My openness statement

Introduction

If you decide to be open about your disability, it is important to think about what you want to say and how you want to say it.

This guide will help you create your openness statement.

What is an openness statement?

An openness statement is a brief, personal description of your disability or health condition and the adjustments or support you may need to perform at your best. It helps you communicate your needs clearly and confidently in job applications, interviews, performance conversations, and networking situations.

There is no single “right” version - your statement should sound like you.

Step 1: Describe your disability / health condition

Start by choosing a few words that positively describes your disability / health condition, avoid using negative words such as unfortunately, suffer, sadly.

Please refer to the ‘Writing Your Openness Statement example’ to help get you started.

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Next, consider the implications of your disability - use a positive way to describe how your disability / health condition impacts you. Again, avoid using negative words such as unfortunately, prevents, can't, etc.

Finally, consider your requirements: think about the support and / or adjustments you may need during the recruitment process or in the workplace e.g. additional time, access, a schedule of the day's event or handouts in advance.

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Step 2: Create your openness statement

Using the content from step 1, turn this into your openness statement using 3 - 4 sentences.

Following this structure may help:

1. Describe your disability / health condition
2. Positively explain how this impacts you
3. List the support and adjustments you need to demonstrate your potential / capability

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Step 3: Make it yours

Using your content from step 2, practice delivering your openness statement, make sure you use positive language. Read your draft out loud or practice it with friends and family.

Ask yourself: Does this sound like me? Would I feel comfortable saying this out loud? Does it focus on what I can do rather than limitations? Am I happy / proud to share this with an employer?

You may find you develop and amend your openness statement, and that it may evolve over time.

Top tops

- Only share information that is relevant; you don't need to go into all the details of your disability
- Don't use complicated medical terminology when talking about your disability
- Become an expert in what you need so you know what to ask for
- Only by being open can you gain the support you need
- Be confident in asking for what you need

Final thought

Employers are looking to recruit the best and brightest talent in the industry, and you can be confident that they will support you throughout the application process if you are open about your disability and have requested adjustments or support. Being open is about levelling the playing field so you can perform at your best.

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