

Module 4 Self-Advocacy and Disclosure: video 3: How to Disclose a Disability

Video 3: Managing your career strategies for graduates with disabilities module for self-advocacy and disclosure: how to disclose a disability

Welcome to module foreign self-advocacy and disclosure in our career and disability series brought to you by the University of Toronto Scarborough AccessAbility Services and the Academic Advising and Career Centre.

This video will be about how to disclose your disability in the context of disability and work. We've talked about the what, the why and the when of disclosure, now we will need to discuss how to disclose that you have a disability. First thing to do is to frame the conversation what is your objective for disclosing your disability. Is it to inform the person that you have a disability or is it to request accommodations?

If you do decide the disclosure is the best course of action here are some tips for preparing for the conversation with your employer. First ensure that you know the legal obligations of disclosure which we talked about in the previous video. Also, understand your disability and be able to convey relevant information as it relates to the job because your workplace may not understand it yet. Identify your specific needs. The same disability affects people differently as much as possible and be prepared with potential solutions and accommodations.

To be effective in your role know who you should disclose your needs to, keep the information simple and factual. You don't need to share the history or details of your disability unless it's required. Present the information so that your supervisor or human resources officer can absorb it and get the accommodations you need to do the job. Share the information in a positive way, don't explain your disability as a problem. Discuss your strengths and share how you faced and responded to challenges. Present solutions and show them the support tools you used to perform tasks independently. Request the accommodations you need and discuss options, tools and resources. If you're unsure of the accommodations, you may need or what's available this is an opportunity to engage in a conversation with the employer about your restrictions and limitations. To determine appropriate accommodations, remember the conversation about your disability, it should present you in the best light it should be strength focused and about what you need to be a successful employee.

Also, choose the most appropriate person to disclose your needs to, the Human Resources office is a sensible place because they should understand employment equity and they have a mandate to hold the information you share in confidence. Depending on your needs you might find the Health and Safety office in your organization makes more sense.

In a small organization without these offices, you may speak directly with your supervisor arranging a meeting in advance, with any of these offices it is recommended rather than dropping in, this will ensure that you have a private space in which to talk and that you have their full attention. The Ontario Human Rights Commission offers a checklist on how to disclose your disability related needs see the resource guide for a link to it.

If you would like to provide feedback on these videos or if you have questions or concerns. Please contact the Academic Advising and Career Centre at aacc.utsc@utoronto.ca or the AccessAbility Services at ability.utsc@utoronto.ca