

Strategies and Resources: **Disclosing a Diagnosis**

There are many situations when we may think about disclosing a diagnosis. For example, to friends and family, employers, and colleagues, or to professionals. Although there are many positives to letting people know about a diagnosis of autism, it can leave us feeling vulnerable.

Some Advantages	Some Disadvantages
It can lead to getting the right help and support when you need it. Adjustments at work or within social events or gatherings for example.	There may be some people within certain environments who may not feel able to manage adjustments or be defensive if asked to do something different to normal.
Get people thinking and learning about autism. This can enable people to feel comfortable to ask questions about autism and what it means for you. Open useful dialogue leading to understanding and acceptance.	If someone has a little knowledge or experience of autism, it may mean they make assumptions about how autism impacts things for you. This can feel frustrating and undermining. There may be situations in which those around you are dismissive of autism- <i>'we are all a little bit autistic'</i> .

Things to Consider:

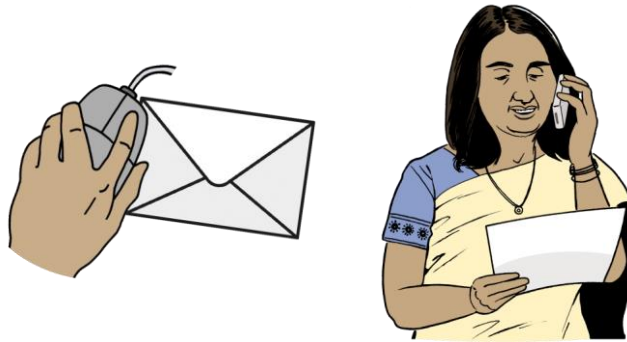
- Whether to disclose - think about the pros and cons, such as those listed above.
- When to disclose - timing can impact how the person may respond. If for example they are already stressed or tired, they may react negatively.
- Who to disclose to - does it need to be someone you know well and therefore have an idea how they may react? Does it need to be someone you trust?
- How to disclose - consider what will feel comfortable for you. Face to face, email, message or over the phone?
- Your own understanding and feeling of your autism- if you are recently diagnosed you may not fully understand what it means to you. Maybe you feel apprehensive about being autistic, or even negative about it. It is important to think about how you may feel if you disclose and do receive unhelpful responses.
- A support network - would it be beneficial to have a friend or family member to chat things through with before disclosing? Is it important to you to have a person (or people), you trust that you can talk things through with after disclosing?

Takeaways:

1. Think about the advantages and the disadvantages of disclosure
2. Consider - when, how, and who
3. Make sure you feel ok about your own autism and what it means for you
4. Think about if you need a support network around pre and/or post-disclosure

Contact Us

This guide was produced by **Autism AIM**, part of The Advonet Group. We are a free service co-led by and run for autistic adults (aged 18+) in the Leeds, Bradford and Craven areas.



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