you could disclose your disability. The decision is up to you. The following is information to help you decide when the best time is for you.

Before the interview - If you are going to need an accommodation for the interview, you must tell the employer. For example, if you have a learning disability and you know that there is a test that is given during the interview, you might request that you take the test in a quiet area.

During the interview - Talking to the employer about your disability at the

interview will let them know what supports and services you need to do the job. Make sure you talk about your skills and give examples of what you will need to do the job. For example, if your desk needs to be raised to a specific height to have room for your wheelchair, you would want to discuss this with the employer.

After you have been offered a job - If you need an accommodation to do the job you are offered, you will need to tell your employer. For example, if the job requires a medical test and you are taking medications, you might want to disclose this information to your employer.

While you are working - Now that you are working at the job, you might realize that you need an accommodation. In order for the employer to give you the accommodation, you will need to disclose. For example, if you are taking medication that makes you thirsty and you need to drink lots of water, you may have to take frequent bathroom breaks. You would want to talk with your employer about this.

Remember it may not be necessary to disclose every detail of your disability, only

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Disclosure and Work (continued)

the information that relates to your job functions and performance.

Once you have decided when to disclose, think about who you want to tell. If the reason you choose to disclose is to discuss accommodations, you will want to disclose to your supervisor and human resource manager. Whether or not to tell your co-workers is another decision to make. It is important to talk to these people in a private and comfortable place. Make sure that you have set aside enough time to have a discussion about how your disability impacts your job, what accommodation(s) you are requesting and why. The person you are talking to might have questions, suggestions or concerns about the information you are telling them.

A good tip is to practice what you are going to say with a friend, family member, counselor or someone else. Make sure the information that you are going to share is clear and relates to your job.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Disclosure

Some of the advantages of disclosure are:

- ◆ It reduces stress. Many people say that it is more stressful trying to hide their disability than it is to tell.
- ◆ It makes it easier to talk about the accommodations you may need.
- ◆ You don't have to worry that someone you used to work for, or a reference will tell that you have a disability.
- ◆ You will be able to talk to your employer if you have any changes in your situation.
- ◆ You can feel comfortable asking about health insurance and benefits.

Disadvantages of disclosing are:

- ◆ You could be treated differently.
- ◆ It could cause you to be overlooked for a promotion.
- ◆ Co-workers could ask you questions about your disability.
- ◆ You could be excluded from activities.
- ◆ You could worry about bad experiences that happened in the past happening again, such as losing a job or negative reactions from your co-workers.
- ◆ It can be difficult and sometimes embarrassing.

When considering whether or not to talk with an employer about your disability, talk with people you feel close to. Decide if you will need an accommodation to do the job, think about the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing and practice what you are going to say. You can learn more about your rights and responsibilities in the fact sheet entitled *Your Rights and Responsibilities*.

Resources

DBTAC: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

Voice / TTY: (800) 949-4232
Email: adainfo@transcen.org
Website: www.adainfo.org

DisabilityInfo.gov

www.DisabilityInfo.gov is a website that has employment tips specific to job seekers with disabilities. At www.DisabilityInfo.gov you can find more information on disclosure.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Voice / TTY: (800) 526-7234
Email: jan@jan.wvu.edu
Website: www.jan.wvu.edu

Maryland Department of Disabilities

Voice/TTY: (410) 767-3660
Voice/TTY: (800) 637-4113
Email: mdod@mdod.state.md.us
Website: www.mdod.maryland.gov

Maryland Disability WorkFORCE Information Exchange

Voice: (301) 662-0099
TTY: (301) 662-4853
Email: info@mdworkforcepromise.org
Website: www.mdworkforcepromise.org

National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult (NCWD/Adult)

Voice / TTY: (888) 886-9898
Email: contact@onestops.info
Website: www.onestops.info

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth (NCWD/Youth)

Voice: (877) 871-0744
TTY: (877) 871-0665
Website: www.ncwd-youth.info

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

Voice: (866) 633-7365
TTY: (877) 889-5627
Website: www.dol.gov/odep

T-TAP (Training and Technical Assistance for Providers)

Website: www.t-tap.org

VCU - RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

Voice: (804) 828-1851
TTY: (804) 828-2494
Website: www.worksupport.com