

Telling Future Employers about Non-Visible Health Conditions: The Disclosure

Having the disclosure conversation can be nerve-wracking but if you prepare it, this will give you the extra confidence and control you need to ensure the focus is on the impact and your needs.

Before preparing, ask yourself the following:

- Do I have to tell my employer? (see previous blog)
- Why do I want to tell them? (is this out of obligation or will be helpful to you?)
- How do I feel about telling them? (whatever emotional response this elicited is very normal)

Having a plan

Having a disclosure plan for the conversation helps you keep the things you want the employer to concentrate on. There is also a bit of reflection and research you can do to support your plan.

When will I tell the employer?

This could be at application stage, at interview, before a test, after the job offer is made, when you're in the workplace. When you disclose is entirely dependent on how comfortable you feel disclosing at any of these stages. It may be worth listing pros and cons to help you decide the timing.

Where will I tell them?

Think about what the conversation might look like. Will you speak to someone on the phone or will you do this in person? If the conversation is not face-to-face, how might this change what you want to say? E.g. how much time will you have with them?

What will they say?

Pre-empt questions or concerns. Think about how you might deal with a reaction. Two big questions they will likely have are:

- How will this affect your work?
- What support will you need?

How will they react?

There are two things to remember here – they are human and may react in a way you didn't expect, and also that you have had time to absorb this information for a while, however they might need time to take it all in. Equally, of course, they may not react at all and take the information in their stride.

What will I say?

As the mainstay of the conversation, keep it positive. Remind them of what you do really well and, concisely, tell them about how you currently manage your condition at university. Highlight areas of work that might impact your condition, then focus on what support you can both put into place to help you do your job the most effectively. Think about what your employer might do to help you – are there any physical changes to your desk? Is there something about your working pattern that might help? Think about ways of working you can bring from university or what you found helped you. You can make clear whether or not this would be open information or if you would like things kept private and confidential.

Remember, this is not only about what you can do, but also that employers have a duty of care to take away barriers in the workplace that exist because of your condition. They do this by providing reasonable adjustments (more in the final blog).

How will I say it?

Keep the conversation flowing and factual. Focus only on aspects that are relevant to the role (i.e. they don't need to know that you spend your weekends filling pill boxes, etc).

How will I ask for support?

Once the information part of the conversation is over, if you feel this is the right time, you can move on to your needs: things that will help you integrate and help you to do your job effectively. This is the research bit – once you've identified areas in which you'll need support, do some research on the sorts of things others have found very useful.

Use your resources

At UCL Careers, we're more than happy to talk through disclosure with you, whether you're confused, have made up your mind or just want to do a simple role play! If you are already accessing UCL Careers Extra, then please book a 30-minute one-to-one appointment. If you have a health condition and not yet accessed this, please contact UCL Careers and we'll give you a steer.

Resources

[Equality Act & Human Rights Commission / 0808 800 0082](#)

[Disability confident employers](#) (government scheme)

[Workplace adjustments: Equality Law](#)