

Student Handbook

The

**411** on

# Disability Disclosure

**A WORKBOOK FOR YOUTH WITH  
DISABILITIES**



**MAINE TRANSITION NETWORK**

# **The 411 on Disability Disclosure**

## **A Curriculum for Educators of Youth with Disabilities**

### **Introduction**

This curriculum has been adapted for youth ages 14-24 to train them to talk about their disability in an informed manner should they choose to disclose their disability in a work, school, and/or community setting. It is to be used as a supplement to the original 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities (2005) developed by The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Over 100 youth leaders with disabilities ages 14-24 from all over Maine participated in the development and revision of this curriculum. The activities within this booklet expand upon the information and worksheets of the original 411 on Disability Disclosure to teach the skills and information in a fun and hands-on manner. Although the original 411 on Disability Disclosure is a workbook for youth with disabilities this supplemental curriculum also comes with a student workbook. The student workbook contains information, worksheets, and self-reflection guides that correspond with the activities of this curriculum.

### **Special Thanks and Recognition**

The development of the Youth 411 Disability Disclosure Curriculum was made possible with financial support from CHOICES CEO, a project funded by the federal Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services through a grant to Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (grant #11-P-92409/1-02). The CHOICES CEO project is managed through a partnership involving the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine Department of Labor. All staff support is provided through the Muskie School for Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. Views expressed do not represent official policy of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, the Maine Department of Labor or the University of Southern Maine.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following people who have worked on this youth curriculum, Lorinda Joy, Downeast Youth Leadership and Mary Redmond-Luce, Region V Advisory Council on Transition both of the Maine Transition Network; Jackie Stanley, Maine Parent Federation; Sandra Lamb-Mickel, Vocational Rehabilitation; Deanna Coutts, Workforce Investment Act; Karen Gorris-Hicock, Maine Transition Network; and the youth leaders of the Maine Transition Network.

Developed and produced by the **MAINE TRANSITION NETWORK.**

# Table of Contents

Terms and Definitions .....	4
Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 2 .....	5
Advantages and Disadvantages of Disclosure .....	6
Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 3 .....	8
Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 4 .....	9
List of Common Accommodations .....	10
Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 5 .....	11
Disclosure in a Post-Secondary Education Setting .....	12
Disclosure in a Job/Vocational Setting .....	16
Disclosure in a Community Setting .....	20
Legislation & National Resources .....	23
Maine State Resources .....	25



Should I or shouldn't I disclose information about my disability?

## Terms and Definitions

<b>Accessible:</b>	Environmentally modified or adjusted so that everyone can use it
<b>Accommodation:</b>	A modification or adjustment for a particular task or set of tasks. Eliminates a barrier in school, work or community
<b>Advantages:</b>	To choose something because it will lead to a positive result
<b>Assistive Technology:</b>	Technology that assists people with disabilities in independent living, communication, and access to education, employment, and recreation
<b>Confidential:</b>	Private and personal information
<b>Disclosure:</b>	To tell someone about your disability or other important information
<b>Disability:</b>	A physical or mental condition that makes it more difficult to do one or more of life's major activities. A disability can be either hidden or visible.
<b>Essential Functions:</b>	Tasks necessary to do a job
<b>Goals:</b>	Something that you work towards that can be long term or short term
<b>Informed Choice:</b>	Making a decision when you have and understand all information
<b>Modification:</b>	A change in an object, environment, or activity to make it available for all to use
<b>Postsecondary Education:</b>	Study or schooling after high school
<b>Respect:</b>	A feeling of high regard, desire to take care of people, things, or ideas that are important to you
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Reliability or trustworthiness
<b>Rights:</b>	Legal privileges given to you
<b>Self-Accommodation:</b>	To take responsibility to modify your environment rather than request it being done for you
<b>Self-Advocacy:</b>	Speaking up for yourself
<b>Self-Determination:</b>	Making informed decisions through reflecting on and building on your strengths.
<b>Values:</b>	Something that is important to you and that you respect

## Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 2



**What would you like to be doing in 5 years?  
Will you need to disclose your disability?**

<b>Dare to Dream</b>	<b>Might you have to disclose your disability? Yes or No</b>
<b>Post-Secondary Education</b> Do you hope to go to school after high school?  If so, what kind of school?	
<b>Work/Employment</b> Do you hope to be working?  If so, what kind of work do you hope to be doing?	
<b>Recreation/Social</b> How and where to you hope to recreate?	
<b>Living Environment</b> Do you hope to be living independently?	
<b>Advantages &amp; Disadvantages of Disclosure</b>	

Before you decide to disclose your disability consider these lists of advantages and disadvantages. Talk to the people close to you like friends (both with and without disabilities), teachers, mentors, coaches, and family members. Allow them to help you determine if you need accommodations in the classroom, on the job, or elsewhere in your community, and whether it is appropriate for you to disclose your disability.

### **Advantages of Disclosure**

- ✓ It allows you to receive reasonable accommodations so you can pursue work, school, or community activities more effectively.
- ✓ It provides legal protection against discrimination (as specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- ✓ It reduces stress, since protecting a “secret” can take a lot of energy.
- ✓ It gives you a clearer impression of what kinds of expectations people may have of you and your abilities.
- ✓ It ensures that you are getting what you need in order to be successful.
- ✓ It provides full freedom to examine and question health insurance and other benefits.
- ✓ It provides greater freedom to communicate should you face changes in your particular situation.
- ✓ It improves your self-image through self-advocacy.
- ✓ It allows you to involve other professionals (for example, educators and employment service providers) in the learning of skills and the development of accommodations.
- ✓ It increase you comfort level.

\*\*\*Remember that it is important to select a private, confidential, comfortable place to disclose and to allow enough time to discuss the impact of your disability. The person(s) to whom you are disclosing might have questions, suggestions, or concerns that require more time for discussion.



### **Advantages & Disadvantages of Disclosure**

## Disadvantages of Disclosure

- ✓ It can cause you to relive bad past experiences that resulted in the loss of a job or negative responses from your peers.
- ✓ It can lead to the experience of exclusion.
- ✓ It can cause you to become the object of curiosity.
- ✓ It can lead to your being blamed if something doesn't go right.
- ✓ It can lead to your being treated differently than others.
- ✓ It can bring up conflicting feelings about your self-image.
- ✓ It can lead to your being viewed as needy, not self-sufficient, or unable to perform on par with peers.
- ✓ It could cause you to be overlooked for a job, team, group, or organization.
- ✓ Disclosing personal and sensitive information can be extremely difficult and embarrassing.



**\*\*\*Remember that it is not essential to divulge specific personal information about your disability. Your disability is only important if it affects (or can potentially affect) your ability to perform successfully within the school, work, or community settings.**

## Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 3



**What are your strengths?**

## What will you need? Will you need to disclose?

<b>Strengths</b> What am I good at? What do I like to do? What do other people think I am good at? What skills do I have?	<b>Needs</b> What things are difficult for me? Are there things that I need to get better at or learn in order to reach my dreams?	<b>Disclosure</b> Will you possibly need to disclose this information?
<b>Postsecondary Education</b>		
<b>Work/Vocational Settings</b>		
<b>Recreation/Social</b>		
<b>Living Environment</b>		

**Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 4**



## Stakeholders



# Who can help me reach my dreams?

Who can help me?	How can they help me?

**Common Accommodations**

Listed below are some accommodations that are commonly requested for in school, work, and community environments. This list does not include all possible accommodations.



## Educational Accommodations

- ✓ Accessible classrooms.
- ✓ Modified instruction (for example, use of small groups).
- ✓ Modified curricula (for example, different learning outcomes or different materials from those for other students).
- ✓ Modified class schedules (for example, block schedules).
- ✓ Providing supervised breaks or allowing extra response and processing time during testing sessions, and administering the test at best time for the individual.
- ✓ Providing special seating in a general education classroom (for example, seating in the front of the room or in a study carrel), a small group setting.
- ✓ Providing large print materials, Braille materials, calculators, computers with spelling and grammar checks, and electronic dictionaries.
- ✓ Providing written copies of orally presented information found in examiner's manual, closed-captioned video materials, or sign language interpreters.
- ✓ Allowing individuals to answer by pointing rather than marking on a test booklet, by dictating responses to examiners for verbatim transcription, or by responding to an interpreter for transcription.

## Workplace Accommodations



- ✓ Changing an employee's workstation arrangement.
- ✓ Modifying equipment or devices (for example, computer software).
- ✓ Reassigning non-essential functions through job restructuring.
- ✓ Providing qualified readers and interpreters.
- ✓ Providing part-time or modified work schedules.
- ✓ Telecommuting options.
- ✓ Personal assistance services.
- ✓ Adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, and policies.

## Community Accessibility

- ✓ Providing ramps and reserved parking spaces (increasing physical accessibility).
- ✓ Providing assistive technology (for example: readers, calculators, spell-check, or communication devices).
- ✓ Providing interpreters.
- ✓ Providing accessible bathrooms.
- ✓ Providing accessible drinking fountains.
- ✓ Providing accessible equipment (for example, computers, desks, or copiers).
- ✓ Providing wide aisles and doorways.

## Self Reflection Worksheet - Unit 5



## Accommodations

# What accommodations will you need?

<b>Accommodations</b>
<b>Post-Secondary Education</b>
<b>Work/Employment</b>
<b>Recreation/Social</b>
<b>Living Environment</b>
<b>Disclosure in a Post-Secondary Education Setting</b>



**Purpose:**

The purpose of this section is to help you understand why, when, what, to whom, and how to disclose in order to get reasonable accommodations in college, at a university, in a career and technical school, or in an adult education center.

## WHY to disclose in post-secondary education

The process of choosing a post-secondary institution of learning is quite challenging. There are many decisions you will need to make: where to study, what to study, how to study, whether to attend full-time or part-time, whether to live at home or on campus, and whether to commute from a distance or enroll in online study are just a few.

If you have a disability, you must also consider the supports and services that you may need to be successful in the postsecondary setting of your choice. Are these supports and services available to you if you require an accommodation?

**\*\*\* Remember, accommodations at the post-secondary level (after you exit high school) are provided only when a student discloses his or her disability and requests accommodations.** Faculty and staff are not required to provide accommodations to students who have chosen not to disclose their disabilities.

Learning to disclose your disability-related needs effectively and developing an accommodation plan are extremely valuable skills. Effective disclosure skills require that you share information regarding your disability-related needs and also provide creative, practical suggestions for accommodations. Open communication with your professors and the disability services staff can facilitate the process of evaluating the effectiveness of your accommodations, and of making changes when efforts are not working.

Again, this is where informed decision-making is critical. The more enlightened you are before you graduate from high school, the more questions you ask, and the more you talk with people in the post-secondary world, the more likely it is that you will be confident that the decisions you make are right for you.

Some reasons why you may choose to disclose your disability in a postsecondary setting include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Obtaining information about available supports and services;
- Discussing specific needs in order to identify adjustments necessary to the study environment;
- Discussing academic requirements and practical components of your chosen course of study, in addition to possible professional requirements;
- Receiving any necessary assistance with the transition from high school to postsecondary education;
- Ensuring that Disability Support Service professionals provide any needed training or awareness for faculty members and other staff to help you receive the best accommodations; and

- Ensuring that faculty members know and implement the accommodations you require for success in their classes.

**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 study effectively, and 2) the environment, supports, and services you'll need in order to access, participate in, and excel in your area of study. Although confidentiality is protected under both the ADA and Section 504, as a student with a disability you must determine your own personal privacy boundaries. You must decide what and how much information is necessary to reveal in order to obtain the needed accommodations.

## WHEN to disclose in post-secondary education

It is important to think about the most appropriate time and place in which to disclose your disability in the post-secondary setting. The timing of your disclosure is important and can potentially have an impact on how you are perceived by others and what accommodations can be provided. There are 4 options for “when” you choose to disclose:

### **1. *Prior to enrollment***

Usually you will meet with your instructors or disability support services coordinators prior to enrolling in class. At this time, be prepared to disclose your disability as well as plan for needed accommodations or begin to explore strategies for accommodations that will work for them and the instructors.

### **2. *At the time of enrollment***

It is usually recommended that you inform your instructors of your needed accommodations at the beginning of a semester, or as soon as your disability is interfering with your progress in class.

### **3. *During your course of study***

If you wait to disclose your disability until after classes have started, there may be additional considerations. For example, if you decide to disclose your disability and make a request for accommodations the day before an exam (an example of poor timing), not only is the disclosure stressful, the accommodations are more difficult to arrange. If instead, you approach the instructor before the first class session, then accommodations can be arranged in an organized, thorough manner with sufficient time to implement them. Everyone is more comfortable with this arrangement.

### **4. *Never***

It is important to remember that if no accommodations are needed, or if you have made a decision to accommodate your potential needs personally (for example, by using a spell-check feature for English papers) then there is no need to disclose your disability.

## WHAT information to disclose in postsecondary education

Remember that preparation is essential when planning to disclose your disability. Don't forget that it is unnecessary to disclose very detailed medical or personal information.

You may wish to present the following information to the disability services professionals, faculty members, and staff:

- General information about your disability
- Why you've chosen to disclose your disability (i.e., its impact on your academic performance)
- The type of academic accommodations that have worked for you in the past (in high school)
- The type of academic accommodations you anticipate needing in the postsecondary setting
- How your disability and other life experiences can affect your course of study positively

Most importantly, keep the disclosure conversation focused on your abilities, not on your disability.

### **WHOM to disclose to in postsecondary education**

It is essential that you disclose your disability only to those individuals who need to know. Sometimes, the person you choose to disclose your disability to is determined by when you choose to disclose. The following list gives you examples of the people you might disclose your disability to at different times.

- Prior to enrollment, you might choose to disclose to the Disability Support Services staff, directly to faculty, or to an admissions officer.
- At the time of enrollment, you might choose to disclose directly on your application form or contact the Disability Support Services office.
- During your course of study, you might choose to contact your academic advisor or counselor, your professor, other teaching staff, or the Disability Support Services office.
- When in doubt, contact the trained professionals in the Disability Support Services office for guidance.

Throughout the process of disclosure and accommodation development, it is very important that you work closely and cooperatively with those individuals (such as faculty, counselors, Disability Support Service staff, and higher education administration) who can provide the supports and services. When you request for accommodations try to be assertive rather than aggressive and forthright rather than confrontational.

There are differences between assertive and aggressive communication and behavior. Assertive communication and behavior is preferable. Being assertive means that you (a) stand up for your personal rights; (b) express your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a

direct, honest, and appropriate way; (c) show respect for yourself and others; and (d) leave room for compromise. It is important for you to maintain good eye contact, express yourself clearly, stay on topic, and avoid apologizing or losing your temper.

Remember that it's important to select a private, confidential, comfortable place to disclose and to allow enough time to discuss the impact of your disability. The person(s) you are disclosing to may have questions, suggestions, or concerns that may require extra time for discussion.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Adapted from <<http://sites.uws.edu.au/rdlo/disclosure/education/prior.htm>>.

### You have the right to:

- Be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory fashion.
- Discuss your academic needs, supports, and accommodations in a non-judgmental setting.
- Have information about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully.
- Know what happens to personal information you choose to share with counselors, faculty, or staff.
- Work collaboratively with staff to identify necessary supports for your success.
- Obtain information about disability support services as well as physical and programmatic access at the institution of your choosing.
- Be self-determined and practical.

### You have the responsibility to:

- Investigate and fully understand the academic and practical requirements of your chosen course of study, including determining that this option matches your skills and abilities.
- Recognize that disclosing on an application form or prior to enrollment does not eliminate your responsibility to contact Disability Support Services after you are enrolled or contact your professors for any needed accommodations.
- Find out about options for accessing the institution of your choice.
- Advise faculty and staff in a timely manner of your needs in relation to your disability, including accommodation, support, and information.
- Understand that Disability Support Services staff or faculty may not be able to address your needs effectively if you do not disclose them in a timely manner.
- Be self-determined and practical.

## Disclosure in a Job/Vocational Setting



### Purpose:

The purpose of this section is to help you understand why, when, what, to whom, and how to disclose in order to get reasonable accommodations in a work setting (on the job).

## WHY to disclose on the job

Every job seeker with a disability is faced with the same decision: “Should I or shouldn’t I disclose information about my disability?” Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to disclose is entirely personal. It is a decision to make only after weighing the personal advantages and disadvantages of disclosure (see page 6).

If you have a disability, you must consider the supports and services that you may need to be successful in the job of your choice. Are these supports and services available to you if you require an accommodation?

**\*\*\*Remember that accommodations in the workplace are only provided when a worker discloses his or her disability and requests job accommodations.**

Employers and co-workers are not required to provide accommodations to workers who have chosen not to disclose their disabilities.

**\*\*\*Remember that it is not essential to divulge specific personal information about your disability. Your disability is only important if it affects (or can potentially affect) your ability to perform the essential functions of a job.**

What is most important and helpful is to provide information about how your disability affects your ability to perform the essential functions of the job, what supports you need in order to provide a most favorable environment for your career, and your own accommodation ideas for your particular situation.

## WHEN to disclose on the job

Though there is certainly no one “right” time and place to practice disclosure (it will depend on your individual situation), being proactive is strongly encouraged. Being proactive puts you in better control of your life. When you decide to disclose your disability to your employer, there may be settings and circumstances in which disclosure is more appropriate than others. Consider the following possibilities:

### *Circumstance of when you should disclose*

- Employment counselors at the local One-Stop Career Centers have strong connections with local employers and may be willing to serve as a reference for you. Be sure to make it clear with the counselor whether you would like him or her to disclose your disability and how you would like your disability to be represented.

### *In your letter of application or résumé*

- Many individuals choose to disclose their disabilities in their résumé or letter of application. Having a disability may be viewed as a positive trait in some professions or even as a requirement. For example, the Workforce Recruitment Program has been established specifically for young adults with disabilities.



### *Pre-interview*

- Disclosure prior to the interview is encouraged only when an accommodation is needed for the actual interview. For example, if you use a wheelchair and the office where the interview is to be scheduled is on the second floor of a building without an elevator, you need to make the interviewer aware of your need for accommodations (for example, by suggesting that the interview be moved to a first floor location).

### *On the employment application*

- You may have several options if the employment application form asks something like, “Do you have any mental or physical limitations that may impact your performance on the job?”

### *At the interview*

- You might or might not choose to disclose your disability during an interview. If your disability is visible, you might wish to discuss your disability and how it will not get in the way of doing a good job, especially if you have proper accommodations. You could give examples of how you would perform the job. If your disability is not apparent (invisible), you will need to decide whether or not to disclose your disability based on your comfort and trust levels. You do not have to disclose your disability at this stage. However, it might be helpful to do so in order to show that you can do the job with the right accommodation. At this time, you might want to give examples. Be positive and upbeat; show your confidence in yourself. Don't be apologetic, defensive, or cocky.

### *After you've been offered a job*

- Many individuals choose to disclose their disabilities after they have been offered the job. They want to be selected for the position because of their skills, and worry that disclosure prior to the point of hire may influence the interviewer's decision. However, once hired, you might need accommodations to do the essential functions of the job. Also, if the job requires medical testing and you take medications that will show up in a screening, you may choose to disclose this to the employer at this time.

### *During your course of employment*

- Sometimes, individuals with disabilities do not recognize that their disabilities can negatively affect their job performance. This is especially true for youth getting their first full-time job. Sometimes, you may feel confident when you begin a job, but become concerned that you may have underestimated your need for an accommodation.

**Remember that it is your responsibility to ask for an accommodation if you need one.**

**WHAT information to disclose on the job**

Remember that preparation is essential when planning to disclose your disability to your employer. Is your information presented in a clear and concise way that is relevant to your job? If it is, TERRIFIC! If not, make some changes and practice rehearsing your disclosure conversation. Don't forget that it is unnecessary to disclose very detailed medical or personal information. **Get to the point and keep it positive!**

You might wish to present the following information to your employer, supervisor, work mentor, or co-workers:

- General information about your disability;
- Why you've chosen to disclose your disability, including its impact on your job performance;
- The types of job accommodations that have worked for you in the past (in previous jobs and in training situations);
- The types of job accommodations you anticipate needing in the workplace; and
- How your disability and other life experiences can positively affect your work performance.

Most importantly, keep the disclosure conversation focused on your abilities, not your disability.

## WHOM to disclose to on the job

As a job seeker with a disability, you might choose to disclose information when developing your career plan and searching for employment. You might disclose information to the following individuals:

- Career counselors
- Disability-specific adult employment services personnel
- One-Stop Career Center personnel
- Prospective employers or human resources personnel
- Workplace mentors

When selecting the person to disclose to, reflect on the following questions first:

- Does this person have the power to determine how reasonable the request is for the accommodation?
- Can the person provide the required accommodation(s)?
- Is the person responsible for hiring, promoting, or firing?
- Is the person in a supervisory role and will he or she support me?
- What experiences does this person have with similar disclosure situations?

- Do I have respect for and trust in this person's keeping my disclosure confidential?

Remember that it is important to select a private, confidential, comfortable place to disclose and to allow enough time to discuss the impact of your disability. The person(s) to whom you are disclosing might have questions, suggestions, or concerns that require more time for discussion.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Adapted from <<http://sites.uws.edu.au/rdlo/disclosure/education/prior.htm>>.

### You have the right to:

- Have information about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully.
- Seek information about hiring practices from any organization.
- Choose to disclose your disability at any time during the employment process.
- Receive appropriate accommodations in an interview so you may demonstrate your skills and abilities.
- Be considered for a position based on your skill and merit.
- Have respectful questioning about your disability for the purpose of reasonable accommodation.
- Be self-determined and proactive.

### You have the responsibility to

- Disclose your need for accommodation if you desire any work-related adjustments.
- Search for jobs that address your skills and abilities.
- Inform the manager or interview panel about your need for appropriate interview accommodations in a timely manner.
- Identify appropriate and reasonable accommodations for an interview.
- Negotiate reasonable accommodation(s) with an employer at the point of job offer and beyond.
- Bring your skills and merits to the table.
- Be truthful, self-determined, and proactive.

## Disclosure in a Social and Community Setting



### Purpose:

The purpose of this section is to help you understand the why, when, what, to whom, and how to disclose your disability to community members and friends in social situations.

## WHY to disclose in social settings

Social and community environments have barriers that sometimes prevent people with disabilities from spending time outside their home, socializing and going out with friends, and participating in community or civic events. Speaking about your disability in social settings can be hard and sometimes frustrating, because many of the barriers you will face in social settings are people's attitudes, beliefs, and inexperience. It is important to understand how your disability and disability-related needs can influence your participation in your community and other social activities (such as recreation, leisure, civic, religious, and political activities).

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 how your disability affects your capacity to participate in social and community activities, and the supports that are needed to allow you to participate fully.

### WHEN to disclose in social settings

There may be times when you decide to disclose in social or community settings. The following list includes some possibilities:

- Going with your friends to a concert
- Planning a date with someone
- Meeting your mentor for lunch
- Meeting new people, or starting new relationships
- Joining community clubs or activities

### WHAT information to disclose in social settings

Remember that what you disclose about yourself is a deeply personal issue and you don't have to share everything with everyone. You should think about what you want people to know and to think about you. It will be helpful if you describe your disability and related needs in honest and positive terms. You want people to feel good about interacting with you, not from a point of pity or helplessness but from being included.

Preparation is essential when planning to disclose your disability. Is your information presented in a clear and concise way, a way that is relevant to your social and community life? If it is, TERRIFIC! If not, make some changes and then practice the disclosure script. **Don't forget that it is not necessary to disclose every detail of your medical or personal information even to your friends, but be open and honest in your discussion.** Some people may feel uncomfortable with talking about your disability, which may hurt or make you angry, but your positive presentation can help put them at ease. Be prepared, but be flexible in how you talk about your disability in different settings.

You may wish to present the following information about your disability to friends, acquaintances, or community members:

- General information about your disability.
- Why you've chosen to disclose your disability to them, including its impact on your social life and community involvement.
- The type of accommodations that have worked for you in the past or that you may need in the future.
- Positive examples of how you can become more involved in your community and what community involvement means to you.

### WHOM to disclose to in social settings

As a person with a disability, you may choose to disclose your disability to a variety of other community members. Often, disclosure may be made to the following individuals (among others):

- Friends and acquaintances
- Relatives
- Owners or staff members of various businesses (such as grocery stores, banks, or clothing stores)
- Public transportation staff
- Parks and recreation staff
- Events coordinator's
- Mentors or role models

When selecting the person to disclose to, reflect on the following questions first:

- Do I have respect for and trust in this person's keeping my disclosure confidential?
- Is disclosure essential to our relationship?
- Does this person have the power to determine how reasonable a request for an accommodation is?
- Can the person provide the required accommodation(s)?
- Is this person going to use information about my disability to support me or harm me?

Remember that it's important to select a private, confidential, comfortable place to disclose, and to allow enough time to discuss the impact of your disability. The person(s) you are disclosing to might have questions, suggestions, or concerns that require additional discussion.

### Rights and Responsibilities

Adapted from <<http://sites.uws.edu.au/rdlo/disclosure/education/prior.htm>>.

**You have the right to:**

- Be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory fashion.
- Have information about your disability treated confidentially and respectfully.

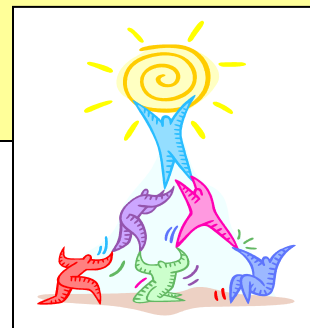
- Work collaboratively with others to identify necessary supports for your success.
- Obtain information about disability support services as well as physical and programmatic access in community settings.
- Be self-determined and proactive.

**You have the responsibility to:**

- Investigate and fully understand your disability and disability-related needs as they pertain to community living and social activities.
- Find out about options for accessing the community settings of your choice.
- Advise community members and friends in a timely manner of your accommodation and support needs.
- Understand that community members and friends may not be able to address your needs effectively if you do not present them in a timely manner.
- Be self-determined and proactive.

**Whether or not to disclose your disability is your decision.  
You have a right to happiness, success, and prosperity.**

**Make your life happen!**



## **Legislation & National Resources**

**Legislation:** Assistive Technology (AT) Act

The Assistive Technology Act requires states and territories to conduct activities related to public awareness, interagency coordination, technical assistance, and training and outreach to promote information about and access to assistive technology devices and services. The AT Act also authorizes the Assistive Technology Alternate Financing Program to assist people with disabilities in accessing the technology that they need.

<http://www.section508.gov/docs/AT1998.html>

Assistive Technology Alternate Financing Program:  
<http://www.resna.org/AFTAP/state/index.html>

**Legislation:** Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act requires that people with developmental disabilities and their families receive the services and supports they need and participate in the planning and designing of those services.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/DDACT2.html>

**Legislation:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA 2004)

The IDEIA 2004 guarantees youth with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Services detailed in IDEIA include transition services and planning, individualized education programs, early intervention services, due process provisions, disciplinary services, and alternative education programs.

[http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/Policy/IDEA/the\\_law.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/Policy/IDEA/the_law.html)

**Work Incentives:** There are a number of work incentives designed to help people on SSI and SSDI transition to work, including the following:

The *Student-Earned Income Exclusion* supports the ability of transition-aged youth to work and have earnings through work-based learning programs that are integrated into educational programs.

A *Plan for Achieving Self Support* (PASS) allows a person with a disability to set aside income for a given period of time to achieve an employment goal.

*Ticket to Work and Workforce Investment Improvement Act* (TWWIIA)

Additional information on work incentives can be found at: <http://www.ssa.gov/work>.

### **The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), in the US Department of Labor. JAN provides information about disability and accommodation and receives questions concerning individuals with disabilities in classroom environments such as public schools, colleges, technical schools, continuing education, internships, and employment.

Contact information for the Jan Network and booklets on the ADA website:  
[www.jan.wvu.edu/media/adahandbook/handbook.html](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/adahandbook/handbook.html)

1-800-JAN-7234 V/TTY.

### Maine State Resources

Agency/Program & Service provided	Phone number	Website
<b>Interdepartmental Committee on Transition</b>  Information and referral to youth, families, educators, agency personnel,	(207)621-9878  1-800-328-9549 (Maine)	<a href="http://www.mainetransition.org">www.mainetransition.org</a>



and others on the transition from school to adult life		
<b>ALPHA-ONE</b>  Assistance to youth and adults with disabilities in understanding SSI and SSDI, acquiring adaptive equipment, and accessing recreational opportunities	1-800-300-6016	<a href="http://www.alphaonenow.com">www.alphaonenow.com</a>
<b>Disability Rights Center</b>  Can assist youth with disabilities advocate for their rights.	626-2774  1-800-452-1948	<a href="http://www.drcme.org">www.drcme.org</a>
<b>Maine Department of Labor</b>  Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation  Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired	Central Office: 624-5950  TTY/V: 1-800-698-4440	<a href="http://www.maine.gov/labor/">www.maine.gov/labor/</a>
<b>Client Assistance Program (C.A.R.E.s)</b>  Federally funded advocacy program that provides information and assistance to individuals who are applying for or receiving VR services.	Voice/TDD 207-622-7055  Voice/TDD 1-800-773-7055	<a href="http://www.caresinc.org">www.caresinc.org</a>
<b>Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know your Rights and Responsibilities</b> (booklet)	To order call toll free: 1-877-433-7872	<a href="http://www.ed.gov/ocr/transition.html">www.ed.gov/ocr/transition.html</a>