



TO TELL OR NOT TO TELL: ISSUES OF DISCLOSURE IN THE WORKPLACE

Whether or not to disclose your diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) — and when and how — are often difficult decisions. The decision to disclose varies from situation to situation and individual to individual. The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals with disabilities; however, each individual person needs to decide whether or not to disclose disability information and if so what information to disclose.

There are many reasons you may want to disclose your diagnosis. One big reason is that disclosure is necessary before requesting and receiving accommodations at work. In addition to helping to secure accommodations, there are several benefits to disclosing your diagnosis. For example, disclosure may help to:

- Provide an open exchange about how your disability may affect your work;
- Make you feel more comfortable during an interview or a conversation because you know you are being honest and not trying to hide anything;
- Give the employer a chance to decide if the disability is going to interfere with work;
- Explain any unusual behaviors to your colleagues or future colleagues;
- Find people who will be supportive of you.

However, disclosing your diagnosis may also have some negative consequences, including:

- It may cause you to be excluded simply based on your diagnosis of ASD;
- It may prevent you from ever knowing if the diagnosis, or something else, got in the way of being hired, getting a promotion, or getting a new assignment;
- It may get in the way of the process of finding work.

Issues of disclosure are closely tied to the concept of self-advocacy. If you decide you want to disclose your diagnosis, you should be able to understand ASD and be

able to talk about it, label it, and discuss how it may interfere with work. If you are seeking accommodations at work, you will need to discuss which accommodations you need and how they will help you to be successful in your job. If you have difficulty disclosing your diagnosis, a job coach or professional counselor can help you practice talking about ASD and how it affects you. Sometimes, they can accompany you when you tell your employer.

Often times, an employer will not know much about ASD or may only know what they have seen in the media. You may want to come prepared with educational materials to help your employer and staff to understand and know how to offer support.

Related Articles:

- [Protections Against Employment Discrimination](#)
- [The Right to Accommodations in the Workplace](#)
- [Workplace Accommodations and Supports for Individuals with ASD](#)
- [Self-Advocacy](#)
- [The Role of a Job Coach](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Adults with ASD: Deciding When to Disclose](#)
- [Should You Disclose a Disability on Your Resume](#)
- [An Autistic View of Employment](#)

The Center for Autism Research and The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia do not endorse or recommend any specific person or organization or form of treatment . The information included within the CAR Autism Roadmap & trade; and CAR Resource Directory & trade; should not be considered medical advice and should serve only as a guide to resources publicly and privately available . Choosing a treatment, course of action, and/or a resource is a personal decision, which should take into account each individual's and family's particular circumstances .