

How to Disclose Disability to an Employer

Guideline	Example
<p>1. Be optimistic; focus on your job qualifications.</p>	<p>Cover letter: "As an individual with a lifelong physical and speech disability, I learned early on to focus on my intellectual abilities and to develop strengths within my limits. For example, I received my first computer when I was 5 years old and learned to operate it independently. Today, I am proficient in many software applications and operating systems and in system troubleshooting."</p>
<p>2. Stress current involvement in a positive activity that shows your ability to manage your disability.</p>	<p>Resume: "Member of the American Blind Skiing Foundation"</p>
<p>3. Give the employer information on what he or she needs to do or provide regarding communication, directions, or supervision.</p>	<p>Telephone call prior to the interview: "I am calling to confirm my interview scheduled at your company in 2 days. Could you please tell me where to find your office's accessible entrance?"</p>
<p>4. Educate the employer by articulating or demonstrating how you can perform the essential functions of the job. Have resource information available for the employer.</p>	<p>During the interview: "Have you ever heard of a screen reader? I have a learning disability and have difficulty reading in the traditional way. However, when I hear written words the information makes so much sense. My screen reader has enabled me to succeed at college, and I know it will be useful on this job."</p>
<p>5. Face employer concerns by talking about your compensatory strategies or accommodation solutions.</p>	<p>During the interview: "You may be wondering how I can type letters with my physical disability. I have a great software program that allows the computer to type as I speak words. It can be loaded onto most computers. I would be happy to show it to you sometime."</p>
<p>6. Explain the benefits of your disability regarding your personal growth or perseverance.</p>	<p>During the interview: "After experiencing a brain injury, I learned the value of connecting with professionals. I can be resourceful and creative to get a job done."</p>
<p>7. Use general, functional terms to briefly explain the impact of your disability on the job; avoid technical, medical diagnoses</p>	<p>After the job offer: "During the interview, you explained that work was generally assigned at a staff meeting. I find that I work best when instructions are both written and verbal. I have a disorder that makes processing verbal information a challenge. Could you accommodate me in this way?"</p>
<p>8. In a private setting, remind your employer about your right to confidentiality.</p>	<p>After the job is accepted: "Thank you in advance for keeping this information confidential."</p>
<p>9. Frame the disclosure around how you work best.</p>	<p>A few weeks on the job: "I have noticed that I am having a difficult time completing my work assignments. I have a medical condition that requires frequent breaks in order to do my work. Would you allow me to work later to enable me to take more breaks? I always get the job done when I manage my schedule in this way."</p>