



DISCLOSURE & ACCOMMODATION

Who needs to know what and when?

In this tipsheet, you will learn about why, when, and how to disclose private, personal information and to request accommodations related to a variety of areas including disability, religion, and age. You will learn what is required from you, and what you can expect from an employer. The information below provides you with a starting place - decisions about disclosure are very personal and each individual needs to build their own approach. For further support with your specific situation, you can speak to a Career Counsellor during [Drop-In Career Advising](#) or by booking a [Career Consultation appointment](#).

What is Disclosure?

Disclosure is a complex topic, often associated with disclosing a disability. However, disclosure can pertain to any piece of sensitive personal information you may decide to share, or not share, with a potential or current employer. This may include self-identification with an equity seeking group (LGBTQ+, person of colour, women, Indigenous persons, person with a disability), or a religion, ethnicity and/or culture.

Why disclose?

Thinking about how and when to disclose before it happens can help remove some potential stress in future situations. You may want to disclose some aspects of your identity for the following reasons:

- **To identify as part of an equity-deserving group.** If an employer is recruiting candidates from equity-deserving groups, disclosure may help your application and increase the likelihood that you receive an interview. Employment equity legislation does not require them to give you an interview or the job — they are still required to hire the most qualified candidate. However, this is often a sign that the organization is open and supportive of disclosures.
- **To demonstrate relevant knowledge and experience.** If the position involves working within a specific community, you may want to disclose that you are member of that community, and any experiences you have from living, volunteering, or working in that community.
- **To acquire accommodations.** If you require an accommodation, you will need to disclose what type of accommodation you need (but you do not need to disclose any health information). This does not necessarily need to happen in an interview. You can wait to get a job offer, and then discuss what accommodation(s) you require.
- **To lead and shape the narrative.** You are the best person to inform an interviewer about who you are. Initiating the discussion on your terms can help you to feel more empowered, while dispelling misinformation and representing your needs.
- **To bring your whole self to work.** Withholding personal information about yourself can take an emotional toll. If choosing not to disclose prevents you from feeling comfortable at work, it may be worth considering to disclose.



Am I required to disclose?

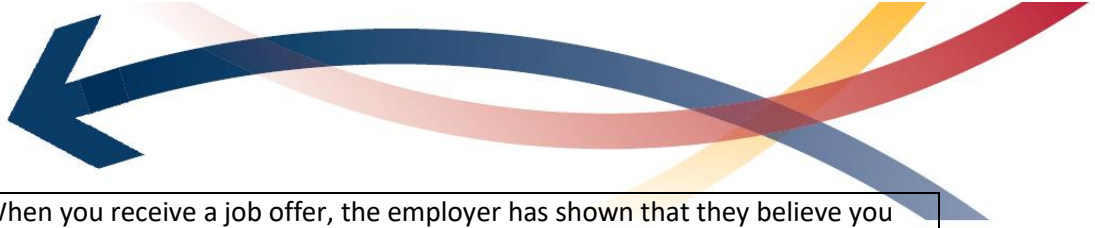
Unless you are creating a health and safety risk, a risk to others' properties, or requesting an accommodation (discussed in greater detail below), you are not required or obliged to disclose personal information — defined as information that is not relevant to your job — to the potential employer. However, in some cases, disclosure can be useful, and it is your decision to choose whether to disclose. Think of disclosure as one of the many tools you can use to help you reach your job search or career objectives.

When to disclose?

You can choose to disclose at any time (including not at all), so how do you decide when is the right time? It might occur as a direct communication with the employer, or as part of your response to an interview question. However, you may also decide to disclose information prior to or after the interview.

The below section provides considerations for disclosure when requesting accommodations:

<p>In the Resume or Cover Letter</p>	<p>Be sure to focus on your strengths and experience, and why you are a strong candidate for the role. However, consider how disclosure at this point may further highlight your suitability as a candidate if the information you share is relevant to the position you are applying for. Be aware of how including details such as organization and club names, extracurricular affiliations, etc. may lead to unintentional disclosure.</p> <p>Also consider further researching the values, practices, and work culture of the organization you are applying for .</p> <p>Space on a resume & cover letter is limited, so you may prefer to disclose during a conversation, where you can attend to any concerns or questions that arise.</p>
<p>Before, During, or After the Interview</p>	<p>When you receive an interview offer, it is generally helpful to know what will happen in the interview process. If details are not provided, ask about the length of the interview, interview type, and whether there will be any assessments, tours, or other components. This information can help you assess whether disclosure and/or accommodations are needed.</p> <p>Many people prefer to disclose their need for accommodations at this stage because they can have a conversation with the recruiter before the interview, the hiring team at the interview, and/or in the follow-up after the interview. For accommodations related to disability, it may be important to consider whether your disability will be visible when you attend the interview. Will disclosing beforehand raise or lower your stress level? See the below section on “How to Disclose” for further guidance about having this conversation.</p>
<p>References</p>	<p>You can speak with your references before they are contacted if you are concerned they may inadvertently disclose personal information you are not ready to share.</p>



After job offer and before first day of work	<p>When you receive a job offer, the employer has shown that they believe you are the best candidate to do the job. Many people are concerned that disclosing a need for accommodations at this point may lead the employer to rescind the job offer; however, this is very unlikely as there can be legal ramifications through the Ontario Human Rights Code if this happens.</p> <p>If you have not required accommodations during the application and interview process but do require them in order to fulfill the job, you may decide this is the best time to disclose.</p> <p>Disclosing before you start the job can be very beneficial; it can help ensure that any required accommodations are set up before you arrive for a smoother on-boarding experience. It gives the manager time to familiarize themselves with any relevant information or policies, and to gather other resources as needed.</p>
After you begin work	<p>Some people like to wait until they have been in the role for a while to disclose personal information. They feel that this allows them to establish themselves and to develop trusting relationships before disclosing.</p> <p>For requests for accommodations, consider requesting a meeting with your supervisor to discuss issues you want the employer to know. You should be prepared to answer questions related to the potential impact on the team and the organization, but do not need to necessarily include every detail. Bringing up the possibility of requiring some accommodation in the future opens the door for open communication. Being open and honest at the start of your role, even if you don't require accommodation, or don't know what accommodation you will require yet, can make it easier to have these conversations later on.</p>
In the role, when need for accommodations arises	<p>If you wait to disclose information until a challenge arises, this may be a high stress scenario, and you may not be able to best speak to what you need, why you need it, and how you will be able to do the required tasks of the job. Also, waiting until a challenge arises to disclose may affect your relationship with your manager. On the other hand, if up to that point you have seen no need to disclose, you may prefer to just address the situation when a challenge arises. It is important to consider what to disclose to enable your employer to best support you and for you to fulfill your role. It is recommended that you have a formal meeting with your employer (and possibly HR) to discuss what kind of accommodation is required. Reflect on and present the various options and possible solutions for the situation.</p>



The below section provides considerations for disclosure of personal information not related to accommodations:

In the Resume or Cover Letter	<p>While your resume and cover letter should focus on your relevant strengths and experiences for the role you are applying for, you may consider disclosing personal information that supports your suitability as a candidate. At the same time, though the role may connect strongly with a dimension of your identity, that does not mean you need to explain that to the employer.</p> <p>Be aware of how details such as organization and club names, extracurricular affiliations, etc. may lead to unintentional disclosure. Also explore whether and how the organization’s practices are aligned with their espoused values and priorities.</p> <p>If you are less comfortable disclosing at this stage, you can also disclose during a conversation, where you can attend to any concerns or questions that arise.</p>
References	<p>You can speak with your references before they are contacted if you are concerned they may inadvertently disclose personal information you are not ready to share.</p>
After job offer and before first day of work	<p>When you receive a job offer, the employer has shown that they believe you are the best candidate to do the job. Many people are concerned that certain kinds of disclosure at this point may lead the employer to rescind the job offer; however, this is very unlikely as there can be legal ramifications through the Ontario Human Rights Code if this happens.</p> <p>Disclosing aspects of your identity is your choice and you are not obliged to do so.</p>
After you begin work	<p>Some people like to wait until they have been in the role for a while to disclose personal information. They feel that this allows them to establish themselves and to develop trusting relationships before disclosing.</p>



How to disclose and/or ask for accommodation?

When you disclose, you want to keep in mind the following things:

- **Focus on what you need, not your diagnosis or why** – When disclosing the need for accommodations, focus on the functional limitations, not the diagnosis. What do you need from the employer/supervisor (e.g. time, equipment, flexibility, etc.) in order to do your job in the most efficient and effective way? When disclosing a need for accommodation due to non-disability related factors (ex. accommodated schedule for childcare, time/space for religious activities), focus on how you will still meet workflow or deadline priorities.
- **Focus on your strengths** - provide examples of how you have managed or how accommodations have facilitated your success in the past. Show how these experiences have led to success and what strengths you've developed as a result.
- **Be aware of employer requests** – employers may ask you to demonstrate specific bona fide job requirements, to ensure you can meet the main requirements of your role. Employers may also request medical or other documentation if you are requesting an accommodation. Check with HR around which forms to use. Forms should focus on an assessment of your functional ability/limitations rather than focusing on diagnostic information.
- **Keep an open mind** – be ready to consider a variety of options for meeting your needs, and review these with your manager and/or Human Resources to determine what will work best for all parties while meeting your accommodation needs.

Can an employer deny me an accommodation?

- Employers in Ontario are required to provide reasonable accommodations to the point of undue hardship. Undue hardship is evaluated by cost, funding, and health and safety requirements. For more information, see the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#).
- An employer may dismiss your application or deny an accommodation if the requirement in question is a bona fide requirement of the job. A bona fide job requirement is a task/qualification that is required in the context of the job (although it may be seen as discriminatory in other contexts).
 - Example: in Ontario, to be legally allowed to serve alcohol you must be over 18 years of age. Employers are allowed to reject applications from people who are under 18, although they are legally allowed to work. In other contexts, this would be seen as age discrimination.
- An employer may ask you to demonstrate your ability to meet a bona fide requirement of the job. Bona fide means “good faith” or “genuine”, and in this case, a requirement is evaluated to see if it is possible to accommodate, without causing undue hardship to the employer to accommodate for.
 - Example: At an interview to be a heavy lifting warehouse worker, the interviewer may ask you to lift 75 pounds, as outlined in the job description, to ensure you are able carry out the responsibilities of the role.
- For more information about your protections, see the Ontario Human Rights Commission page on [Policies & Resources related to disability](#).



Additional Helpful Websites & Resources

Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/social_areas/employment

The OHRC works to build respect for human rights into all aspects of life in Ontario. It looks at the roots of discrimination, develop policy for preventing different forms of discrimination, and work to raise awareness of human rights issues. The OHRC intervenes, as needed, at tribunals and all levels of court on human rights issues with broad public interest or concern, with different sectors and groups, to promote organizational change and to break down barriers to equity and success.

Lime Connect <https://www.limeconnect.com/>

A global not for profit organization that works to connect high potential university students and professionals with disabilities with scholarships, internship sand careers. Lime Connect works with a number of corporate partners to help educate them and develop opportunities for persons with disabilities. Check out their opportunities and programs on their website.

CareerWise <https://careerwise.ceric.ca/> - search for articles using keywords such as disclosure, diversity, accommodations, inclusivity

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