DISCLOSURE PROCESS

STEP 1: PREPARING TO DISCLOSE
- Explore your feelings about your disability…how comfortable are you talking about your disability
- Identify (by yourself or with other’s help) what accommodations you may need during the hiring process or on the job.
- Weigh the benefits, risks and timing of disclosure.
- If you decide not to disclose, make sure you can perform the essential functions of the position before accepting it.
- If you decide to disclose, plan in advance how you will handle it
  - Whom to tell (interviewer, HR representative, etc.)
  - What you will say

STEP 2: WHEN YOU DISCLOSE
- Decide how specific you will be in describing your disability.
  - General terms: a medical condition, a disability, etc.
  - Specifically refer to your disability
  - Exact diagnosis
  - Remember, try to use language that is informative, yet non-threatening. Be concise in your explanation and prepare brief answers for anticipated questions.
- Describe the skills that you have that make you able to perform the essential functions of the job.
  - Qualifications
  - Technical Skills
  - General Work Skills
- Describe any functional limitations caused by your disability that may interfere with your performance and identify those accommodations you may need to overcome those limitations.

STEP 3: PREPARE SCRIPT (If Necessary)

“I have (name of disability). Currently, I have (the skills required) to do the essential functions of the job. Sometimes, (functional limitations) may interfere with my ability to (duties you have trouble performing). It helps if I have (name the specific accommodations you need). I work best when (other accommodations).”
Rules for a Good Disclosure

1. **Script your disclosure.** Write it down and have it critiqued. Run through it with friends who are employers, with people in the working world.

2. **Rehearse** your disclosure script until you feel comfortable and good about it, not only with your lips, but also with your body language.

3. When you prepare your script, **avoid being too clinical or too detailed.** It may be of great interest to you, but the interviewer wants to know only 3 things: will you be there; can you do the job as well or better than anyone else; will you be of value to the company?

4. **Remember your script and be positive** about your skills and abilities. The more positive you are, the more you will convey that you are you and you “just happen to have a disability.” Conversely, the more you discuss your disability, the more important it will become in the employer’s mind.

**THE BOTTOM LINE: You and the employer must both feel comfortable.**

Suggestions for Scripts

“I have *(preferred term for disability)*. Currently, I can/have the skills required to do *(the main duties) of the job, but sometimes (functional limitations) interfere with my ability to *(duties you may have trouble performing).* It helps if I have *(name the specific accommodations you need).* I work best when *(other accommodations).*

You could also add the following information…

*Sometimes you might see (symptoms or behaviors associated with symptoms). When you see that, you can *(name the action steps for the employer).* Here is the number of my *(employment specialist, doctor, therapist, previous employer, JAN, etc.) for any information you might need about my ability to handle the job.*