

ADA Trainer Network Module: Talking to Employers about Disability

Handout--Checklist Making Choices, Getting Ready

Employees with disabilities have rights and choices about disclosing or discussing a disability either during a hiring situation or after employed.

Use this checklist to prepare for a disability-related conversation with an employer or potential employer by thinking through the legal, practical and human aspects of this conversation.

You can work through this checklist alone, or with others who know about your situation and employment goals such as a disability service professional.

If you have questions about any of the items on this checklist, contact :

- Your regional ADA Center at 800 949 4132

For each of the items on the following list, give yourself a score:

1 = I can do this

2 = I think I can do this, but may need support

3 = I need more preparation before I can do this



Before the conversation, do I...

- Understand my choices, rights and responsibilities around disclosing my disability in this situation.

- Understand that I am not alone in this situation. (The number of people with disabilities in the workplace might surprise you! There are probably other people with disability working where you working or would like to work).

- Know how much information I would/would not like to share during this conversation. (You are only obligated to tell an employer that you have a disability when you request an accommodation to participate in the hiring process or to perform the essential functions of your job. Even in these instances, you do not need to share every detail of your condition.)

- Understand how my disability might impact the main functions of my job or the job I'm applying for

- Know how to explain a gap in my work history, if one exist s.

- Know how to talk about my disability in a way that is clear, concise, unapologetic, and connected to my work tasks.

- Have an idea about what concerns/questions the employer might have about my disability and thought through possible responses.

- Have suggestions about possible reasonable accommodation(s) I might need to perform the essential functions of my job.

- Know about how much each of these accommodation(s) might cost and what supports/resources might be available.

- Knowhow I can keep the conversation focused on my desire to do the best job I can .

- Have someone I trust who I can practice this conversation with



During the conversation, I will...

- Focus on a clear and specific discussion of the accommodations/modifications I need instead of on a vague, general discussion of my disability.
- Talk about how my disability may give me a valuable and unique perspective. (Having a disability might give you a unique perspective, make you a flexible, adaptable problem-solver, or make you more empathetic to others.)
- Cooperate with legitimate requests to provide medical information that will help the employer make decisions about hiring or accommodations.
- Gently but firmly challenge myths or misperceptions about my disability if they are brought up during the conversation.
- Be open to addressing the employer's legitimate questions/concerns about how I would do the essential job functions with my disability. (If you have an obvious disability or disclose a non-obvious disability that an employer legitimately thinks would affect your ability to do the job, you may be asked to describe or demonstrate how you would do essential job tasks.
- Emphasize what I *can* do.
- If needed, discuss who else (if anyone) will be told about my disability. Stress to the employer that even if a co-worker needs to be told you will do things differently, you do not want the employer to tell others about your disability.
- If needed, touch upon how to manage any "fallout" from any accommodation/modification I will be using among co-workers, customers or others in the workplace.
- Leave the conversation with a concrete plan of next steps to make sure the accommodation/modification is effective in helping me do the essential functions of my job.

