

How Your Supported Employment Specialist Communicates with Employers Worksheet

Some people who use Supported Employment (SE) services ask their employment specialist to talk to employers on their behalf, sometimes while looking for a job and at other times after starting work. Employment specialists do contact employers to help people be successful with their work goals, but only with the permission of the person.

For example, if a person is interested in working in pet shops, then the person may ask the employment specialist to go out to the local community to meet some managers of pet shops to learn more about their jobs and to talk about the reasons that the person would be a good worker.

When employment specialists talk to employers, they usually tell the employer that they work for a vocational program. Employment specialists always discuss what they can and cannot say with clients in advance of any meeting with an employer.

Sometimes having an employment specialist do some work contacts without clients being present helps people find work a little more quickly or comfortably. Once again, this is the person's own decision.

A person who is employed may want to have their employment specialist talk with a supervisor in order to help them be successful with their employment. An employment specialist is also able to do this, but only with the specific permission of the person.

Some clients may not give the employment specialist permission to talk to employers on their behalf. Instead they may ask for help with job leads, filling out applications, practicing interviewing skills, or role-playing ways to ask for assistance at the workplace, or any number of other things that can help people accomplish work goals. Some people in supported employment services may use this strategy when they don't want employers to know they are working with a supported employment program or that they may have some type of mental health symptoms.

Any option is fine. It is important that you make decisions about how your employment specialist will work with you based on your own goals, your situation and what feels best to you at the current time. It's also ok to change your mind at any time during the job search or after you are hired.

It is also good for you to know that you can still ask for an accommodation at a work place or after you have started. You do not have to disclose information about the presence of a disability that qualifies for an accommodation before you start a job in order to receive an accommodation.

It's important for you and your employment specialist to talk about the possible pros and cons of introducing your employment specialist to employers.

Some examples of reasons that some people may not want to use disclosure for their employment specialist to meet with an employer include:

- Some people are fearful that employers won't hire them if they know the person has some mental health symptoms.
- Some people may think it is okay if their supervisors knows about the presence of mental health symptoms but they are worried that their co-workers may find out too.
- Some people feel that they want to get the job based on their own abilities and talents without the assistance of an employment specialist.
- Some people may want the assistance of an employment specialist to help them with their work goals but they are not sure that someone will hire a person who works with an employment specialist.

Some examples of reasons that some people may want to use disclosure for their employment specialist to meet with an employer include:

- Some people have challenges managing their own anxiety or fears and they are concerned that employer may not see their strengths right away and an employment specialist can help emphasize the person's strengths and talents.
- Some people may be okay with their employer knowing they are working with an employment specialist who will help the client and the supervisor make a good job match.
- Some people may feel that they will find an employer that matches better with their goals and their current situation if an employment specialist meets with an employer first.
- Some people may want the assistance of an employment specialist to help correct a situation at work before it becomes a problem, so they may ask their employment specialist to meet with them and their supervisor together.

You might have your own feelings, preferences and ideas about disclosure and how you want your employment specialist will work with you. In order to help with this decision, you may want to use this decision matrix. You may also identify areas where you want more information, or you are unsure of something.

	Pros	Cons
Using Disclosure		
Not Using Disclosure		

Questions about disclosure:

If you choose to give your permission to your employment specialist to talk or meet directly with employers, you still have the right to decide what can be said and what you do not want said.

For example, some people may be okay with an employment specialist telling a potential employer that you have had some mental health challenges and your employment specialist is helping you to find a good job match because work is very important to you. Some people may not want their employment specialist to say anything about if they have a mental health condition, or if the person has a learning disability, or if they take medications for their mental health.

If you have some ideas about what is okay, or not okay for your employment specialist to say about you, it is good to start listing those things here. It is also good to list questions that you have about this information too.

Some things that I give my permission to say about me:

Some things I do not give my permission to say about me:

Some questions that I have about things to say about me:

If you think that you want your employment specialist to speak with employers on your behalf, the two of you should discuss what he or she might say. For example, if a person thought he might be anxious at first, the employment specialist could say, "He might have a little difficulty with concentration at first because he is anxious about doing a good job. However, after a couple of weeks, I'm sure that he will be accustomed to the job and his concentration will be fine."

In making decisions about how your employment specialist and you will work together, you should also know that your employment specialist can do a huge number of things with you, to help you be successful with work even if you choose not to give permission to him or her to use disclosure. Your employment specialist can review with you what she or he can do without disclosure in comparison to with disclosure.

You should also know that you have the right to change your mind at any point. Of course, if you decide to let your employment specialist talk with a potential employer, then if you change your mind, your employment specialist cannot take back that information after he or she has talked with the employer. However, if you start trying to get jobs without having your employment specialist meet with employers, and you are not successful for several months, you may then change your mind and allow the employment specialist to meet with employers on your behalf.

If it is helpful to you, you may want to record your current thoughts and ideas about how you want your employment specialist to help you with your work goals and what further information that you want about this.

As of right now, I do not give my permission for my employment specialist to talk with employers about me

As of right now, I am not sure about giving my permission for my employment specialist to talk with employers about me.

In order to make this decision I would like more information about:

- As of right now, I do give my permission for my employment specialist to talk with employers about me. I understand that I will need to sign a release of information form about this. I also understand that I can change my decision regarding this at any point.

Person

Date

Employment specialist

Date