

Module 5 Video 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZilt28pWik&feature=youtu.be>

Managing your career strategies for graduates with disabilities

Module 5: Workplace accommodations

Video 2: Responsibilities of the employer

Welcome to Module 5 of our Career and Disability series. Brought to you by the UTSC AccessAbility Services and the Academic Advising and Career Centre. This module focuses on workplace accommodations. The previous video explained the human rights code, this video talks about your responsibilities as an employee as well as the responsibility of the employer.

As an employee your responsibilities include telling the employer that you need an accommodation. This is important to do because employers may not realize that you require an accommodation as, many disabilities are considered invisible disabilities.

Another responsibility you have is to cooperate in getting information for the employer about your disability. Keep in mind that you do not need to tell the employer your diagnosis, you only need to tell them how it affects you and what accommodations you require.

You also have the responsibility of participating in discussions about solutions, which means that you have to be able to tell people how your disability impacts you, what challenges you have or may have in performing your job tasks and what accommodations may be helpful.

Once accommodations are put in place, you are responsible for continuing to work with the employer to manage the accommodation process. This means that you have to monitor your progress and determine if the accommodations are working or if something needs to be changed.

Employers also have responsibilities in the accommodation. Process one of the employer's responsibilities, is to accept your accommodation request in good faith. This means that the employer will trust that the accommodation is needed, unless there are legitimate reasons for acting otherwise. The employer will only request information that is needed to put the accommodation in place.

The employer is responsible to seek expert opinion when necessary to ensure that your needs are being met, has the responsibility of taking an active role in looking at solutions and it's the employer's responsibility to ensure confidentiality and respond in a timely manner to your accommodation request.

If the employer requires medical documentation from an expert such as setting out accommodation needs, the Ontario human rights commission or the OHRC has stated that the service provider should pay for that documentation. While the OHRC focuses on the right to accommodate the accessibility, for Ontarian's with disability act, the AODA employment standard builds on this requirement.

The employment standard is part of the integrated accessibility standards regulation.

It requires employers of a certain size to have processes in place to determine employees accommodation needs. These processes include, recruitment when offering an applicant a job, documenting accommodation plans for employees, workplace emergency response information, performance management, career development and return to work after absence.

There are many benefits to being accommodated on the job. It's important to discuss the benefits because some of you may be thinking that you won't ask for accommodations even though you may require them. This is sometimes referred to as going it alone and it may negatively impact your job performance because you're not being accommodated when you need to be knowing the benefits. Being accommodated on the job will help you to determine if there's a need to disclose to the employer.

This disclosure would include that you have a disability and require accommodations. Putting accommodations in place to perform your job tasks will help you to improve your work performance, because appropriate accommodations will minimize the impact of your disability on your ability to perform the job tasks efficiently and effectively.

It's best to inform the employer of your disability related needs in advance of the employer disciplining you due to performance issues or terminating you. Another benefit of telling an employer about your disability is that it may help you get a job if the employer has an employment equity program in place.

Employment equity programs are a commitment an employer has made, to diversify the company's Workforce, to include certain groups of qualified people including people with disabilities. Disclosing that you have a disability when there's an employment equity program in place within a company, may help you to increase your chances of being hired provided that you do have the skills to perform the job.

Another benefit of being accommodated on the job is that it can help reduce your stress and anxiety. Typically, those people who decide to go it alone have a higher level of stress because they may experience difficulties completing certain job tasks. Being accommodated at the start of your job can help you to complete your job tasks effectively which will reduce your stress.

An employer will also benefit from putting accommodations in place for employees who need them. The job accommodation network surveyed over a thousand employers. The results of the study showed that the benefits employers receive from putting accommodations in place for employees far outweigh the low cost of some accommodations.

There is a myth that accommodating an individual with a disability is expensive or difficult. Accommodating someone with a disability is seldom as expensive or difficult as it's perceived, over two-thirds of job accommodations cost under 500 and many accommodations have no cost at all.

Please try to remember this so you'll be able to provide the employer with accurate information about the true cost of accommodations in case it's questioned. The benefits for employers include retaining valuable employees, improving morale, reducing workers

compensation and training costs, improving interactions among co-workers, improving company diversity, innovation and overall productivity.

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