

Self-Advocacy in Career Management

Self-advocacy in career management empowers individuals to communicate their needs and request accommodations that foster inclusion, productivity, and well-being. This table highlights a selection of impairments, barriers, and practical strategies to support disclosure and workplace success.

Disability Impairment	Personal Barrier Examples	Accommodation Examples	Considerations/Benefit	Tips	Sample Disclosure Messages
Physical or Mobility	Structural or neuromuscular limitations, spinal cord injury; rheumatoid arthritis; Parkinson's; multiple sclerosis.	Ramps; adjustable desk, table and chairs; accessible washrooms, grab rails; reserved accessible parking; remote or hybrid work.	Supports full participation; limits barriers; reduces strain and injury; boost independence; increases productivity.	Specify required equipment (mouse, keyboard); map accessible routes; understand employer's WCB obligations for remote or hybrid employees.	I use a wheelchair and need accessible entry, elevator access, and an adjustable workspace. Can you accommodate this?
Mental Health	Emotional, psychological and social wellbeing; challenges with mood or anxiety; trauma; OCD, bipolar, and psychosis-related conditions.	Flexible deadlines or work schedule; supervisory communication avenues; employee wellness benefits.	Promotes a positive work culture; improves work quality; reduces burnout; maintains performance and attendance.	Communicate triggers and coping strategies; schedule short wellness breaks; in partnership with your supervisor or HR, create a wellness plan; keep communication lines open; understand WCB's support for psychological risks.	I am experiencing personal health issues: what documentation does the company require to provide a remote work schedule as an accommodation to support me? OR I manage an anxiety disorder and may need flexible deadlines and occasional breaks to maintain consistent performance. Is this something your company can accommodate?
Neurodiverse	Neurodivergent conditions that affect learning, cognitive or developmental processes; autism; ADHD, Fragile X.	Step-by-step written/visual instructions; picture-based checklists; segmented tasks with clear milestones; simplified forms; consistent routines and schedules.	Difference in reasoning, processing speed, or social communication. These are differences in cognitive and developmental processes, not a lack of ability to learn, grow, and develop new skills. Enhances independence; better job performance; accommodations align with strengths; improves confidence.	Request templates and examples; paraphrase back instruction for clarity; use colour coded visual aids.	It is beneficial for me when tasks are broken into clear, sequential steps, with specific deliverable dates and a final due date. Is this feasible within the current supervisory and reporting support structure?
Cognitive	Challenges with memory, attention, executive function and effects of brain injury. Traumatic brain injury (memory, attention); early-stage dementia (recall); memory impairment.	Reminders and alarms; written meeting minutes; procedural guides.	Improves focus and concentration; reduces errors; increased autonomy and productivity.	Use calendar reminders and timers; Apps specifically for task completion, communication and memory, limit the amount of multi-tasking to avoid overload.	I need written summaries of key points and calendar reminders to support my cognitive processing. How can we work together to create this process?
Learning	Academic processing and learning challenges (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia)	Text-to-speech and screen-reading software; audiobooks and podcasts; varied training formats (written, audio, video); step-by-step instructions.	Accelerates skill development; greater independence; improves job performance and employee retention.	Request materials in advance; record sessions; ask for sound-bite training sessions; practice new skills in smaller groups.	In order to perform difficult tasks well, I need to re-review all expectations and instructions. Can project meetings be hosted in Zoom so I can watch the recording to ensure I fully understand my work?
Communication or Sensory	Vision, hearing or sensory processing differences blindness, deafness, aphasia, nonverbal communication, stuttering, color deficiency.	Speech-to-text software; sign language/voice interpreters; alternative or virtual communication channels; large print/high contrast materials; hearing assisted equipment; fire alarms with visual and auditory representation; use plain jargon free communications; allow additional response time in conversations.	Ensures equal access to information; promotes inclusion; reduces stress and misunderstanding; ensures equality of safety.	Test assistive technologies before meetings; offer suggestions for request different lighting, a workplace in low traffic setting, access to a window for natural light; summarize and review key meeting or project points with supervisor or colleague.	I have found for best productivity a low stimulation environment assists my concentration allowing me to be productive and deliver high quality work. Is there an available workspace that I can use when I am required to concentrate?
Functional Limitation	Episodic or ongoing medical conditions (Crohn's, diabetes, migraines, mental health conditions) epilepsy, cerebral palsy).	Proximity to bathrooms; adjustable temperature and lighting controls.	Enables effective self-management and optimal performance; supports health and wellbeing; maintains productivity.	If possible, communicate episodic or emerging concerns; keep it simple- you are not obligated to discuss specifics; track symptom patterns; plan for backup coverage.	I manage a medical condition that sometimes requires unplanned breaks during the day. Can this be accommodated by the company, and is the role able to accommodate an unexpected breaks? Who would help me to create an accommodation plan?