

4 Steps for Encouraging Disclosure and Self-Identification

The most common disabilities are invisible. These include learning disabilities and ADHD. When employees disclose, you can provide supports and they can bring their whole self to work.

1. Send a clear message that you value employees with disabilities and that your workplace embraces and supports differences.

- Encourage leaders at your company to disclose and share stories about their own disabilities, including invisible ones.
- Encourage senior leaders to voice their support for employees with disabilities. Talk about how important disclosure is for both reporting and giving support.
- Provide training on disability inclusion. That sends a message that it's OK to talk about disability. It also increases disclosure levels.
- Create disability-related employee or business resource groups, with support from your company's top leaders.
- Adopt a clear accommodations policy and procedure.

2. Work with supervisors to promote supportive relationships.

- Train managers and supervisors on what to do when an employee discloses and how important it is to keep information confidential.
- Encourage supervisors to give needed support and adjustments to employees.
- Train supervisors to give inclusive feedback.

3. Adopt a self-identification campaign.

- Develop a communication plan to spread the word about the campaign (be sure to create a catchy slogan).
- Be clear about why you're asking employees to self-identify and how you'll use the information.
- Stress that their participation is voluntary and that all information is confidential.
- Remind employees of the broad definition of "disability" under the ADA and give some examples.

4. Follow Section 503 guidelines if you're a federal contractor or subcontractor.

- Make sure your company complies with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The law says you must work toward having 7 percent of your workforce be people with disabilities and that you report on how you're doing at meeting that goal.
- Invite applicants and employees to self-identify pre-offer and post-offer. Invite current employees every five years.
- Make sure identification is voluntary, confidential, and anonymous.
- Use Form CC-305 to report the number of employees with disabilities in your company, without changing any of the language.