

Information Sheet 3:

If someone discloses to you: a guide for caseworkers and employment agencies

This information sheet is designed to give you a general outline of the *processes* that you need to follow when working with mature age people with disabilities who are considering tertiary study.

It is also designed to provide caseworkers and employment agencies with a guide to follow when a client chooses to disclose their disability.

The purpose of disclosure

A client will disclose their disability to you so that their employment or service needs can be addressed.

Disclosure by a client will enable you to assist and support them in their search for employment, and identify any services they may need.

Step One - What do you do if a client discloses?

If a client chooses to disclose to you it is important that you adhere to the following steps:

- believe the client
- respect the fact that they have told you something personal
- discuss confidentiality with the client (see confidentiality section below)
- check if the client is registered with a service provider
- explore and address the client's employment and service needs
- explore tertiary education as an option for improving employment prospects

Step Two - Discussing confidentiality

- discuss what you and the client *understand* by confidentiality
- identify with the client if there are any third parties who need to be informed in order for you to meet their employment and service needs. For example, other staff having knowledge about their disability
- identify if the client feels comfortable with these parties knowing about their disability
- agree with the client what you will and won't do with the information you have discussed

NOTE: There may be some occasions when you will need to tell others. For example, if you believe the person may harm themselves or others. In this situation it is appropriate to contact the relevant services to discuss whether referral is needed.

Step Three - What not to do if a client discloses

- demand to see written proof of the client's disability
- make disparaging comments
- fail to discuss confidentiality with the client
- talk to others about the client's disability
- assume the client is registered with a service provider
- assume the client is unable to undertake tertiary study
- assume the client has no skills relevant to the workforce
- fail to agree with the client what you will and won't do with the information they have disclosed