



FRAMEWORK

AHEAD's View

Disclosure is a process of shared responsibility with the aim of sharing relevant disability related information.

Two key points in this process are:

Identifying the Necessary Information

Disclosure is about making the relevant information known. Such information advises an employer about the impact of a particular impairment or condition within a specific work environment. A fair and transparent process should only seek the relevant information at the relevant time.

Acknowledging Shared Responsibility

To disclose is an individual's decision and key to informing such a decision is the employer providing accurate and detailed information about the work involved. For clarity, employers commonly expect all applicants including applicants with disabilities to demonstrate their suitability for a particular job. In order for this to occur and encourage disclosure, the employer needs to take responsibility for providing sufficient information about the role and work environment, typically within a job specification. The individual knows how they work best, but the employer understands the work environment and job related tasks. Sharing such relevant information will assist an employer in meeting the unique needs of all its employees and the company.

A work environment which encourages disclosure is one that explicitly publicizes supports, does not segregate staff through processes used to provide supports, promotes health and well-being and acknowledges the importance of the long-term health of all staff.

For further information on the AHEAD WAM Programme please contact:

t: 01 716 4396 e: wam@ahead.ie w: www.ahead.ie



facebook.com/ahead.ie



[@aheadireland](https://twitter.com/aheadireland)



DISCLOSURE

The Work Environment

A Whole Organisation Approach:

A work environment which encourages disclosure of disability takes account of the diverse needs of all its employees.

Identify the Important Information:

Considering your obligations, what do you actually need to know? This information is usually found in gaining awareness of any potential impacts of an impairment or condition within a work environment.

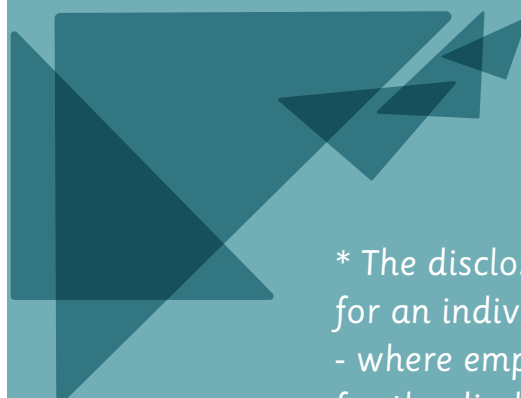
Use Language that Applies to All:

Asking direct disability related questions may not encourage disclosure. Such processes should focus on the support requirements of all staff rather than the disabilities of some staff. Where disclosure related questions are required, the purpose of the question should be made clear i.e. to create a positive work environment and ensure supports are in place for the person to do their job.

Responsibility During Recruitment:

It is the role of the employer to present the relevant information about a job so that an applicant can identify whether they are suitable for the role at all and decide whether their particular disability will have an impact and therefore require disclosure of disability related information. Key to this process is a detailed job specification which covers core competencies, the physical aspects of the role, the work environment and task related pressures.

WAM findings point to the interplay of a number of factors which influence each disclosure decision. Some of the most important factors in this decision are; the type of disability, the individual's self-identity, the context of the decision, the experience of the individual, and the environment in which the decision is being made.



** The disclosure decision can be made easier for an individual in a supportive environment - where employers have shared responsibility for the disclosure process.*

Use Processes that Apply to All:

The sample question; 'Do you require any specific supports or adjustments in order for you to...' should be asked of all whenever required. Opportunities include; application forms, prior to attending interview, during the interview, at job offer, prior to receiving important training, performance plans, reviews etc. Where this question is being asked, it should be asked of all going through the process, especially prior to interview and during the interview.

Clear Access to Supports:

Ensure all staff have access to policies on how you as an employer can accommodate support requirements. Having a designated staff member willing to have a conversation about supports, answer any questions about the process and offer an individualized support, can encourage staff to disclose support needs. Generally, employers should make use of every opportunity within their induction and training programmes to incorporate equality and diversity, promote health and well-being and highlight the supports available within the organization.

Transparency is Key:

Where disclosure occurs, it is very important that the process enables the person to have control over private information i.e. explicit clarification on where it is going and who needs to know in order to ensure supports are provided. If you feel colleagues need to be aware, discuss this with the person and agree on a process in which all parties are comfortable. Transparency, collaboration, confidentiality and clarity are vital.

Awareness:

HR and management staff should receive disability equality training. Staff involved in the provision of supports should be aware of the range of equipment and assistive technology enabling people with various disabilities in the workplace. This is a constantly developing field so expertise is not expected but an awareness of the range available would be beneficial.

Culture, Attitudes and Perception:

The culture of your organization will influence how people behave in it. This can be shaped through the publicizing of supports for all staff (i.e. posters, internal newsletters etc.), a flexible approach to work organization and support solutions, and optional training opportunities for all staff such as Irish Sign Language classes or sessions on Assistive Technology. Visual stimulus and training opportunities are key in highlighting what is of importance to an employer.