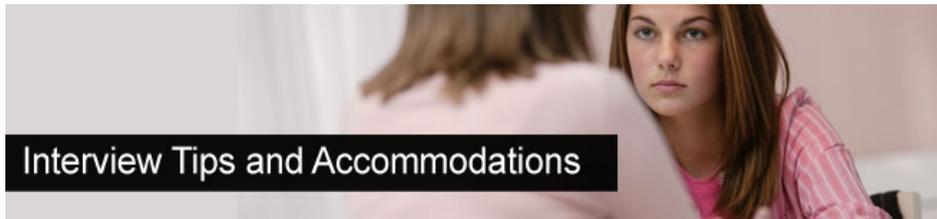


Workplace Confidence: Interview Tips and Accommodations

The interview is the perfect time to make a lasting impression on a potential employer. It is your opportunity to highlight your strengths, convey why you feel that you are well suited to the job, and assure your potential employer that you will be an employee worth accommodating.



Interview Tips and Accommodations

Your rights during an interview

When do you tell a possible employer about your disability? Much of this depends on how evident your disability is from the start of your interview. While you have a right to not disclose any information at all, if you have a physical disability that is readily apparent (for example, if you are using a wheelchair), the interviewer may be distracted by preconceived notions and "internal dialogue" until you address some questions and help to put him/her at ease. Addressing questions confidently and openly from the outset may demonstrate your strengths and help you to stand out as a candidate.

To get started:

- You have to find when the time is right for you as well as when you feel it is appropriate.
- You never have to disclose that you have a disability, but it also is not recommended to lie about your disability.
- If you are in need of accommodations, it is recommended that you let the employer know in order to ensure that you are able to fulfill your job responsibilities and thrive in your position.
- Working with your employer to make needed workplace accommodations within the first few weeks of employment will ensure that you're provided the best opportunity for workplace success.
- How to inform an employer about your disability?
 - Discuss the details of your disability that impact the workplace, as well as anything that may have contributed to the career path that led you to this interview — remember that the goal is to make an impact and to be someone who this employer wants on his/her team.
 - Practice telling a friend so when you tell a potential employer during an interview, you will feel confident and prepared.
 - Stay positive, and don't let your disabilities define you.
 - Highlight your strengths and the ways in which your disability contributes to your ability to do the job and how your strengths distinguish you from other applicants.
- What can be asked about your disability during a job interview?
 - From a legal standpoint, an employer can ask if you are able to perform the job at hand, provided they don't state that the reason for asking is based on your disability.
- Examples of questions that an employer is not permitted to ask you during a job interview:
 - Do you have a disability?
 - It is illegal to ask this under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
 - An employer or potential employer is not allowed to ask about your medical history, including:
 - Do you have a heart condition?
 - Do you have asthma or any other difficulties breathing?
 - Do you have a disability that would interfere with your ability to perform the job?
 - How many days were you sick last year?
 - Have you ever filed for workers' compensation? Have you ever been injured on the job?
 - Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?
 - What prescription drugs are you currently taking?

- If a potential employer or interviewer asks a question that is illegal, you can refuse to answer the question — or you can politely redirect the conversation. For example, “I’d like to focus on my abilities and the fact that I have the skills and work ethic to meet your needs here at ABC ... ”

How do you request accommodations in the workplace?

By law, public buildings are required to be wheelchair accessible, have accessible restrooms, and to have functioning elevators and ramps, when applicable. Here are some tips for getting started:

- Refer to the Americans with Disabilities Act for guidelines.
- Examples of reasonable workplace accommodations include, but are not limited to:
 - providing written materials in accessible formats, such as digital or audiotape;
 - providing readers or sign language interpreters;
 - ensuring that recruitment, interviews, tests and other components of the application process are held in accessible locations; and
 - providing or modifying equipment or devices such as computers, keyboards, desk height, etc.
- It is important to let the employer know about modifications that you will need as soon as possible in order to allow ample time for the employer to respond to your requests and order necessary equipment.
- Contact your State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, as it helps people with disabilities prepare for, obtain and retain employment. Vocational rehabilitation programs are custom-designed for each individual.
- Visit the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) for guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. JAN will help you work toward practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee.

For additional references visit us on mda.org/Tips_for_Success