



## CTAT Survivor Series March 2018

### DISCLOSURE ~ TELLING YOUR STORY

**YOU ARE A MEMBER OF A SELECT GROUP. “Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage...”**

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DISCLOSING YOUR STORY?**

**ALWAYS OR NEVER DISCLOSE?**

**YOUR STORY**

- ⦿ Your story defines where you have been, are today and where you are going
- ⦿ You pick what you want to tell
- ⦿ Writing down your story can help you be clear (acceptance and let go of hurt)
- ⦿ In telling your story you have control
- ⦿ Who will you tell the story to? Someone wants to be my friend, your next employer, work, social, wedding, family reunion, first date, love interest...
- ⦿ Take the time to decide your story
- ⦿ ***Can't create your whole story today, so start with slice of your story***
  - **First words out of your mouth – 1 sentence introduction**
  
  - **Quick 2 sentences about who you are – Beginning of Story/Disclosure**

**FACTORS IN THE DISCLOSURE DECISION**

- ⦿ Is the disability hidden or obvious?
- ⦿ Is an accommodation needed or anticipated? If so, when?
- ⦿ Is there any reason that having a disability would be an advantage?
- ⦿ What is the company's history and attitude toward hiring people with disabilities?

- ⦿ Does the TBI pose a safety risk?
- ⦿ What are the cultural attributes typically associated with traumatic brain injury?

#### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISCLOSURE DECISION**

- ⦿ What are the essential functions of the job?
- ⦿ Will I need an accommodation to perform one or more of these essential functions?
- ⦿ Am I aware of one or more possible accommodations that would enable me to perform this function?

#### **FEEL, FELT, FOUND**

- ⦿ I know how you may *feel*
- ⦿ (Name) at (Company) *felt* the same way at first
- ⦿ What he/she *found* was \_\_\_\_\_

#### **OTHER DISCLOSURE INFORMATION**

##### **GENERAL DISCLOSURE PRINCIPLES**

- ⦿ Disclosure is always a voluntary personal decision
- ⦿ Never disclose another's disability without his/her permission
- ⦿ The setting or context may determine one's comfort level with disclosing
- ⦿ There are consequences to the decision to disclose or not to disclose
- ⦿ There are effective and ineffective ways to disclose
- ⦿ Avoid medical terminology, jargon, acronyms
- ⦿ Define TBI in context of functional limitations that may impact job performance
- ⦿ Identify strengths and abilities that offset functional limitations
- ⦿ Use practical common language
- ⦿ Present the disability as a characteristic
- ⦿ TBI is a source of pride, not shame
- ⦿ If the disability is obvious, assume that disclosure has taken place
- ⦿ Script and rehearse your disclosure

- ⦿ People with and without TBI's are hired based on their capabilities
- ⦿ Disclosure dialogue should always relate to job duties
- ⦿ Employers want to know how and why you are the best person for the job

#### **COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT DISCLOSURE**

- ⦿ Job Seeker is prohibited from discussing disability
- ⦿ Disclosure must take place at time of hire for an accommodation to be provided
- ⦿ Disability information will become part of personnel file
- ⦿ Employers are prohibited from requesting documentation to support accommodation request

#### **ADA Information about Disclosure**

Employer is prohibited from pre-employment inquiry about disability (including use of sick time and Worker's Comp); may ask about disability after conditional job offer; may administer medical exam after conditional offer if administered to all candidates in job class; may request documentation of disability if accommodation is requested; all inquiries must be job related and consistent with business necessity.

May inquire about disability for program eligibility purposes and to determine potential accommodations, but may not disclose anything to an employer that the employer is prohibited from accessing; all disclosure on behalf of a job seeker should have his/her permission.

Job Seeker has no limitations, but should be prepared to identify qualifications with respect to essential job functions, to request needed accommodations, and to provide documentation upon request.

**ADA is not affirmative action. Candidates with and without disabilities must be qualified to perform essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation.**

Resources:

- ⦿ Job Accommodations Network: [www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu)
- ⦿ DBTAC: 800-949-4232
- ⦿ State Vocational Rehabilitation Offices
- ⦿ ABLEDATA: [www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)
- ⦿ Community based Independent Living Centers
- ⦿ U.S. Dept. of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy: [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)
- ⦿ Cornell University; Disability Disclosure in the Workplace: What Employers Should Know