



Your Voice Matters!

SELF ADVOCACY & AND ACCOMMODATIONS

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TO DISCLOSE OR NOT DISCLOSE



1. Visible vs. invisible disability.
2. Will you need an accommodation in order to work? (i.e. modified workspace, assistive technology purchase, altered work schedule).
3. Before an interview, you may disclose a disability if you need an accommodation to fully participate in the interview process.
4. When to disclose? - Best practice is to disclose and ask for accommodation before work performance is impacted.
5. You NEVER have to disclose. Your voice, your choice.





KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

Americans with Disabilities Act

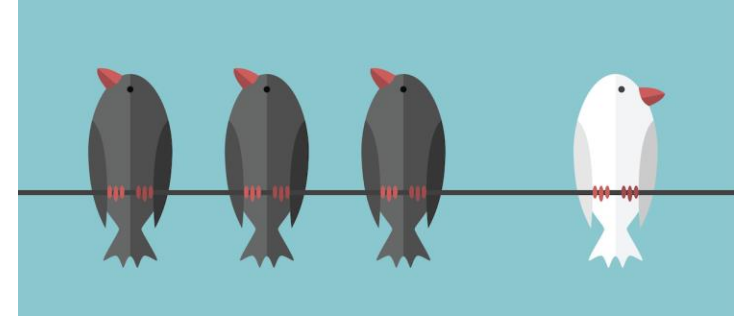
Equal Employment Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities

“The ADA defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. The ADA also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on that person’s association with a person with a disability.”

All employers with greater than 15 employees must abide by the ADA and grant reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities, so long as the accommodations do not present an undue hardship to the employer.

For more information, visit: <https://adata.org/> or <https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>

WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?



Unfair practices that limit employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities:

- Recruitment practices (i.e. not providing accommodation for someone to participate in an interview process).
- Firing someone solely due to disability factors.
- Re-assigning someone to a lesser paying job without offering accommodation.
- Denying promotion opportunities.
- Creating a hostile environment, where one is bullied due to their disability - this includes exclusionary practices.



RIGHTS BEING VIOLATED?

1. Step one: document clearly any evidence of disability discrimination. (i.e. save emails, witness statements, etc.)
2. Step two: follow HR policies for reporting internally if possible.
3. Step three: if the problem cannot be resolved internally, report misconduct to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) - <https://publicportal.eeoc.gov/Portal/Login.aspx>



REQUESTING ACCOMMODATION

1. Verbally to your supervisor, at any time. There is no formal process.
2. By contacting HR and speaking with a representative to make a formal request.
3. Written request to either your supervisor or HR, via letter or email.
4. Not sure what to request, or if you even need an accommodation? Check out the Job Accommodation Network website: <https://askjan.org/>



SELF-ADVOCACY (USING YOUR VOICE)

1. You know what YOU need to succeed. (And if not, make a list of “I Need ____” to succeed and explore this).
2. Tell people what you are thinking and feeling using “I” statements. (i.e. “I think I need extra guidance to complete this task.”)
3. When others treat you wrong, gently steer them right (if possible).

You are worth being heard.



STAYING INFORMED

1. Know what is going on in your workplace and how it might affect you. (i.e. new boss or staff member, change of policy, or change in procedure)
2. Stay up to date on what's new in your field of work.
3. Ask questions to learn more!



FINDING SUPPORT

1. Family and friends
2. Coworkers or mentor – develop a professional relationship with someone at work that you trust to support you.
3. Disability resources – community providers (i.e. medical providers, counselors, peer support)
4. Support groups – online or in person.

When things get tough, turn to your support team.



SELF DETERMINATION

YOU have the power.

1. **Autonomy** – you have the right to make informed choices for yourself.
2. **Motivation** – determine what is important to you, what you value, and what makes you want to do work. Use this motivation to inspire you to be the best worker you can be.
3. **Relatedness** – feeling connected to others. Find your niche (your happy place).
4. **Competence** – be open to learning new things and feel good about what you do know. Your knowledge, skills, and abilities matter.

For more information visit: <https://selfdeterminationtheory.org/theory/>



ASKING FOR HELP

How do I ask for help?

- Identify knowledge gaps or gaps in training.
- Express your need clearly and directly. (Your employer may not know you need something unless you tell them clearly).
- Know who to turn to. (Trusted coworkers, peers, and mentors are there to help you).
- Ask confidently – it is okay not to know! We are all learning new things everyday.
- Remember the answers to questions you've already asked. If you tend to forget, write things down.



Remember that asking questions is how we all learn from each other.



QUESTIONS??

