

DISCLOSING YOUR DISABILITY

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First: Prepare How You Will Discuss It

- Who should you speak to?
- How can you set the meeting (i.e. email, do you see them often, etc.)?
- How can you make sure its in a private space?
- What is it you are looking to accomplish?

Using this resource, you will flesh out the information about your disclosure. A part of this guide is to craft an email to send **after** you have the discussion with the person you identified you should speak to.

Once you've fleshed out the email draft, practice saying it in a mirror to your employer. Don't read out word for word what you have written down, but make sure the same points you make in your follow-up email is what you will cover in the discussion.



Second: Outline the Problem You Are Looking to Solve That Led to You Disclosing You Have a Disability

Prompt	Response
I am... What is it you are responsible for or what are the tasks that you do that are relevant to this discussion.	
I am trying to... What is it you are looking to resolve by having this discussion.	
But... What is the barrier that is impacting you in the workplace.	
Because... How is it that this barrier is causing you a problem. What are the results of this barrier that you are concerned will happen. Why are you trying to get ahead of this problem.	
I would like... Offer suggestions for overcoming this barrier and include how you think it will lead to solving the concerns outlined in the "Because" section.	

Third: Follow Up After the Conversation with An Email of the Information

Why should you do this?

- This will ensure your main thoughts are documented.
- The details of your disability and accommodations will be easily available to those who need it in your own words.
- If it is writing, then no one needs to depend on memory recall. Depending on memory recall can lead to some confusion or assumptions being made.
- The email will also help your Manager or Supervisor provide context to a Director, Manager, or Human Resources that they need to speak with to be able to support you.

Do not send this email as your initial request. Have an in-person or virtual conversation. This email should be sent as a follow-up after the initial conversation.



Drafting the Email

- **Have a descriptive subject line**, for example, “Following Up On Our Discussion About Accommodations”
- Leave emotions out of the email, and instead **focus on the facts**.
 - This is a statement that could be interpreted as being based on emotions, “I feel strongly that there are barriers in my workspace.”
 - This statement focuses on the facts, “In my workspace I am experiencing a flare up of chronic pain related to my disability due to the height of my desk.”

What to Include	Example
The nature of your disability as it pertains to this situation; you don’t have to say what your disability is or worry about providing information of an official diagnosis. You can just discuss how it impacts your work.	For instance, if you don’t want to say, “I have dyslexia”, you can say, “I have a disability that changes how I process text-based information. I use an online read aloud app and wear headphones to process text-based information.”
Indicate any potential impacts to your work, pull direct information from your job description or from the training provided to you.	“In my role, I am responsible for packaging products to ship to customers. The environment that I do it in is really noisy and may lead to me being distracted and result in me not packaging as many products that I know I am able to do.”
Include any suggested accommodations. Remember, this is a negotiation with your employer so keep your suggestions open and flexible and be prepared to have a dialogue with your employer about them.	Let’s build off the example from the previous point, “In order to ensure that the noisy environment doesn’t impact my priority, I am wondering if I can have noise cancelling ear buds that I wear at my workplace. I have provided links to some below that I have found good reviews on.”
Highlight Your Flexibility	“I am open to discussing these accommodations further and finding solutions that work best for both the company and me.”
Document what level of confidentiality you would like. This will hopefully lead to you not being surprised that someone else knows the details of your conversation, without you knowing about it.	“I would like to request that this information remain confidential and only be shared with my direct supervisors, the human resources team, or anyone who is directly involved in facilitating these accommodations.”



Remember, you only have to **share what you feel comfortable with.**

You can disclose that you have a disability without saying what your disability is.

Here is an example:

Subject: Follow Up On Our Accommodation Discussion

Hello,

Thank you for speaking with me today about my disability and the accommodations I think may help with my success here. I just wanted to send an email to recap the information that we discussed.

I take a medication related to my disability that may impact my alertness in the morning. I am concerned that in the morning when I currently am asked to do my reporting and documentation, that I may make mistakes or leave out important details.

I am requesting that, if possible, I do my reporting and documentation at the end of the day. In the morning in place of this I will do more repetitive tasks like cleaning the reception area, checking the voicemail, and preparing the meeting rooms for the day. Currently I do a lot of these tasks at the end of the day.

I am open to discussing this accommodation further and finding solutions that work best for the company and me.

I would like to request that this information remain confidential and only be shared with my direct supervisors, the human resources team, or anyone who is directly impacted by this accommodation.

Looking forward to discussing this further.

Regards,

(Your Name)