



Mental Health in the Workplace

**Disclosure workbook;
Presenting yourself positively**



A guide for disclosing your mental health condition positively

Whether you are preparing to start a new job or you need to tell your employer about your mental health condition, it's beneficial to consider how to share your health condition in a positive light. This guide is designed to help you articulate your experiences and strengths effectively.



Why disclose?

Disclosing your health condition is a very personal choice, you don't have to disclose anything you aren't comfortable with. If you're dealing with a mental health issue, you might feel unsure about talking to your employer. It's common to worry about being judged, or whether your privacy will be respected.

However, if your mental health condition qualifies as a disability and you want the protection of the [Equality Act 2010](#), your employer will need to know.

If you decide to share, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- When and how to bring it up
- What to share- You don't have to go into detail, just focus on how it affects your job.
- Who to tell- You could talk to HR about your diagnosis without needing to tell your manager or co-workers.



Understanding your health condition

Take some time to reflect on how you want to describe your health condition. The following prompts can help you in developing a clear statement around your mental health that you can use to explain yourself positively.

- How will you define your health condition?
- Choose language that feels comfortable.
- Avoid terms that might sound overly severe, such as “chronic” or “degenerative.”
- You might consider using specific medical terms when appropriate, like "anxiety disorder," or opting for broader descriptions, such as "experiencing low mood."
- Strive for clarity that resonates with most people.
- What strategies have you developed to manage your condition?

Remember, YOU are the expert in how your mental health affects you. Employers don't always have the answer, they value your insight and expertise regarding your own health.



Addressing employment gaps

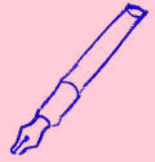
When there are gaps in your work history, potential employers may want to know more and have questions around this. Instead of focusing on the absence of work, highlight the positive experiences or skills gained during that time.

Use the table on the next page to jot down relevant activities or experiences.

You can find an example below to help you get started.

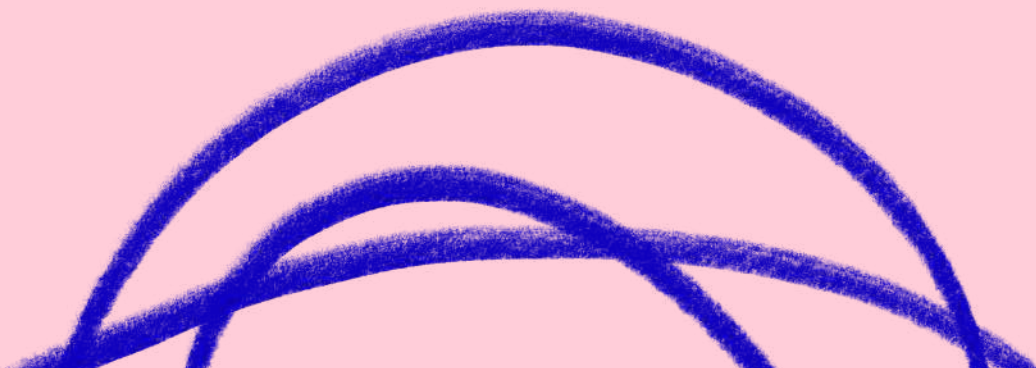
Experience or activity	Skills or insights gained
Living with a health condition	Enhanced empathy, resilience, and self-awareness
Engaging in health-related courses or therapy	Acquired self-management techniques, improved communication skills, and valuable coping strategies.
Volunteering or work experience	Gained confidence, teamwork skills, and a renewed sense of purpose.
Pursuing educational opportunities	Achieved new qualifications, adaptability, and determination.

Enter your own here



Experience or activity

Skills or insights gained



What are reasonable adjustments?

If your mental health condition qualifies as a disability and it's making your work difficult, your employer has to help by making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. Here are some things you might ask for:

- Changes to your work environment to make it more comfortable
- Adjustments to your working hours
- The option to work from home some of the time
- Time off for mental health treatment, assessment, or recovery
- Help with tasks that are causing you stress, like having someone else handle them for a while
- Some workplace mentoring or support

These adjustments can help you manage your work better and reduce the impact of your disability.



What counts as 'reasonable'?

The adjustments your employer makes need to be "reasonable," which means it depends on each situation. Here are some factors that might affect whether a change is considered reasonable:

- If the adjustment helps address your difficulties at work
- How practical it is for the employer to make the change
- The size and resources of the employer, including their budget
- Any financial or other support available to help with the adjustment

To figure out what might work best for you, try talking to your GP, your Employment Advisor, or another health professional who knows about your mental health.

Sometimes, employers can get financial help to make these adjustments. This support might come from the government's Access to Work program.

Identifying reasonable adjustments

Consider any adjustments that you might need during the recruitment process, or enhance your work environment. Use the table below to note these down.



During recruitment	In the workplace

Some examples of adjustments at interview might be...

- Requesting more time to complete assessments to help with anxiety
- Requesting interview questions in advance
- Requesting your interview at a certain time if you are taking medication that makes you feel sluggish in the morning

Some examples of adjustments in the workplace might be...

- More frequent shorter breaks
- Requesting flexible hours, or time to attend medical appointments
- Additional one-to-one time with your manager to break tasks down so they are more manageable
- Requesting additional training or mentoring

Putting together your statement

Use the insights you've gathered in the previous pages to compose a brief statement that reflects your journey on the next page. Here's an example of how this might look to guide you:

Statement	Relevant to section
<p>"I decided to take some time away from work to focus on my mental health. I attended therapy and enrolled in educational courses based around my mental health.</p> <p>These experiences helped me to understand my condition and implement effective coping strategies, including regular exercise and dietary changes, alongside support from my healthcare provider.</p> <p>I also discovered a passion for helping others and spent time volunteering, which has really improved my confidence and reinforced my desire to return to work. I successfully completed a gardening course at college, which was a fulfilling experience.</p> <p>I believe the flexible nature of this role will complement my health management strategies, and I am eager to discuss how I can contribute effectively in this position."</p>	<p>Experience</p> <p>Skills gained</p> <p>Skills gained</p> <p>Adjustments</p>

Now try your own....

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a thick blue border. The interior is white, providing a space for writing or drawing. The box is positioned centrally on the page.

Well done! Hopefully you found this guide a useful tool to help you present yourself in a positive light when speaking to employers about your mental health condition.

On the following page are some additional resources you may find useful.

Further resources

ACAS

www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law

www.acas.org.uk/supporting-mental-health-workplace

www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/wellness-action-plan-sign-up

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/discrimination-at-work/overview

GOV.uk

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

www.gov.uk/government/publications/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty

www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-adjustment-passport

The Job Retention Network

jobretention.org.uk

HSE

www.hse.gov.uk/stress/overview.htm

