



# Deciding whether to disclose mental health matters at work

Sharing information about your mental health with anyone is entirely your choice, but it can be difficult to come to a decision, even more so at your place of work. There is no legal obligation to disclose your mental health diagnosis or any other medical condition. Reasons for disclosing will vary and it's natural to feel concern or anxiety about sharing personal information.



This document will explore aspects to consider when making your decision and the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing in a workplace setting.

**Your rights:** It is important to remember there are numerous laws which govern the rights of individuals and you can find more information about them here:

- 🌐 [Mental Health Laws](#)
- 🌐 [Money, Benefits & Mental Health](#)
- 🌐 [Rights & Restrictions](#)

## Pros and cons

Exploring the potential benefits and disadvantages to disclosing is a valuable exercise and will support you making an informed decision. Consider the examples below and whether they apply to your situation and to what degree. Use the empty boxes at the bottom of the table to add any of your own important factors to consider.

|  <b>Pros</b><br><i>(reasons to notify workplace)</i>      |  <b>Cons</b><br><i>(reasons not to notify workplace)</i>                                   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Some employers offer guaranteed interviews</b> for applicants who meet the minimum requirements of the post and have a disability.</p> | <p><b>Colleagues could unintentionally undermine</b> the individual by being unsure of capabilities. Also, may be perceived as vulnerable due your mental health condition.</p> |
| <p><b>Could help to explain gaps in your career</b> should they be queried and should you wish to divulge at that stage.</p>                 | <p><b>Potential target for gossiping</b> or discrimination (real or perceived).<br/> <b>Continued overleaf</b></p>  |



## Pros

*(reasons to notify workplace)*



## Cons

*(reasons not to notify workplace)*

**It could demonstrate to prospective employers qualities and skills** you have acquired because of your mental health condition such as empathy, non-judgemental, etc.

**Stigmatisation of mental health** may still be opinionated by some individuals.

**If your employer is aware** of your mental health diagnosis, you may be entitled to reasonable adjustments if you meet the criteria of the Equalities Act (2010).

**Potentially won't be hired** (if the disclosure is made before employment is offered).

**You could educate others** in the workplace about mental health and become a positive role model/champion.

**You might feel personally vulnerable** upon disclosing as it could potentially lower your personal boundaries. People may become inquisitive or questioning and that could make you feel uncomfortable.

**Your disclosure could lead to** a more honest and inclusive culture at work, supporting others to talk about their own mental health.

**Is the workplace receptive to disclosure?**  
Some workplaces might not be receptive or supportive of mental health matters and it may take time to understand the culture, i.e., are they inclusive, supportive of diversity, etc.

**Being upfront/honest about a condition** can be less stressful than concealing it.

**If your mental health doesn't impact** upon your ability to do your performance and capability at work then the incentive to share this information may be less.

**Disclosing may explain behavioural aspects** associated with mental health issues which might otherwise be misinterpreted.

**You might be concerned** that by disclosing, you may not have the opportunities available to you. Although if evidenced these could be grounds for discrimination.

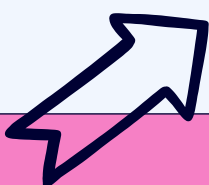
**Some companies have other support mechanisms** in place you may not be aware of. Whilst you don't have to disclose anything to access them, if your manager knows, they could signpost you to Employee Assistance Programmes, support groups, mental health champions, etc.

**You might be going through a difficult** or stressful period which is challenging your mental health but this could be short term.


**You can lead the way** to greater understanding of mental health and encourage inclusivity.

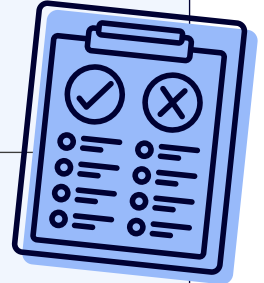
**You may have support networks** around you in your personal life and/or friends at work and that might be all you need.

**Add your own pros and cons overleaf**

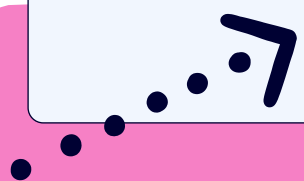


 **My pros**  
*(reasons to notify workplace)*

 **My cons**  
*(reasons not to notify workplace)*



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |



## Other factors to consider

- **Familiarise yourself with your workplace policies and initiatives** around health and wellbeing, e.g., flexible working policy, Wellbeing Action Plans, etc.
- When considering the implications of disclosing you might want to **consider both short-term and long-term benefits and disadvantages.**
- **Surround yourself with trusted colleagues** so you can talk to them about the possibilities of disclosing and they could support you throughout the process.
- **Don't be swayed by other people**, it needs to be the right decision for you. Much time is spent at work and you need to feel safe and comfortable in your daily life.
- **Define your reasons for disclosing** to identify if there are unwarranted pressures to do so or any ways of thinking that might be unhelpful.
- **Understand what you are expecting from disclosure.** What are you hoping to achieve and how can you guide the conversation to that?
- **Who is the best person to speak to?** Work out who you feel comfortable disclosing to. It doesn't have to be your manager; it could be their manager, HR lead or mental health champion. It will vary depending on your workplace, personal relationships and the outcomes you are hoping for.
- **When is the best time to have the conversation?** This decision is based on many factors, not just availability. There might be times of the day that work best for you but not for the individual you wish to talk to. An impromptu chat might not feel appropriate but similarly, if you are anxious, this approach might be helpful for you.
- **How much information you impart is entirely your choice** and dependent on what you hope to gain from the meeting and how comfortable you are with the individual. It is important to take your time and not to feel rushed because this will help you focus on what you want to say and the outcomes you wish to achieve.
- **If you are asked questions following your disclosure, don't feel pressure to answer them.** Feel free to seek clarification over the nature or purpose of the question. Also, you could ask for another meeting if you need more space and time.
- **What happens to this information?** You might wish to establish this early in the conversation to ensure you know what will happen next, e.g., will it be saved on your HR file?

## Signposting

 [CIPD | The Professional Body for HR & People Development](#)

 [Acas | Making working life better for everyone in Britain](#)

Find out more

[mentalhealth-uk.org/into-work](https://mentalhealth-uk.org/into-work)

