


# THE 411<sub>ON</sub> DISABILITY DISCLOSURE


A WORKBOOK FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES





The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies.


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Information on the Collaborative can be found at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>.

Information about the Office of Disability Employment Policy can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>.

Information is also available at <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/>, the comprehensive federal website of disability-related government resources





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This workbook provides the expertise about disclosing a disability, and you provide the expertise about yourself.



## INTRODUCTION

**W**hen you opened this workbook, you made an important decision! You made a decision to learn about disability disclosure and what it can mean for you. This workbook provides the expertise about disclosing a disability, and you provide the expertise about yourself. This workbook does not tell you what to do. Rather, it helps you make informed decisions about disclosing your disability, decisions that will affect your educational, employment, and social lives. In fact, making the personal decision to disclose your disability can lead to greater confidence in yourself and your choices. Disclosure is a very personal decision, a decision that takes thought and practice. Both young people with visible disabilities and those with hidden (not readily apparent to others) disabilities can benefit from using this workbook.



This workbook is for you if

- you want to understand yourself better;
- you want to understand your disability better;
- you want to explain your disability better to others;
- you are deciding whether or not to disclose your disability;
- you have decided to disclose your disability but feel unprepared or uncomfortable with this challenge;
- you wonder if disclosing your disability could improve your educational, employment, and social lives.

The ultimate goal is for you to make an informed choice about disclosing your disability. Remember, this decision may change based on the particular person, situation or setting, and need for accommodations. Trust your instincts! The workbook introduces numerous examples of other young people struggling with the question of “to disclose” or “not to disclose.” If you decide to disclose your disability, we believe this “how to” workbook offers you the information and practice opportunities you will need to learn how to disclose most effectively. ENJOY!

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

**E**ach unit contains a general statement of purpose, useful terminology, a discussion section, and activities to allow you to understand and practice the ideas presented throughout the unit. As you move through each unit, you will gain the information necessary to make an informed decision about disclosure. We encourage you to complete the units in order, as the information in each unit is dependent on the information in previous units.

There is a sizeable amount of information to process and it may take several weeks to get through all of the units. It is important to become comfortable with many of the concepts, especially self-determination and informed choice, before moving on to other units concerning issues such as rights and

responsibilities and accommodations. While most of the activities can be completed individually, some of the activities are meant to be completed in a small group. Make sure you surround yourself with people you trust and who know you and your strengths.

The following units provide activities to help you make some very important disclosure decisions such as the following:

- Should I disclose?
- If I decide to disclose, who is an appropriate person to tell?
- When should I disclose?
- How much should I disclose?
- What should I disclose?