

Balancing Employee Privacy and Disclosure

The following are tips for employers on how to balance employee privacy while encouraging the disclosure of information that supports employees to be successful.

1. Ask the person.

The best way to understand what information should be shared, and what information should be kept private, is to ask the employee.



An excellent way to phrase this question is, “What information can we share with the team about your working style and what they can do to contribute to your success in this role?”

Help the employee see why sharing information will be helpful to their success.

2. Consider what information is relevant to the role.

What information could be shared that would help make the employee successful in their role? What information pertains specifically to the employee’s duties and responsibilities?



An example of this is “Bill prefers that people email him about tasks, versus asking him in person. This allows him to keep track of the various pieces on his plate and prioritize accordingly.”

In work from home roles or virtual workplaces, everyone has different preferences and accommodation needs, and these may vary depending on disability-related or external factors. Some people may need Zoom meetings vs. phone calls for the access to automated captions or lip reading, others may prefer to keep the camera off unless it’s necessary for all to be visible. These sorts of adjustments can be

easily made, and can accommodate all employees' personal needs—whether they have a disability or not! The most inclusive employers make sure to offer more than just one form of interview, so they can reach the broadest pool of candidates.

3. Consider how you share information about all your employees.

Making the sharing of information a best practice amongst all employees can reduce the stigma of sharing information only about the employees with disabilities.



What information can each person share about what makes them successful in their roles?

Presidents Group's [Pledge to Measure](#) is also a great tool for workplaces to adopt, to directly address the stigma of talking about disability in the workplace. Research shows that promoting disability disclosure can fundamentally improve organizational culture, build a competitive advantage, and demonstrate the employer's commitment to employing people with disabilities.

4. Demonstrate the benefits of disclosure.

Employees may not disclose having a disability for fear of the repercussions that might exist by doing so, or because of past experiences.



Demonstrating why an employee might disclose can benefit everyone involved.

Presidents Group's '[Spotlight on Disability in the Workplace](#)' video series showcases employee and employer experiences of disclosure.

Listen to Roop Johal's story of disclosing about her dyslexia at Small Business BC (with [CC and ASL](#) or [Described Video](#)) and Crystal Bramwell's story of being an employee with hearing loss at BCAA (with [CC and ASL](#) or [Described Video](#)).

However, remember: no one has an obligation to disclose, and ultimately the decision is theirs.