



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

Take a few minutes now to think about the impact of MS on your work. Use the chart provided on the next page to write down your thoughts.

**Step 1.** In the first column, list your symptoms of MS.

**Step 2.** Rate the impact of each symptom on your work using this scale:

Rating	Description
0	No impact on work
1	Minimal impact on work, occurs rarely
2	Minimal impact on work, occurs occasionally
3	Minimal impact on work, occurs regularly
4	Some impact on work, occurs rarely
5	Some impact on work, occurs occasionally
6	Some impact on work, occurs regularly
7	Significant impact on work, occurs rarely
8	Significant impact on work, occurs occasionally
9	Significant impact on work, occurs regularly
10	I am not able to complete my responsibilities because of this symptom

**Step 3.** In the third column, list examples of situations at work where this symptom has affected your work performance.

<b>My MS Symptoms</b>	<b>Rate the Impact</b>	<b>Examples of Impact</b>
EXAMPLE – Fatigue in afternoon	6	Almost fall asleep at desk, have trouble focusing in afternoon meeting, error rate higher in afternoon

National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 1-800-344-4867  
[www.nationalMSSociety.org](http://www.nationalMSSociety.org)

## Disclosure Decision Worksheet

Consider the pros and cons of disclosure in your personal situation:

Why are you telling?	
Anticipated Positive Consequences	Possible Negative Consequences

Whom are you telling?	
Anticipated Positive Consequences	Possible Negative Consequences

How much are you telling?	
Anticipated Positive Consequences	Possible Negative Consequences

**Bottom Line: Based on all of the above, the best alternative for me is:**

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## Employment Disclosure Worksheet

First of all, remember that disclosure is a highly individual decision. You may find the following questions from this quiz helpful in your decision whether or not to disclose.

	Yes	No
1) Am I avoiding medical treatment to keep my health status secret on the job?		
2) Am I telling lies or making excuses to cover MS symptoms more than once or twice a month?		
3) Have I received negative comments about my effectiveness on the job? A performance evaluation that was less than I expected?		
4) Do I have episodes of staggering, slurring, or falling asleep at my desk?		

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, it may be time to consider disclosing to your employer.

Take the time now to determine your feelings as to whether you want to disclose to your current employer, a new supervisor, or new co-worker. Answering the following questions and discussing your answers with a person close to you may assist you with this decision.

What are the advantages of disclosing?

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What do I hope to gain from disclosing?

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What is my biggest fear in disclosing?

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What are the disadvantages of disclosing?

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If you decide to disclose, you need a game plan with a three-step approach – **research**, **script writing**, and **practice**. Consultation with an occupational or physical therapist, psychologist, career counselor, or your state’s vocational rehabilitation office is highly recommended. Talking to these experts will assist you in your research about the kinds of accommodations that would work for you. Remember to take advantage of the educational support provided by the National MS Society as you go through this process.

Your disclosure script should be specific, brief, and non-apologetic. Keep in mind the perspective of your employer as you write this script. Your employer will be considering the questions:

- Can you do the job?
- Are you reliable and dependable?
- Can you grow in your job and be of value to the company?

Include answers to these questions in your disclosure. Other tips include:

- Keep it short with few, if any, details about MS. Focus on symptoms that are interfering with your work. We recommend starting at the lowest level of disclosure and only providing more details if your employer requires it.
- Keep it non-medical, avoiding clinical or medical terminology.
- Relate your request for accommodations to your ability and success in your job performance (the next section will address specific accommodations).
- Explain that you can do the job and, with (or without) accommodations, your disability will not interfere with your ability to do the work.
- Remind your employer that your need for and use of some accommodations may vary due to the relapsing/remitting nature of your medical condition.

- Be positive, focus on your best attributes, and end on a positive note, highlighting the continued good work you will be able to do with the help of accommodations (if any).

The final step of your game plan is practice, practice, practice. Ask your family and friends to critique your script and delivery.

Use the following formula to practice writing your own disclosure script.

I have MS (or a disorder), which affects people differently. In my case, I have (job-related) difficulty with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. However, this would not interfere with my ability to perform the duties of the job, if minor accommodations could be made such as \_\_\_\_\_. With these accommodations, I will \_\_\_\_\_ (positive statement).

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## Analyzing Your Need for Reasonable Accommodations

Take a few minutes now to analyze your need for reasonable accommodations. Use the chart provided on the next page to write down your thoughts.

**Step 1:** Using a copy of your job description, list your job functions. (If you are currently between jobs, list the functions of a past job or of a job you would like to have).

**Step 2:** Decide whether the job function is essential or non-essential and write your decision in the second column.

**Step 3:** In the third column, jot down those symptoms of your MS which are affecting, or which you fear will affect in the future, your job performance.

**Step 4:** For your essential job functions, brainstorm possible accommodations to help you manage your symptoms and continue to do your job. Jot these down in column four.

For the non-essential job functions that you are having difficulty accomplishing, think about other tasks that you could do instead of this one (e.g., if you and co-workers share the responsibilities of covering the receptionist during lunch and taking the mail to the mailbox, but you are not able to take the mail to the mailbox any longer, offer to take additional lunch shifts). List these in column four.

My job functions	Essential / Non-essential	List specific MS symptoms that are affecting each job function.	Possible accommodations/ other tasks
EXAMPLE: Taking turns twice a week making coffee	Non-essential	Can't walk all the way to the kitchen and carry back coffee.	Trade one day of receptionist lunch coverage with someone who can make and carry coffee.



Look over the list of accommodations you have generated and analyze them further. Would any of these accommodations increase your productivity and your value to your employer? Consider each accommodation in terms of its effectiveness for you as well as from the viewpoint of your employer. Take some time now to perform this analysis.

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>This accommodation will help me by:</b>	<b>This accommodation will help my employer by:</b>
<b>EXAMPLE: Headset for phone</b>	Reduce fatigue caused by holding phone with head.	I will be able to answer more phone calls.

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