



Introduction for Students And Employees with Disabilities

Choosing Your Path. Disclosure: It's A Personal Decision is a resource which provides substantial information about options and pathways that people with disabilities can use in disclosing their disability in post secondary education and employment environments.

Choosing Your Path has been written for students and employees with disabilities as well as employers, educators and support services. The Resource provides information about:

- The options and pathways a person with a disability has when deciding to disclose their disability, the benefits and disadvantages of disclosing as well as providing some key considerations to achieving **effective disclosure**
- The rights, roles and responsibilities of ALL parties when deciding about disclosing a disability in post secondary education and employment.

A Personal Decision

Martin has been accepted into the course and university of his choice and is greatly looking forward to his study, however, he is uncertain about notifying the university that he has a disability.

Gina has completed her training course in information technology and has seen a position seeking someone with her skills, but she is concerned that she will be discriminated against if she asks for some accommodations in the workplace, if she is the successful applicant.

These are just two examples of the many situations facing people with a disability. Ultimately, the decision to disclose or not is a personal one, but it needs to be a considered decision.

Some people choose to disclose their disability knowing that they may need education or work related adjustments to enable them to undertake the tasks associated with study or work. Others may choose to disclose in order to avoid misunderstanding or labeling by others, while some people may use disclosure to create an opportunity for educating others about disability and its impact. Disclosure can also provide an opportunity to find out about disability related services, support, research and other information.

However, many people are fearful of disclosing their disability, believing they may be discriminated against, or denied opportunities, such as a place in the course they wish to undertake, or a job or promotion they really want, or being denied certain entitlements. Some people fear their disability may provoke curiosity or unnecessary concern in others.

Effective Disclosure

Disclosure is most effective when you are clear about the purpose and the desired outcomes of disclosing. This ensures that disclosure occurs with the right person, in a timely and appropriate manner and with a clear goal in mind.

Disclosure is most effective when the applicant is:

"...knowledgeable about their disability and (is) able to articulate both their disability-related needs and their unique (skills)." (1)

This resource will provide you with information about some key considerations to achieving effective disclosure, in post secondary education and employment settings.

Informed Choice

Choosing Your Path, Disclosure: It's a Personal Decision aims to provide information about the pathways and options of disclosing a disability, both the benefits and disadvantages as well as providing some key considerations to achieving effective disclosure, in post secondary education and employment settings.

This resource, however, is just one tool in the process of deciding about disclosing a disability. Other practical support can be gained by talking to others about their experiences, such as when and how they disclosed, why they disclosed or not and the outcomes or consequences of disclosing. It is important to know and understand how personal information disclosed will be used by the employer or educational institution, and about their confidentiality and privacy policies. Some of this information may be available on education and employers websites or in their printed material. **It's a good idea to do some research before disclosing.**

Choosing Your Path, Disclosure: It's a Personal Decision focuses on disclosure in:

Post Secondary Education:

- Prior to Enrolling
- Enrolment
- Commencement of Study
- Anytime During Study
- Not To Disclosure

Employment:

- Developing a Career Plan and Looking For Work
- Letter of Application and Resume
- Organising a Job Interview
- Job Interview
- Offer of Employment
- Medical Questionnaires and Assessments
- In the Job
- Equal Employment Opportunity Monitoring Forms
- Superannuation
- Not to Disclose in Employment

Choosing Your Path. Disclosure: It's a Personal Decision also provides information on the legislative requirements in relation to disability:

- Privacy and Confidentiality Acts
- Disability Discrimination Act.
- Occupational Health & Safety Acts