

Planning your disability conversation

Preparing for conversations about your disability in a workplace setting can give you a sense of empowerment and control. Providing a concise overview of your strengths and skills, your “conversation plan” is a brief summary of how your disability impacts your work and provides accommodation solutions. Having a plan and practicing it with friends, relatives, and mentors will help you when it comes time to talk about your disability in both planned and unplanned situations.

This activity is designed to help you positively advocate your strengths and confidently communicate that your disability will not impact your workplace performance once the accommodations you need are implemented.

1. Describe your disability in simple terms that most people could understand. This does not have to include a diagnosis but can if you choose.

2. What are your top strengths and abilities that relate to this position? You may find it helpful to use the job posting, and your resume and cover letter for ideas.

3. What job duties could be difficult for you to perform?

4. Now think about possible accommodations. Are there strategies or tools you have used in the past at school or work that have allowed you to overcome similar challenges? Research your options using resources such as the [Job Accommodation Network](#).

Now combine these points into a dialogue that you feel comfortable sharing in an employment setting. Here is a sample: “Although I don’t anticipate any problems, I did want to mention that I have (preferred term for your disability). I know that my (one or two strengths) will allow me to excel in this position, however sometimes (indicate your functional limitations) might interfere with my ability to (describe the duties you may have difficulty performing). In the past, I have found that I can overcome this issue with (describe specific accommodations you need).”

If you would like further support with disability conversation planning, Accessibility Career Advisors are available to help. Contact recruit@guelph.ca to learn more or to book an appointment.