



Disability Disclosure FAQs

When students are in high school, they can receive accommodations simply by qualifying for special education services. In postsecondary education, students must disclose their disability to the school's office of disability services in order to receive services. There are many factors to consider when thinking about disability disclosure. The following are common questions asked about disclosure; use them to prepare your students if they choose to disclose their disability.

When should students disclose?

- Remember, each student has individual needs, so if and when they choose to disclose their disability is an individual choice.
- Before or during enrollment- Student knows they will need accommodations to be successful in their application or in the classroom. Offices of disability services generally recommend this option to ensure students receive accommodations without a gap in services. When students disclose their disability after they've already fallen behind in a course, it can be challenging to make up for lost time. By disclosing a disability early, the student can always choose not to use the accommodations. But if needed, the accommodations are already set up in the system.
- During the academic year- Student wants to see how they do without accommodations before disclosure and discovers during classes that they need services.
- At the time of diagnosis- The student is diagnosed with a disability after classes have begun.
- Never- Student is able to navigate the rigor of the classroom without accommodations.

Why should students disclose?

- Find out services and accommodations that are available for the individual student
- Discuss course requirements and course of study components with professors
- Ensure that faculty members implement the necessary accommodations to be successful in classes

To whom should students disclose?

- **Only** people that need to know
- Staff member in the Office of Disability Services- best place to start because they can help with disclosure while obtaining accommodations
- Academic advisor
- Faculty or professors



What do students disclose?

- Diagnosis information (assessments, official diagnosis information, etc.)
- Types of accommodations received in past (Summary of Performance document would be helpful to guide this conversation.)
- Types of accommodations anticipated for post-secondary education
- Description of how disability affects student academically and socially
- Each institution may have additional information requirements

Why do teachers need to prepare students for disclosure?

- By the time students graduate, they need to be able to understand their disability, identify supports that help them, and take responsibility for their own success.
- Educators must provide self-advocacy instruction and opportunities for students to advocate for themselves.
- Students also need instruction in decision making so they can decide whether they want to disclose their disability.

What activities and lessons can educators implement to ensure students are ready to make disclosure decisions?

- Read and examine procedures for disclosure and role play different scenarios involving disclosure
- Assist students in listing the perceived pros and cons of disclosing their disability
- Role play conversations with disability services offices or professors
- Provide instruction on how to lead an IEP meeting and allow students to lead their own meetings
- Give students the opportunity to communicate needed accommodations to general education teachers
- Have students research required disclosure documents specific to schools they would like to attend
- Invite guest speakers from disability services offices to speak to students to discuss disclosure and accommodations
- Schedule a trip to a local disability services office

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