

UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING YOUR DISABILITY



INTRODUCTION

Understanding Your Disability is the second unit in the *Habits of Work* curriculum, and also the second unit in part two, *Learning About Work*. The lesson activities are designed to be pick-and-choose to suit the needs and interests of your students. See Appendix A in *Learning About Work* for a short summary of the full curriculum.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify strengths and talents they can apply in a work setting.
2. Describe how their disability might affect them in a work setting.
3. Describe their personal plan for disclosure.
4. Request an accommodation in a work setting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTOR

You are not broken. There are many ways to be smart. There are many ways to be strong.

Students need to hear this explicit message over and over again to counter both subliminal and explicit messages they receive in their daily lives. Their understanding of their disabilities at this age can vary widely. Often what they know will focus on their weaknesses. Part of the intent of this unit is to help make visible their strengths, especially ones they've developed because they have a disability. A practical understanding of what job tasks may be difficult is also important, as is an understanding of accommodations that can help.

Job applicants with a disability, like all other applicants, must be able to meet the employer's requirements for the job, such as education, training, employment experience, skills, or licenses. In addition, applicants with a disability must be able to perform the essential functions of the job, i.e., the fundamental duties, either on their own or with the help of *reasonable accommodations*. An employer doesn't have to provide an accommodation that will cause undue hardship, meaning significant difficulty or expense. (Adapted from www.eeoc.gov/facts/jobapplicant.html.)

Students need to figure out accommodations and resources available to them; they also need to be able to educate an employer effectively. They need an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace as well as the rights and responsibilities of their employers.



Disclosure is a personal decision. Figuring out what an employer needs to know and deciding what or how to disclose are important skills.

Readings

Overview FAQ of the ADA as it applies to the job application process. <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/jobapplicant.html>

Accommodations:

- for specific employees with disabilities in a variety of occupational settings: www.workrerc.org/accommodations.php
- related to mental health disabilities: www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/transitioning.htm
- related to learning disabilities: www.jan.wvu.edu/media/LD.html
- related to ADHD: www.jan.wvu.edu/media/adhd.html
- related to medical disabilities: haskjan.org/media/atoz.htm

Disclosure:

- considerations, including samples of disclosing in a cover letter, when confirming an interview, and how to disclose: www.udel.edu/CSC/disclosure.html
- whether or not and what to disclose: www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/ydw.htm

An introduction to Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory: www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/index.html

Other Resources



The Headstrong Nation website has a mission to serve the dyslexic community by providing information about dyslexia, self-advocacy, and new technologies in multimedia formats: www.headstrongnation.org/. It includes an excellent 26:46-minute video, "Headstrong: Inside the Hidden World of Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder."

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities. This is a great resource for youth and adults who work with them. It has clear language, an appealing layout, and many case studies and personal exercises. From the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (NCWD). Available in PDF or Microsoft Word format, as a complete guide or in individual sections. www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/411.html

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Families, Educators, Youth Service Professionals, and Adult Allies Who Care About Youth with Disabilities. This adult-focused workbook is a companion publication to the student workbook above. It introduces numerous examples of young people struggling with the questions, do I disclose or do I not disclose? It also offers information and practice opportunities you can use to learn how to support a young person in disclosing most effectively. Available in PDF or Microsoft Word format. www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure-for-adults

Cyber Disclosure for Youth with Disabilities. This document is a supplement to *The 411 on Disability Disclosure*. Sites like Google and Facebook have added a new element to disclosure, where it is now possible to disclose your disability on the Internet without even being



aware of it. This new document provides suggestions to students about how to make an informed decision about their own disability disclosure and manage their online disclosure.

UNIT PREPARATION CONSIDERATIONS

Tasks

Be sure to get parental permission before students reads their IEPs.

Students may or may not know much about their disability. You may need to gather additional resources on particular disabilities for them to explore. Preview any suggested websites for appropriate reading and concept level.

At the internship site, make sure there's a clear plan in place with all parties involved about the supports the student will have.

VARK is a short questionnaire, available online, that provides students with information about the way they like to take in and give out information. VARK is free only for use in universities, colleges, and high schools, and is suggested here with permission. If you plan to have your students complete the VARK-based activity in the Your Disability lesson, read this short section about administering the questionnaire and interpreting the results, www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=advice.

 There are several workplace activities involving interviewing people at the workplace. Be sure to prepare the interviewees for the students' questions and the intent of the lesson. You may need to explain some terminology, e.g., accommodation, essential job functions.

Several of the activities in this unit use disability-specific videos. You can customize the activities by doing a YouTube or Google video search using a different disability.

Speakers

Scan the classroom introduction activities for speaker ideas. Contact these people early to arrange dates and times.

NHWorks career centers throughout the state offer education and training resources at no or minimal cost. You can request a speaker to come talk about disclosure and the pros and cons people consider. Speakers can also address accommodations. To find an office close to you, enter your zip code on this web page, www.nhworks.org/index.cfm.

Prior Knowledge

You may need to preteach some of these concepts depending on the lessons and activities you select:

- learning styles
- multiple intelligences
- accommodation



SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IDEAS

Following are ideas for a summative assessment for this unit:

1. Idea spinner. Create spinners with four quadrants labeled, “Predict, Explain, Summarize, Evaluate.” In small groups, take turns being the interviewer and interviewees. The interviewer spins the spinner and asks the others questions about their disability, strengths, and accommodations based on the location of the spinner (learning outcomes 1, 2, 4).
2. Write your personal plan for disclosure answering the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how (learning outcome 3).
3. Build a 3D structure that explains your strengths, your disability, and accommodations that help you (learning outcomes 1, 2, 4).
4. Knowledge Grammy Awards. Distribute nomination forms. Students fill them out describing the new knowledge that will be most useful. Students categorize and tabulate results and announce winners (learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4).
5. Create a What Someone Should Know About Me flyer or brochure (learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4).

UNIT KICKOFF

1.  Show this 4:35-minute video segment from *What the Silenced Say*, a Jonathan Mooney presentation. Jonathan Mooney has dyslexia and ADHD and did not learn to read until he was 12 years old. He is also a graduate of Brown University’s class of 2000 and holds an honors degree in English literature. He has published two books and lectures all over the country. www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbBLYHyR7qg
2.  Show this 0:34-minute English translation of a French language public service announcement showing able-bodied people trying to live in a world made for those with disabilities. www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsuKxY_9f_8&feature=related

LESSONS

This unit is divided into the following lessons. The lessons contain choices for activities and are organized into an instructional sequence around a workplace assignment.

1. Your disability
2. Strengths
3. Disclosure
4. Accommodations



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
<p>I. Your disability</p>	<p>Introduction – individual</p>	<p>Read your IEP or 504 plan and highlight three places where you have a question or a comment. Find the answers or share your comments with a trusted adult.</p> <p> Journal. Do some research in the library or online about your disability. Pretend you have to explain it to a group of young elementary students. What would you tell them? Write a journal entry or record yourself explaining your disability.</p> <p>(or)</p> <p>Make a fact sheet of at least 10 statements you could use to help someone understand your disability.</p> <p> Watch this 8:06-minute video of interview snippets of college students talking about accepting their disabilities: www.going-to-college.org/myplace/disability.html</p> <p>Write a journal entry about your reactions to this video. What struck you? What did you relate to?</p> <p> Journal. Complete this learning styles questionnaire online: www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire</p> <p>Look at the help sheet for your dominant learning style: www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=helpsheets</p> <p>Write a journal entry about two of the strategies you think might be useful at the work site. Name the two strategies and explain how they might be useful at your work site.</p>
	<p>Introduction – classroom</p>	<p>Discussion. Discuss how people learn differently. Discuss different ways to be smart (multiple intelligences). Make three pie charts that include all the different intelligences. On the first, color in the ones that are strengths for you. On the second, color the ones you think will be needed in the work place. On the third, color the ones that you anticipate needing to work on.</p>



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
<p><i>Your disability, continued</i></p>		<p>Brain dumps. Talk or write for five minutes without stopping. Use the prompt, “What I know about my disability is ...” Then look at what you know and decide what you’d like to know more about. Find the answers.</p>
		<p>Investigation. The teacher explains the structure of an IEP and what information goes in each section. Read your IEP in the classroom or as homework. Highlight places you have questions and work with your teacher to figure out where to find the answers.</p>
		<p>Discussion. The teacher explains the difference between entitlement and access in terms of disability legislation. Discuss what this means in college and other postsecondary programs (accommodations but not modifications) and in the workplace (must be able to do essential job functions with reasonable accommodations).</p>
		<p>Muddiest point. Describe the aspect of your disability that you understand the least (your muddiest point). Brainstorm in class about where to find the answers.</p>
	<p>Workplace activity</p>	<p> Interview your supervisor. What tools or strategies has he or she seen employees use to help them do the essential functions of his or her job?</p>
		<p> Interview your supervisor. What are the essential job functions of two jobs that interest you?</p>
	<p>Follow-up – individual</p>	<p> Journal. Based on your research and what you learned from your interviews, pick one job and list the essential functions (“I know the job will require ...”). Rate your readiness to take on each function on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being totally confident). Write one planning or preparation statement for each function, “Therefore my plan is to ...”</p>
		<p> Journal. Write an entry: “My disability is ...” “This means ...”</p>
	<p>Follow-up – classroom</p>	<p>Group check-in. Compare what you learned in your interviews.</p>



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
<i>Your disability, continued</i>		<p>Quick draw. In pairs, and writing with symbols or drawing, share all you know about your disability. Note: No one has to share what they consider private.</p>
2. Strengths	Introduction – individual	<p> Journal. Read your IEP. Find and write down three strengths, two goals, and one challenge.</p> <p> Watch the 11:49-minute monologue by a college-age Australian man talking about his disabilities. Caution: There are a few minor swears. “Dyslexia, Phobias, OCD, and What Makes ME Who I Am”: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpfc4NNQBbM&feature=related</p> <p>Write a journal entry. What strengths does this person have? What strengths do you have?</p> <p> Watch the 1:03-minute video, “Which Is Your Treasure?” about how everyone is called to do something: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mk2msLgQd38&feature=related</p> <p>Write a journal entry. What experience do you have with this “calling.” Tell your story...</p> <p> Watch the 4:03-minute music video – text to read, no script – “The Power of Dyslexia – Famous Dyslexics”: www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_qGJ9svUbM&feature=related</p> <p>Write a journal entry about the blue ribbons you would give some of these people. Name the awards and explain your reasons for giving them. What awards would you give yourself?</p> <p> Watch this 2:00-minute video of several students describing their strengths: www.going-to-college.org/myplace/strengths.html</p> <p>Write a journal entry about your strengths. “My disability has taught me I need to ...” “Because of my disability, I now have developed many strengths.</p>



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
<p><i>Strengths, continued</i></p>		<p>Some of these are ...” Alternatively, design a shield of strength.</p>
		<p> Journal. Look at the 10 statements you developed about your disability in the Your Disability lesson. For each of the statements add a statement about your strengths: “People with this disability might ... but like me ... they might be really good at ...”</p>
		<p> Journal. Research a famous or successful person with a disability similar to yours. This website may be helpful: www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/general/famous.html Make two lists: What are the person’s strengths? How do they work with and around their disability?</p>
	<p>Introduction – classroom</p>	<p>Share-pair circle. The class divides into two equal groups and forms an inner and outer circle facing each other. Think about the ways you work with your disability and the skills you have developed. Share these with the person opposite you. Then rotate one spot. Repeat the exercise until you’ve gone all the way around.</p>
		<p>As a group, create a big list of strengths people can have. Create another list of several jobs. Decide which strengths would be needed in specific jobs. Generalize the discussion to the value of matching personal strengths and job requirements.</p>
	<p>Workplace activity</p>	<p> Often difficult children grow up to be interesting adults. Interview two employees you find interesting. What was school like for them? What do they like about their work?</p>
	<p> Interview three people at your work site. What do they think their strengths are?</p>	
<p>Follow-up – individual</p>	<p> Journal. Write an entry about how you use your strengths outside of school. What strengths do you use in school? Reflect on the differences.</p>	



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
<i>Strengths, continued</i>	Follow-up – classroom	Pantomime. Each student lists their own strengths on 3x5 cards. Combine these to create a card deck of class strengths. Pantomime, asking the audience to guess your strength using the deck of strengths. Only three guesses!
3. Disclosure	Introduction – individual	 Journal. Read pages 7-3 to 7-9 in <i>The 411 on Disability Disclosure</i> , found here: www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/guides/411/411_Disability_Disclosure_unit7.pdf Create a chart. At the top of the chart briefly describe your disability. Make four rows labeled When, What, To Whom, and How. Make two columns labeled Disclose and Why. Fill out your chart for your internship or for a job you'd like to have someday.
		 Watch the 1:16-minute video by an adult woman talking about her personal experiences, “Disclosure of a Psychiatric Disability”: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ccocqjcn1aI Does anything resonate with your experience? React in a journal entry.
		 Journal. Read “Youth, Disclosure, and the Workplace”: www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/ydw.htm Identify one to three things you already know that the video covered and three things you learned.
	Introduction – classroom	 Prepare two questions for a speaker from NHWorks. Ask your questions.
		Research. Working with a partner and using <i>The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities</i> , research the law about disclosure. Generate different statements and ask your partner if this is a Have to Say or a Withhold statement.
		Scenarios. In pairs, make recommendations for a course of disclosure for two of the examples on pages 7-10 and 7-11 of <i>The 411 on Disability Disclosure</i> : www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/guides/411/411_Disability_Disclosure_unit7.pdf



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
<p><i>Disclosure, continued</i></p>		<p>Scenario cards. Create some disclosure scenarios. Small groups discuss whether or not and what to disclose and report their findings to the class. Other students hold up good idea or bad idea cards in response. Discuss everyone’s reasoning.</p>
	<p>Workplace activity</p>	<p>Make yourself a script and then practice disclosing something about your disability to your supervisor. (It could be something your supervisor already knows.)</p>
	<p>Follow-up – individual</p>	<p> Journal. Write a journal entry explaining what you are comfortable disclosing at work. What do you want to keep private?</p>
	<p>Follow-up – classroom</p>	<p>Grab bag. The teacher brings a bag filled with miscellaneous items. Select an item and explain to the class how it relates or illustrates something you learned about disclosure.</p>
<p>4. Accommodations</p>	<p>Introduction – individual</p>	<p>Draw. Think of a task you do at work. Imagine <i>any</i> tool that would help you do it better. Draw it.</p>
		<p> Journal. Research possible accommodations for your disability: www.jan.wvu.edu/soar/index.htm Write a journal entry listing any you already use, and some that might be interesting to try.</p>
		<p> Journal. Write a journal entry about whether or not it helps to have a tutor or job coach with you at your internship site. How and when does it help? When do you ask the person to step back?</p>
		<p>Research. Research accommodations people with disabilities similar to yours have found useful. Your research might include questioning people you know or going online.</p>
		<p>Research. Try a Google search for online tools you could use as accommodations, e.g., “math disability online tools.”</p>
		<p> Journal. Read “Entering the World of Work: What Youth with Mental Health Needs Should Know About Accommodations”: www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/tra</p>



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
<p>Accommodations, continued</p>		<p>Positioning.htm Write a journal entry about accommodations you might need.</p>
	<p>Introduction – classroom</p>	<p> Journal. List some tools you use at school that help you do your best work, e.g., checklists, written directions, demos. Check the ones you think you could use at work and explain why.</p> <p>Mind pictures. The teacher writes this statement on the board (or reads aloud): “Accommodations are tools and strategies to help you navigate a world not built for you, so that you can build the world that is” (Jonathan Mooney). Imagine a world built for you. What would it look like? What would school be like? What would work be like? Share your mind pictures with the class.</p> <p>Discussion. Discuss everyday items you use in daily life and how they might be useful in a work setting (lists, personal calculator, magnifier, audio books, stools).</p> <p>Discussion. Discuss and practice answers to the interview question, “What will be your biggest obstacle on the job?”</p> <p>Make a list of some entry-level jobs. Discuss tools and strategies that would be useful in those jobs.</p> <p>Drama. Develop a script for an accommodation you might need, e.g., “I’ve been thinking about ...” or “I think I could do a better job if ...” Practice your script with a partner playing the role of employer. Page 7-13 from <i>The 411 on Disability Disclosure</i> is a good resource for this activity: www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/guides/411/411_Disability_Disclosure_unit7.pdf</p> <p>Discussion. What will you do if a supervisor asks you to do something you cannot do. Make a plan. Come up with a problem scenario and practice your plan with a partner playing the part of supervisor.</p>



Lessons	Instructional Sequence	Activities
Accommodations, continued	Workplace activity	? Ask for an accommodation using the script you prepared in the classroom.
		? Interview a supervisor. Ask what kinds of accommodations other employees use.
	Follow-up – individual	 Journal. How did asking for an accommodation go? Make some notes for yourself about what went well and things you'd like to improve next time.
		 Journal. Write a personal status report: "I know the job will require (function)." Then for each function, complete the following: "On a scale of 1-5 (5 being totally confident), I would rate myself (number) in this area. The accommodations I might use are ..."
	Follow-up – classroom	Alternative scenarios. Create an alternative scenario – a replay of the events that happened at work with changes you would make next time you ask for an accommodation. Act out the two scenarios. See if your peers can identify the changes you make in your alternative scenario. Report to each other about how employees at your work sites problem-solve around difficulties.
		Report out. Share with your classmates what you learned about how employees at your work site problem-solve around difficulties.

CONNECTIONS TO NH CAREER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The NH Career Development Curriculum Framework (October 2006) establishes seven curriculum standards “that define what New Hampshire students should know and be able to do relative to career development” at the end of grades four, eight, 10 and 12. Listed below are the End of Grade 10 and End of Grade 12 proficiency standards addressed in this unit, some more intensely than others. *Habits of Work* provides practice towards these standards. Student competence will depend on the activities you choose and the depth of student practice. You may need to develop individual activities in order for students to achieve competence.

End of Grade 10

1.1 Access information from multiple sources and information-retrieval systems.



- 1.3 Demonstrate the ability to summarize ideas and information.
- 1.4 Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of organizational structures such as cause-and-effect patterns, paraphrasing, and charts and graphs to communicate ideas and information.
- 1.5 Demonstrate the ability to effectively and logically support individual ideas.
- 1.6 Use cross-referencing while gathering information.
- 1.7 Credit sources and cite references appropriately.
- 1.8 Recognize, evaluate, and respond appropriately to persuasive forms of communication.
- 2.2 Identify the issues involved in making a decision or solving a problem.
- 2.3 Gather and use appropriate materials and resources in making individual and career decisions, including printed materials, human resources, and information accessed through technology.
- 2.4 Use logic to draw conclusions from available information.
- 2.5 Develop a plan that reflects research and builds on relevant precedents.
- 2.6 Evaluate an event or activity in terms of expressed purposes.
- 2.7 Generalize rules or principles (underlying patterns and relationships) from a set of conclusions, objective data, written text, or system's review, and apply those rules and principles to a new situation.
- 2.8 Devise strategies for improving the performance of a system.
- 2.9 Test the effectiveness of the strategies employed.
- 3.1 Independently identify resources and tools needed to achieve learning goals.
- 3.3 Describe how skills developed in academic and vocational programs relate to career goals.
- 4.1 Demonstrate the ability to use peer and adult feedback.
- 4.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how individual characteristics relate to achieving individual, social, educational, and career goals.
- 4.3 Demonstrate the importance of responsibility, dependability, punctuality, and integrity in school, the workplace, and adult life.
- 4.5 Apply decision-making skills to career planning and career transitions.
- 5.1 Demonstrate confidence and positive self-concept in beginning work-related experiences, practice or actual.
- 5.3 Develop the ability to use constructive criticism.
- 6.1 Locate, evaluate, and interpret career information.
- 6.2 Identify and explain the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees.
- 6.3 Demonstrate an understanding of how employers and employees organize to improve the quality of goods, services, and working conditions.
- 6.4 Demonstrate the use of a range of resources to gather information about careers.
- 6.5 Identify individuals in selected occupations as possible information sources, role models, or mentors.
- 6.6 Consult with and observe adult role models at work to identify elements of their work and determine the need for specific knowledge and skills.
- 6.7 Demonstrate skills and behaviors necessary for a successful interview.
- 7.1 Evaluate the relationship between individual interests, abilities, and skills, and achieving individual, social, educational, and career goals.
- 7.2 Demonstrate a positive attitude toward work and learning.



- 7.3 Review and update their individual educational and career plan based on progress, continued and changing development of interests, and an awareness of the importance of lifelong learning.
- 7.4 Apply employability and job-readiness skills to internship, mentoring, shadowing, and/or other world-of-work-related experiences.
- 7.5 Demonstrate knowledge and the application of safety standards to the work setting.

End of Grade 12

- 1.1 Utilize others' critiques as a resource in achieving goals.
- 1.2 Demonstrate the ability to analyze how well evidence supports a conclusion or thesis.
- 1.3 Present, explain, and defend positions, using visual aids when appropriate.
- 1.4 Demonstrate the effective use of the conventions of the English language in communication.
- 1.5 Demonstrate the ability to adjust communication style and language so that it is appropriate to the situation, topic, purpose, and audience.
- 2.1 Apply decision-making skills in a wide variety of situations.
- 2.2 Analyze the design and management of a system.
- 2.3 Develop a systemic plan and communicate the plan clearly.
- 2.4 Develop and test strategies to optimize the performance of a system.
- 2.5 Demonstrate how to analyze the interrelationships of events/ideas from several perspectives.
- 3.1 Evaluate the processes used to achieve goals and improve the qualities of resulting products.
- 3.2 Show evidence of effective time management.
- 4.1 Demonstrate behaviors that maintain physical and emotional health.
- 4.2 Demonstrate knowledge of how individuals grow and develop throughout their lives.
- 4.3 Describe the contribution of work to a productive life.
- 4.4 Demonstrate the ability to make decisions consistent with one's own belief system.
- 5.1 Demonstrate consistent, responsive, and caring behavior.
- 5.2 Demonstrate the ability to respect the rights of, and accept responsibility for, one's self and others.
- 5.3 Demonstrate effective and flexible team skills as a team member or leader.
- 6.1 Use their analyses of role models to improve planning and implementation of projects.
- 6.4 Explain how the changing workplace requires lifelong learning and upgrading of skills.
- 6.5 Analyze the effects of the changing workplace on the individual, employers, workers, labor organizations, the economy, and society.
- 6.6 Explain how employment opportunities relate to education and training.
- 6.9 Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which work, family, and leisure roles are interrelated.
- 7.2 Share and discuss their individual educational and career plan, including decisions to be implemented after high school.
- 7.4 Identify the steps required for transition from high school to entry into postsecondary education, training, and/or employment.