



Five Steps To

Self-Accommodation at Work

Should I Disclose my ADHD Diagnosis to my Boss

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Should I Request ADHD Accommodations at Work?

Are you thinking about disclosing your ADHD diagnosis to your employer because you feel you need accommodations to do your job? Are you missing deadlines or making so many mistakes that you are fearful of losing your job?

As a career coach for adults with ADHD, I've talked about disclosing a diagnosis with lots of employers, ADHD experts, and my own clients. They agree that it is rarely fruitful to disclose your attention deficit disorder (ADHD or ADD). Companies today — with fewer people doing more work for less pay — are likely to frown on an employee who asks for extensive and, in some cases, expensive accommodations to do her job.

Instead, think about making adjustments in your work environment to help you get the job done more efficiently. It's called self-accommodation, and it works for a lot of employees with ADHD. Start by asking yourself some basic questions:

- Does your ADHD affect your attitude about your job?
- Are you making too many mistakes?
- Are you bored with certain tasks that you have trouble completing?
- Are you not meeting deadlines?
- Are you losing your connection with co-workers and staff?

Additional factors that affect your ability to work well include the company culture, employer expectations, and your supervisor's attitude.



Is Your Job a Good Fit for Your ADHD Brain?

Our ADHD brains are interest-based. We need to enjoy what we do, or risk consequences. I have not had one client, in more than 30 years of career counseling, for whom this was not the case. If you don't like your job, you are obviously in the wrong one. But you need to put food on the table and pay the bills, so start by deciding that you are going to stay at the job for a while. Find short-term fixes and accommodations that will allow you to do a better job while you explore other career options. Having a Plan B will change the way you see the job you have, and help you do better work.

Before I was diagnosed with ADHD, I worked for years as a legal secretary in temporary jobs. I was fired from most of them. Getting fired had nothing to do with my skills, and everything to do with feeling I was entitled to a better position, given my education. I loathed the work. It was boring to me. Most of all, I did not like taking orders from anyone. I did my best to fake it, but it never worked, even though my basic secretarial skills were excellent. This took a toll on my self-confidence.

I decided to go to graduate school to create opportunities for my dream job: counseling with an emphasis on career. I continued to work as a secretary through graduate school. But this time I knew it was a means to an end. My attitude shifted. This made my work more tolerable, and I did a better job. And I found my dream job. If this scenario resonates with you, decide that your current job serves a purpose, and begin creating your Plan B.





Self-Accommodate in the Interview

In some cases, you can self-accommodate when you apply for a job. Say that you are the employer doing the interview. Would you prefer to hear the truth about what the applicant needs to do a bang-up job? Or would you prefer that she tell you that she can do a bang-up job? The answer is the latter.

Tell your potential employer that you will do a great job for the company if you are allowed to get up to walk around every 30 minutes, have access to Dragon software, get flexible deadlines, wear a headset intermittently, and receive additional training, as needed. If company policy does not allow for these types of accommodations without disclosure of your diagnosis, you should decline the job if it is offered.

5 Steps to ADHD Self-Accommodation at Work

1

Clarify your accommodation needs. This is for your eyes only. Write down all the ways you can self-accommodate in order to make your job easier and your situation less stressful and more successful.

2

Prioritize your accommodation needs in order of importance. Which are the most important to you? How would they increase your productivity and enthusiasm for the job?



3

Decide which of your prioritized needs can be self-accommodated without the need for disclosure. This may involve negotiating tasks with a trusted co-worker, using headphones (if it is a common practice in the office), or working at home on occasion to help you meet deadlines for complex tasks.

4

Describe to yourself and your boss how each accommodation will help you accomplish your job goals. Using a headset will eliminate noise distractions and increase your productivity; working at home for a day or two on specific projects will ensure that deadlines are met. Preface a request for self-accommodation with how, specifically, the fix is going to help you get the job done efficiently.



5

Implement your self-accommodations, beginning with the first on your prioritized list. Keep track of your results and how you feel about the work. Tracking is tricky business for those of us with ADHD, but at this point it is essential.

Shell is a 30 year ADHD Career Coach and Counselor whose mission is for all ADHD adults to know, without a doubt, a career or business direction that is as engaging, fun, fluid, profitable and creative, as her own work has been from the beginning of her professional career. Shell has helped hundreds of clients around the world achieve career happiness using a timeless system, inner journey v. assessments, and cutting edge tools.

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