

Common Workplace Issues - Tools and Strategies

Learning Objectives

- Why am I a GOOD EMPLOYMENT PROSPECT?
- Should I DISCLOSE MY DISABILITY?
- What kind of ACCOMMODATIONS can help me?

Employers should consider hiring
me because
I'm completely qualified for the
position

And I bring with me some other
benefits....

GOOD BUSINESS\$

Companies that hire people with disabilities are MORE RESPONSIVE TO CUSTOMERS and OUTPERFORM PEERS in revenue growth.

Studies show that CONSUMERS VIEW companies that hire persons with disabilities MORE HIGHLY and are more apt to deal with them.

INNOVATION

- Companies that hire people requiring accommodation have to “THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX”
- Employees with disabilities are constantly finding new ways to do tasks
- this leads to a workforce with SKILLS IN INNOVATION

Lowered TURNOVER and ABSENTEEISM

- The cost-per-hire of one new employee at the clerical/support level is \$3300.00 and the cost rises from there to \$43,000 at the executive level.
- The average Canadian worker was absent the equivalent of almost two full work weeks in 2011. These absences cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$16.6 billion in 2012

Improved Employer ACCESS

- to a SKILLED LABOUR POOL to find the best possible candidate
- AND to a MASSIVE CUSTOMER SEGMENT for marketing products

Employers also say.....Other Benefits of Accommodation are

- Improved productivity of both individual and organization as a whole
- Improved morale and employee relations
- Improved attendance of individual and organization as a whole
- Saved cost of retraining
- Increased company diversity
- Increased overall safety

Employers should not ignore my application because I have a disability

as I'm completely qualified for the
position

and there is a lot of misinformation
out there....

**Myth
Buster
#1**

**There is no difference in
the PRODUCTIVITY of
disabled employees and
their non disabled
counterparts, and in
some cases productivity
increases**

**Myth
Buster
#2**

**Most employers report NO
COST or LOW COST for
ACCOMMODATING
employees with
disabilities**

SAFETY CONCERNS

Myth
Buster
#3

of employers around hiring people
with disabilities is **NOT VALID** or
substantiated by **RESEARCH**

**Should I disclose? When
should I disclose? and
how much should I
disclose?**

Disclaimer

This should not be considered legal advice. This is a discussion of the literature around disclosure to help you decide how you would like to approach the issue

Reasons to Disclose

- You may hurt your relationship with your employer in the long term if you don't disclose
- It may be stressful for you to hide a disability.
- Some large employers and the government seek to hire persons with disabilities to meet employment equity goals.
- Deciding against disclosure could compromise the safety of yourself or your co-workers.
- Disclosure opens the door to promoting education around working with disabilities and reduces stigma
- If you don't disclose you may open yourself to discrimination if you appear unable to perform the job duties adequately
- Disclosure leads to accommodation and improves chances for success

Reasons not to Disclose

- Disclosure may leave you open to possible discrimination from coworkers, or managers.
- If you disclose you may not get hired.
- There are laws to protect you, but what happens while you are fighting for your rights and you are out of a job?
- You may be a private person, and this could make you vulnerable to uncomfortable questions.

It is up to you!

You can disclose at any point during, or after, the hiring process.

Your employer is obligated to accommodate you unless this would expose him/her to undue hardship.

When?

on your resume?
before the interview?
during interview?
after job offer?
or not at all

How Much?

You do not have to disclose your diagnosis, only the nature of the impairment which necessitates accommodation i.e. “I need speech to text software in order to complete reports in an efficient manner”

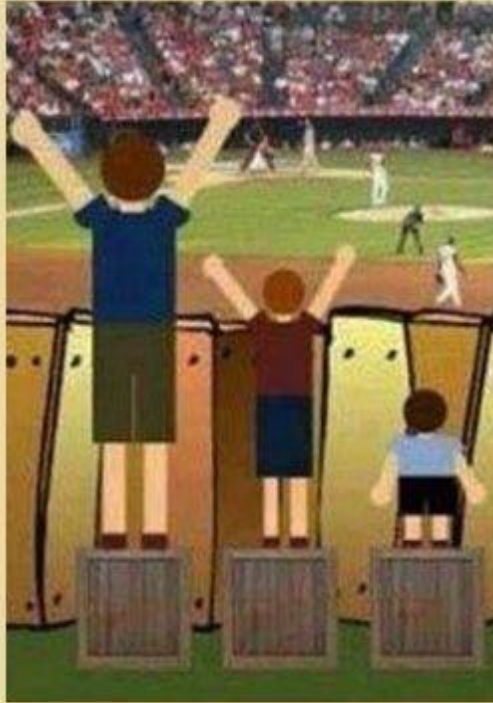
Bottom Line....

- be **AWARE OF DISCLOSURE ISSUES** in advance
 - make an **INFORMED CHOICE** as to what you want to disclose and when you will disclose.
 - **PREPARE** - get advice; role play; focus on the positive and play to your strengths; know what accommodations you will ask for and their costs etc.

Our Stories

What is it really like out there in the world? Have things changed? Are they changing? What is your experience in the workplace?

Accommodation



Types of Accommodation

- Physical Changes to the Environment
- Use of Assistive Technology
- Change of Position duties

Change the Physical Environment

Examples:

- Large Text or Braille for visually impaired
- Preferential Seating for hearing impaired
- Accessible spaces to accommodate wheelchair
- Preferential parking space
- Office relocation to decrease walking

Use Assistive Technology

Examples:

- voice activated software
- zoomtext for low vision
- text to speech software
- software to organize ideas

Change Position Requirements

Example: Scheduling

- frequent breaks
- time off for appointments
- change shift times
- shortened work week
- change actual duties or the workday order

Change Position Requirements

Example: Supervision

- Receive instructions from a supervisor in the best way for you. ie smaller chunks of work or written instruction
- Fewer short notice changes
- Longer explanation of duties
- More time to complete certain objectives

What can I do?

CHOOSE A CAREER WISELY

- Job shadow; talk to people in the industry; do informational interviews
- Ask an employment counsellor
- Think realistically about your strengths and weaknesses and also how your disability might change over time.

What else can I do?

- **ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED.** There is no accommodation if you don't request it.
- **BE OPEN** to employer suggestions and **WILLING TO TRY.** Bring your own suggestions to the table.
- Be willing to **CHANGE YOUR HABITS FOR SUCCESS.** eg. if memory is a problem - write things down, make sure you use a calendar or technology to remain organized; if you are easily overwhelmed - learn strategies to slow down and take tasks one at a time.

Anything Else?

- Find or REQUEST A MENTOR- someone who can help you navigate your employment situation
- ASK FOR HELP when you need it - seek out a disability employment counsellor (SAVTI)
- REQUEST COWORKER TRAINING to promote understanding

**Be Confident; Be
Prepared; and
Believe.**

Time for Questions, Comments, Ideas