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Five Things to Consider When Interviewing for Jobs with a Disability



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The process of getting a job can be stressful—even more so if you have a disability. Even though you have the same employment rights as anybody else and you're sure that you can do the job, you may have additional worries. Will the employer see your skills instead of your disabilities? Will you be trusted and given the same opportunities as your colleagues?

The first time you'll be in front of your potential boss will be the interview, and you'll likely face questions that relate to your disability. Here are five things to consider as you prepare:

To disclose or not to disclose?

Talking about disability in the context of work can be nerve-wracking, and it's a topic that may come up if you require any kind of workplace accommodation. But whether you bring it up during the hiring process or after getting the job is your decision. You can find plenty of arguments for and against online, but the important thing is to do what you feel comfortable doing.

How to talk about gaps and your desire to work

One complicating factor is how any disability relates to your employment and education history.

For many employers, periods of unemployment, especially if they aren't clearly related to education or training, can be red flags, and they're likely to come up in an interview.

This is often where, particularly if your disability isn't apparent, you'll face a decision about disclosure. It's important to be honest in these situations even though it may be uncomfortable. Recovery, therapy and other medical necessities should be acceptable reasons for gaps.

One common follow-up question is why you want to return to work at this point. Here you can talk about the value of work to you and your eagerness to contribute to a team. Make sure to show enthusiasm about the position and why you think you're a good fit, period.

Respect yourself

Unfortunately, though discrimination isn't legal, it's still a reality that you may need to confront. You may feel that the interviewer is viewing you as less than other people because of your disability, or someone may make an ignorant or discriminatory statement.

If you feel comfortable doing so, take a minute to educate that person. Share your skills, competencies, the value you intend to add to the business. But you also don't need to subject yourself to people who would look down on you or question whether the job is really a good fit.

Practice, practice, practice

If you're nervous or uncertain about how to proceed, [look into interviewing best practices](#). Think about concerns or questions that the interviewer might have, and practice responses to them with a friend. You can also [contact your local Goodwill](#) about assistance that they can provide.

And above all, be confident

You applied for the job because you felt that you met the qualifications. You think you can do the job, so express that feeling while interviewing. If there are questions about how your disability might affect performance, express your confidence that you can get it done.

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