

Being Aspie at Work

Shared Experiences from the Shop Floor

Finding Your Inner Self-Advocate

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Flapplause



Becoming a self-advocate

ad·vo·cate

Middle English: from Old French *avocat*, from Latin *advocatus*, past participle (used as a noun) of *advocare* ‘call (to one's aid),’ from *ad-* ‘to’ + *vocare* ‘to call.’

lawyer in other languages

French: *avocat*

Portuguese: *advogado*

Italian: *avvocato*

Spanish: *abogado*

Swedish: *advokat*

Basque: *abokatu*

Becoming a self-advocate

Advocate: someone who's got your back

Who is the one person who
will always have your back? *Yourself*

To embrace self-advocacy? Always your choice.

My job? Give you tools to make informed choice.

Becoming a self-advocate

It's political. Being a self-advocate is really being part of a civil rights movement.



Neurotypical Spectrum Disorder 999.00 (F97.0)

Diagnostic Criteria

A. Persistent over-activity in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts.

1. Insistence on social-emotional reciprocity, ranging, for example, from constant social approach and early adaptation of back-and-forth conversation; to encourage sharing of interests, emotions, or affect; to a constant seeking to initiate or respond in social interactions.

<https://anonymouslyautistic.net/2017/01/20/diagnostic-criteria-for-neurotypical-spectrum-disorder/>

Becoming a self-advocate

There are risks

$\text{risk} \propto N^0 \text{ self-advocates}^{-1}$

Stigma still exists

Reactions vary

My own story



My story

- Management training and the A-word
- ERG
- What autism looks like
- Job dissipates;
self-advocacy solidifies



My story

- Not all D&I initiatives are created equal
- Expand the scope of “normal”
- Let's hope your path is less ... stressful



Your path: How to start

- Many approaches, many levels: one is right for you
- First, critical step: appreciate yourself



Your path: How to start

- Educate yourself about rights and responsibilities



- Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- ADA Amendments Act of 2008
- <https://www.eeoc.gov/>
- <https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm> (2009)
- ASAN (<http://autisticadvocacy.org/>)

Your path: Self-disclosure

- Job Accommodation Network (<http://askjan.org>)

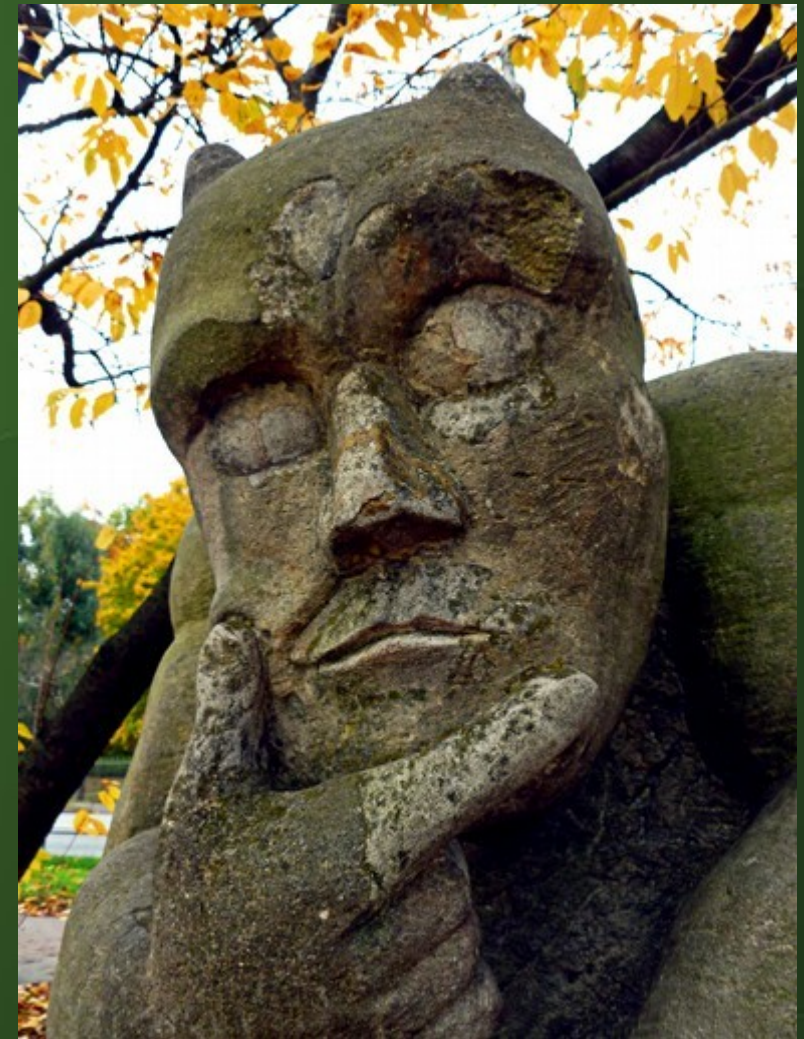
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Disclosure

- [Advising Youth with Disabilities on Disclosure: Tips for Service Providers](#) - ODEP Publication
- [Disability Disclosure and Employment](#) - JAN Effective Accommodation Practices Series
- [Disability Disclosure and Interviewing Techniques for Persons with Disabilities](#) - JAN Consultants' Corner
- [Dos and Don'ts of Disclosure](#) - JAN Effective Accommodation Practices Series  [Audio Version](#)
- [Youth, Disclosure, and the Workplace Why, When, What, and How](#) - ODEP Publication
- [Disability Inclusion Starts With You](#) - OFCCP Public Service Announcement-Style Video
- [The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities](#) - National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth Publication

Your path: Self-disclosure

- Why?
 - to ask for an accommodation
 - to enjoy the benefits of employment
 - to explain an unusual circumstance
- When?
 - when you have a reason to
 - don't wait until it's too late



Your path: Self-disclosure

- What to share ?
 - General information about your disability
 - Why you are disclosing your disability
 - How your disability affects your ability to perform key job tasks
 - Types of accommodations that have worked for you in the past
 - Types of accommodations you anticipate needing in the workplace

Your path: Self-disclosure

- Whom to tell?
 - “need to know”
 - HR
 - Supervisor
 - Team lead ?
 - Team ?



- Goal: awareness for everybody



Your path: Self-disclosure

- How?
 - practice with a trusted friend
 - devise a script
 - be positive:
 - “I would be more productive if ...”
 - not: “I can't do ...”
 - avoid negative language
 - focus on ability, not disability



Your path: Self-disclosure

- Rights
 - Confidentiality and respect
 - Seek information about hiring practices
 - Choose to disclose your disability at any time
 - Receive reasonable accommodations for an interview
 - Be considered for a position based on your skill and merit
 - Be asked respectfully about your disability for the purpose of determining what accommodations you may need

Your path: Self-disclosure

- Responsibilities
 - Disclose your need for any work-related, reasonable accommodations;
 - Bring your skills and merits to the table
 - Be truthful, self-determined, and proactive



Your path: Accommodations

- Accommodations without disclosure
 - ask for accommodations for “productivity gain” or “quality improvement”
 - ask for accommodations for a co-existing condition: anxiety, sensory sensitivity, etc.
- But ...
 - w/out disclosure: accommodation is not required

Your path: Accommodations

- Areas of accommodation
 - physical space / environment
 - communication
 - job tasks (who & what you interact with)
- My experience
 - had an office
 - work from home



Your path: Accommodations

- Communication
 - getting and giving feedback
 - format of communications:
 - written
 - recorded
 - graphical



Your path: ERGs

- Common interests; support group; safe place
- Promote education and awareness
 - Inside group and throughout company
 - Monthly Lunch & Learn
- Concerted feedback to company
- Networking
- Disability Mentoring Day



Your path: Inclusive inclusion

- Be the change you want to see
- Self-advocacy, at its best, is advocacy for all



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