

Unit 2: Disclosure...

What Is It and Why Is It So Important?

PURPOSE

The purpose of Unit 2 is to introduce you to the concept of disclosure. Terminology provided in this unit will help you better understand this topic. We strongly suggest that you read the discussion section on page 2-2.

TERMINOLOGY

You may know some of these words already, or you may have just heard them in passing. First, define these words, as you understand them. Then check your definitions against the glossary located in the back of this workbook. The following terms are used in Unit 2:

Confidential	Sensitive information
Disclosure	

Disclosure _____

Sensitive information _____

Confidential _____

DISCUSSION



When you tell someone something that was **previously unknown**, you are practicing **disclosure**. Disclosure comes from the word “disclose,” which means **to open up, to reveal, or to tell**. The term “disclosure” is used in different ways by different groups of people. For example, if you want to buy a house and need a loan, or if you need a loan for your college education, you must disclose, or share, your personal financial information with a loan officer at the bank. This information might include your income, savings and checking account information, any property you own, any debt you have, and any other relevant financial information.

When you disclose, **you are intentionally releasing personal information about yourself for a specific purpose**. Some personal information, such as your Social Security number, banking records, or medical records may be important to keep **confidential**. It is important to keep in mind that your decision to disclose, is personal and should be helpful to you. Remember that it is not essential to divulge specific personal information about your disability. What is most important and helpful is to provide information about 1) how your disability affects your capacity to learn and perform effectively, and 2) the environment, supports, and services you’ll need in order to access, participate in, and excel in your job, studies, and community. You must decide what and how much of this **sensitive information** is necessary to reveal in order to obtain the needed accommodations.

Here are some examples of disclosure. First, you might disclose your disability to a

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One of the most personal decisions you will make as a person with a disability is whether or not to tell someone about your disability.

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potential employer in order to receive needed job accommodations. Second, you might disclose your disability to new friends who have invited you to a concert because you need accessible seating close to the stage in order to see. Third, you might disclose your disability to your track coach because your math tutoring sessions overlap with track practice after school. Fourth, if you are applying for Social Security benefits, it is crucial for you to have your personal information related to your disability in order and ready to share with your benefits counselor. This may mean having your medical records, educational records, and recommendation letters organized. On the other hand, if you are applying for a disabled parking permit, you do not need to disclose all your medical and disability-related paperwork, but you only need to have a verification form completed by your medical doctor.

Let’s look at some examples in which an individual made the informed decision to disclose his or her disability in order to receive needed accommodations:

- Joe is deaf and will need an interpreter for a college interview.
- Joan, who is on the track team, has insulin-dependent diabetes and might need the

help of her teammates if her blood sugar is low.

- Carlo, who has attention deficit disorder (ADD), needs directions in written form because he misses steps when they are presented orally.
- Stephanie uses a wheelchair and has a personal assistant, who helps her with filing paperwork in vertical filing cabinets, to facilitate her job as a chief financial officer.
- Colleen has schizophrenia (which is

currently controlled with medication) and needs a private workspace or dividers in her work area to limit distractions and make her time at work more productive.

- Justin is autistic and needs a highly structured learning environment that focuses on his individual needs, which include development of social skills, language, and self-help.
- Melanie has dwarfism and needs a lower locker at school.

ACTIVITY



Effective disclosure occurs when you are knowledgeable about your disability and are able to describe both your disability-related needs and your skills and abilities clearly. Answering the questions below will help you effectively disclose your disability should the time come when you've decided disclosure is the best action.

Describe your disability-related needs: What needs related to your disability must be accommodated in order for you to be successful? For example, Sally needs all the written material at school and work to be in large print to accommodate her visual disability.



Describe your skills and abilities (think about what you do well at school, at home, at work, and in the community):

Scenario: Jesse has chosen to share information about his disability with his mentor at the manufacturing plant. He has decided to tell his mentor, Joe, about his poor reading skills and difficulty comprehending the new equipment training manuals. Jesse believes it is essential he tell Joe because he will need to miss work to attend training sessions that demonstrate use of the new equipment and verbally present the new information.

Now, think about **what** it is about yourself or your disability that may need to be revealed to the following people AND **why** it would be important to reveal information to this person about your disability:

College professor: _____

Potential employer: _____

New friend: _____

d. Community member (store owner, bank teller, police officer, etc.): _____

e. Family member: _____

Disability support service worker or coordinator: _____

NOTES 



Unit 3:

Weighing the Advantages & Disadvantages of Disclosure

PURPOSE



The purpose of Unit 3 is to help you determine the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing your disability. It is only after considering all of the options that you can make an informed decision. Terminology provided in this unit will help you better understand this topic. We strongly suggest that you read the discussion section on page 3-3.

TERMINOLOGY



You may know some of these words already, or you may have just heard them in passing. First, define these words as you understand them. Then check your definitions against the glossary that is located in the back of this workbook. The following terms are used in Unit 3:

Advantages	Impact
Disadvantages	Self-advocacy
Self-image	

Advantages _____

Disadvantages _____

Impact _____
