

## What is Disability Disclosure?

Disability disclosure is when a person decides to share information about their disability with others. Disclosing information about a disability is a voluntary and very personal decision. A person may disclose to receive accommodations at work or school or because it feels like the right thing to do.

## Why is Disclosure Important?

If you need accommodations or services to be successful at work or school, you must disclose in order to receive them. As a person with a disability, you are guaranteed equal access to work, school, and your community by the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. There are other laws that require employers, schools, and healthcare professionals to keep disability-related and medical information confidential. People with disabilities sometimes decide not to disclose their disabilities because they are worried how other people will react. In your personal life, or at work or school, you can choose to disclose, and you can choose not to disclose. The decision is completely up to you!

## Disclosure into Adulthood

Rights and responsibilities change when students move from high school into adult life. When students with disabilities leave high school, they no longer receive special education services. Instead, students who get a job or who attend college or training after high school must advocate for themselves to receive accommodations and supports they need to be successful. Middle and high school are good times to learn how to disclose, to be better prepared for the next steps.

# RESOURCES

Rocky Mountain ADA Center  
[rockymountainada.org/](http://rockymountainada.org/)

What Can YOU Do?  
Campaign for Disability Employment  
[whatcanyoudocampaign.org/](http://whatcanyoudocampaign.org/)

United States Department of Labor: Office of  
Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)  
[dol.gov/odep/](http://dol.gov/odep/)

Job Accommodation Network  
[askjan.org/](http://askjan.org/)



To learn more about employment services and supports through your local South Dakota VR office, please visit our website:  
[dhs.sd.gov/transitionresources.aspx](http://dhs.sd.gov/transitionresources.aspx)

*Special thanks for the information shared in this brochure to the*  
**Federation for Children with Special Needs**  
[www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org)



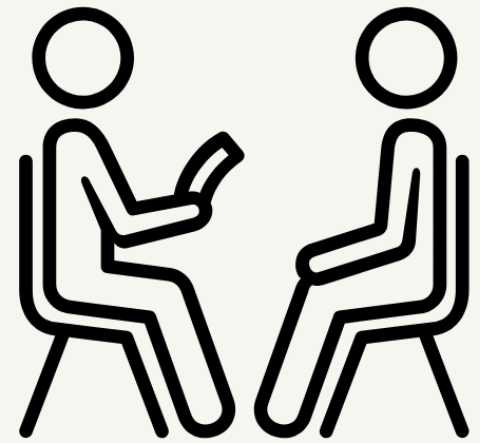
FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN  
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

DISABILITY

DISCLOSURE  
FOR

STUDENTS  
WITH

DISABILITIES



## Tip 1 - Questions to Ask Before Disclosing

- Should I disclose my disability?
- If I decide to disclose, who is an appropriate person to tell?
- When should I disclose?
- How much information should I disclose?
- How does my disability affect my ability to succeed at school or in a job?
- What accommodations or supports have worked for me in the past?
- What types of accommodations or supports will I need now?



## Tip 2 - Personal Decision: Pros and Cons

### PROS:

- Disclosing can help you feel less stressed about keeping disability information secret
- If you disclose, your employer or school can provide reasonable accommodations and/or modifications
- Getting needed support and communicating openly can increase your happiness and self-confidence, and can help others to better understand who you are
- Disclosing gives you legal protection against unfair treatment

### CONS:

- Disclosing may be difficult and may feel embarrassing
- People might overlook you for a job, team, group, or project
- After disclosing people might treat you differently



To get needed accommodations, you do **NOT** need to reveal detailed information about your disability. Disclose only **ESSENTIAL** information.

## Tip 3 - Prepare Yourself Before Disclosing

- Understand your strengths, skills, and abilities
- Understand your disability-related challenges
- Decide what information is necessary to disclose about your disability
- Understand who needs to know about your disability to help you get services or accommodations
- Learn about the laws that protect you, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Get the contact information for the human resources department or the disability support center
- Collect information or documents that describe your disability or diagnosis and how it affects your ability to perform a job task or complete your schoolwork
- Research accommodations to provide your employer/school with suggestions or a plan that will meet your needs
- Write down a script or an outline of what you want to say
- Practice what you want to say with your family, counselor, or friend

## Examples of Workplace Accommodations

- Changing an employee's workstation arrangement (e.g., adjusting the lighting, raising a desk on blocks)
- Modifying equipment or devices (e.g., computer software)
- Reassigning non-essential functions through job restructuring
- Providing qualified readers and interpreters
- Providing part-time or modified work schedules
- Telecommuting options
- Job Coaches
- Personal assistance services
- Adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, and policies



If you choose to disclose, don't over-emphasize the negatives of your disability. Highlight your strengths!