

# Disclosure and Accommodation

## What you need to know

Disclosing diversity identification to an employer or admissions committee is an individual choice. Only you can decide if, and when, you want to share this information with a current prospective employer or school.

## Why ask for an accommodation?

- If you experience or anticipate challenges completing tasks
- If the result is an equal opportunity for you to perform at the same level as others
- If the purpose is for achieving equal opportunity in the workplace
- If it will help you meet the same level of benefits and privileges as other employees

## What to consider before disclosure

- Will disclosing positively affect your qualifications to meet diversity recruitment practices?
- Will there be any impact to your job performance or performance in the program?
- The nature of your work, qualifications, employer, school, policies and culture
- Current trends in the environment, including the experiences of others who share a similar situation
- The impact to your overall health and wellness

Remember, deciding to disclose in one instance does not necessarily mean disclosing in every situation.

## When to disclose

Should you choose to disclose, your unique situation should be considered objectively. Consider the pros and cons of each of the following options:

- When applying to the program (are they recruiting for a specific diversity group?)
- At the time of an interview offer (do you require accommodations for the interview?)
- During the interview (do you wish to disclose as part of your answers?)
- At the time of a job or admission offer (this is common if one knows their accommodation needs)
- Once you begin work or the program (also common if unsure about needs and/or it would help to get to know the work and tasks first)
- After a problem or change is encountered (while best to avoid when this happens, sometimes the need for accommodation is unpredictable)
- Never: there may be informal adjustments you can make to your work that does not require a formal accommodation

## Advantages of disclosing

- It prepares the employer or schools for situations that may arise
- It allows you to access formal accommodations



- If there are any changes to your employment on the basis of protected grounds outlined in the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#), you may be protected by human rights law

## How to disclose

If you have made the decision to disclose and/or ask for an accommodation, here are some tips:

### Part 1: Do your homework

- Understand the position requirements to assess your functional limitations in the job
- Research some ideas on what adjustments may work for you. Consult with your health professional (OT, MD, counsellor, etc.). [AskJan.org](#) is also a useful resource to consult.
- Set up a meeting or send an email (depending on when you disclose)
- Take a strengths-based approach, not a deficit-based approach; present solutions, not problems
- Use your support systems: your family, medical team, SAS, SWC and SSC career counsellors

### Part 2: When you meet/email

- Be positive. Focus on your skills, qualifications and your ability to do the job
- Practice what you will say and how you will say it
- Identify any accommodations you may need. Include pertinent information regarding necessary resources, costing, and procedures for accommodation. You may be required to provide medical documentation for your accommodation request
- Encourage an open dialogue, questions, and conversation
- Follow up to monitor success and adjust as needed

## Individual Rights and Responsibilities

- An employer or school must accommodate the needs of people with disabilities short of causing undue hardship.
- If you choose to disclose, schools and employers do not have the right to know what the disability is, such as your diagnosis. It is common to be asked for supporting medical information which outlines your functional abilities, impact to work and suggested accommodations.
- If you request specific accommodations, it is your responsibility to inform the other party of your needs, cooperate in obtaining necessary information, participate in discussions about solutions, and work with them on an ongoing basis to manage the accommodation process.
- If you choose not to disclose and a situation arises, you may not be covered under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## Have Questions?

Meet with a professional staff member. CAPS provides a customized approach to skill-building and career development to help you overcome barriers you may experience during your career journey.

- By email: [careeraccess@mcmaster.ca](mailto:careeraccess@mcmaster.ca)

