

**The
Advonet
Group**

Providing Independent Advocacy



**Autism
AIM**

Strategies and Resources

Disclosing a Diagnosis

What Can Happen When Disclosing a Diagnosis?

There are many situations when we may think about disclosing a diagnosis. For example, to friends and family, employers, and colleagues, or to professionals. Although there are many positives to letting people know about a diagnosis of autism, it can leave us feeling vulnerable.

Some Advantages

It can lead to getting the right help and support when you need it. Adjustments at work or within social events or gatherings for example.

Get people thinking and learning about autism. This can enable people to feel comfortable to ask questions about autism and what it means for you.

Open useful dialogue leading to understanding and acceptance.

Some Disadvantages

There may be some people within certain environments who may not feel able to manage adjustments or be defensive if asked to do something different to normal.

If someone has a little knowledge or experience of autism, it may mean they make assumptions about how autism impacts things for you. This can feel frustrating and undermining.

There may be situations in which those around you are dismissive of autism - '*we are all a little bit autistic*'.

Things to Consider

- Whether to disclose: Think about pros and cons like those listed above.
- When to disclose: Timing can impact how the person may respond. If for example they're already stressed or tired, they may react negatively.
- Who to disclose to: Does it need to be someone you know well and therefore have an idea how they may react? Does it need to be someone you trust?
- How to disclose: Consider what will feel comfortable for you. Face-to-face, email, message or over the phone?
- Your own understanding and feeling of your autism: If you are recently diagnosed you may not fully understand what it means to you. Maybe you feel apprehensive, or even negative, about being autistic. It is important to think about how you may feel if you disclose and do receive unhelpful responses.
- A support network: Would it help to have a friend or family member to chat with before disclosing? Is it important to you to have a person (or people), you trust that you can talk things through with after disclosing?



Takeaways

1. Think about the advantages and the disadvantages of disclosure
2. Consider: When, how, and who
3. Make sure you feel ok about your own autism and what it means for you
4. Think about if you need a support network around pre and/or post-disclosure

Contact Us



Leeds: aimenquiries@advonet.org.uk
Bradford and Craven: bradfordautismaim@advonet.org.uk



0113 244 0606
Please leave a message for the Leeds Autism AIM or Bradford and Craven Autism AIM team.



leedsautismaim.org.uk / bradfordautismaim.org.uk



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This guide was produced by the Autism AIM team, part of The Advonet Group. We are a free service co-led by and run for autistic adults (aged 18+) in the West Yorkshire area.