

# Can't Ask, Afraid to Tell: Helping Youth Navigate Disability Disclosure Decisions

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## Agenda

- About NCWD/Youth
- Disclosure
  - Post-Secondary School
  - Employment
  - Community
- Disability Inquiries

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## National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth

- Strives to ensure that youth with disabilities are provided full access to high quality services in integrated settings in order to maximize their opportunities for employment and independent living. [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info)
- Funded by Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
- Housed at Institute for Educational Leadership

3

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### Terminology We'll Use

*Disability:*

- 1) A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- 2) A person who has a history or record of such an impairment; or
- 3) A person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

American with Disabilities Act 1990

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### Terminology We'll Use

- *Disability-related information (telling)*
  - Any information that discloses that the customer has a disability (e.g., information about special education, notes that a customer has been referred to Voc Rehab, etc.)
- *Disability-related inquiries (asking)*
  - Asking customers questions that are likely to elicit information about disabilities
  - Asking customers to undergo assessments to determine if they have *hidden disabilities* (such as learning disabilities)

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### What is Disclosure ?

- Intentionally releasing personal information about yourself for a specific purpose
  - How your disability affects your capacity to learn and perform effectively
  - The environment, supports, and services you'll need in order to access, participate, and excel at work, school, and social.
- Critical for both youth with visible AND hidden disabilities
- Most of all, a PERSONAL decision

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### Why is this important for YWD?

- Get a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities if/when they disclose
- Helps YWD make informed decisions about disclosing disability that will effect educational, employment, and social lives.
- To get the services they need!!!
- Advantages and disadvantages to making this decision.

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### A Piece of Youth Development and Leadership

- Disclosure falls under the Guidepost YDL because accommodations are a right
- Self-identity as a person with a disability ties into the disability history, culture, and community piece
- Part of what this guide hopes to do is give YWD the tools to combat the stigma of disability

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### Disclosure in Our Own Lives

- Thumbs up / thumbs down activity
- Who decides?
- How do you decide?

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### Key Issues of Disclosure

- Where to disclose?
- When to disclose?
- Whom to disclose to?
- What are the rights/responsibilities of the individual disclosing?

10

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### Why Disclose in Post-Secondary School?

- At the post-secondary level, accommodations are only provided when a student discloses and asks for them
- Requires open communication with professors, disability support services, and the student

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### To Whom?

- Professors, TAs, etc.
- Counselors/Advisors
- Disability Support Services

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## Rights

- Be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory fashion
- Discuss academic needs, supports, and accommodations in a non-judgmental setting
- Have information about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully
- Know what happens to personal information you choose to share with counselors, faculty, or staff
- Obtain information about DSS as well as physical/programmatic accessibility at the institution of your choosing

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## Responsibilities

- Investigate and fully understand the academic and practical requirements of your chosen course of study, including determining that this option matches your skills and abilities
- Recognizing that disclosing on an application form or prior to enrollment does not eliminate your responsibility to contact DSS for accommodations
- Find out about options for accessing institution of your choice
- Advise faculty and staff of your disability related needs
- Understand that DSS may not be able to address needs if not disclosed in a timely manner
- Be self-determined and practical

14

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## Why Disclose in Work?

- Employers and co-workers not required to provide accommodations unless the YWD discloses
- Obtain information to assist you in developing a career plan that addresses possible barriers and accommodations
- Identify disability-specific employment services & support networks
- Discuss employment requirements with recruiters or other professionals
- Discuss disability issues with prospective employers to determine whether requirements of the position can be met, with/without reasonable accommodations.
- Investigate available workplace supports
- Develop mentoring and peer support structures with employers and employees with and without disabilities

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### To Whom?

- Career Counselors
- Disability-specific adult employment services personnel
- One-Stop Career Center personnel
- Prospective employers or human resources personnel
- Workplace mentors

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### Rights

- Have information about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully
- Seek information about hiring practices from any organization
- Choose to disclose at any time during the employment process
- Review appropriate accommodations in an interview so you may demonstrate your skills and abilities
- Be considered for a position based on your skills and merit
- Have respectful questioning about your disability for the purpose of reasonable accommodation
- Be self-determined and proactive

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### Responsibilities

- Disclose your need for accommodation if you desire any work-related adjustments
- Search for jobs that address your skills and abilities
- Inform the manager or interview panel about your need for appropriate interview accommodations in a timely manner
- Identify appropriate and reasonable accommodations for an interview
- Negotiate reasonable accommodations w/an employer at the point of job offer and beyond
- Bring skills and merits to the table.

18

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### Why Disclose in Social Settings?

- Start relationships/friendships with honesty
- Discuss specific needs in order to identify accommodations in the community
- Receive any necessary assistance that may be needed while participating in community or social activities.

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### To Whom?

- Friends
- Relatives
- Owners or staff members of various businesses
- Public transportation staff
- Parks and recreation staff
- Events coordinators
- Mentors/Role Models

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### Rights

- Be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory fashion
- Have info about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully
- Work collaboratively with others to identify necessary supports for your success
- Obtaining about disability support services as well as physical/programmatic access in community settings
- Be self-determined and proactive

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## Responsibilities

- Investigate and fully understand your disability and disability-related needs as they pertain to community living
- Find out about options for accessing the community settings of your choice
- Advise community members and friends of your accommodation and support needs
- Understand that community members and friends may not be able to address your needs if not presented in a timely manner.

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## NCWD/Youth Disclosure Resources

- 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities  
[www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure)
- The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Families, Educators, Youth Service Professionals, and Adult Allies Who Care About Youth with Disabilities  
[www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure-for-adults](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure-for-adults)
- Cyber Disclosure for Youth with Disabilities  
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/cyber-disclosure>
- Disability Inquiries In The Workforce Development System  
[www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-09](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-09)

23

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## More Resources

- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info)
- DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)
- Job Accommodation Network [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)
- Disability.gov (search "disclosure")

24

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### Any questions?

- Reality Check: How does this information connect to you and your experiences? (Or not?)
- Next Steps: What do you plan to do with this information?

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### Contact Information

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26

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