



# How to talk about your access needs

A guide for young people  
with disability



## What is covered in this fact sheet?

- Identifying your access needs
- Communicating with confidence
- Where to go if things go wrong
- Helpful links

# Access Needs

**You might already know what your access needs are, or you might have a new job and aren't sure how accessible your workplace is. If you are a wheelchair user, your employer might need to provide accessible parking or rearrange furniture. If you are blind or have low vision and work with computers, you might need large print materials or screen reading technology.**



# Identifying your access needs

Identifying your access needs can help your employer to know which tools, technology or practices will help you to communicate, engage and participate in the workplace equally.

## Access needs can include:



well-lit areas and clear signage



alternative contrast or large print documents or emails



captions, subtitles or Auslan interpreters in online meetings



frequent breaks in online meetings, or a communication order



Easy Read documents



accessible parking, wheelchair ramps and elevators



screen readers



text-to-speech or read aloud technology



calming or quiet spaces

This is not an exhaustive list. Access needs are as diverse and unique as people with disability.



**If you're unsure if your access needs are being met, you can ask yourself the following questions:**

- Can I access the workplace easily and safely?
- Is information easy to engage with? Is it in an accessible format?
- Do I feel included and supported to perform my role?



# Communicating with confidence

**You are the expert on your own lived experience.**

When talking to your employer about your access needs, you can expect them to listen to you, be respectful, open minded and use inclusive language.

When speaking to your employer directly, you might say, 'I would like to talk to you about how I work,' or, 'To be included in online meetings, I need captions to engage with the content.'



## Tips for building confidence:

- reach out to a workplace champion
- practice positive self-talk
- practice self-care
- set goals



An example of positive self-talk is: 'This was really hard, and I'm proud of myself for trying,' or 'I have the power to change my situation'.

Goal setting can help tasks become more manageable by breaking them down into smaller steps.

Workplace champions are employees who work to improve specific areas in a company or organisation. They can help you find a solution or help to practice communicating your access needs. They should be someone you trust and feel comfortable with.

# Where to go when things go wrong



## If your access needs are not being met, there are several things you can do.

You can talk to your employer directly, tell someone you trust like a family member or friend, reach out to a coworker, workplace champion or an employment service provider who can support you to advocate for your access needs.

CYDA has also created a [fact sheet on accommodations in the workplace](#) that can be useful to share with your employer.

The links below may also help you to understand your rights and communicate your access needs.

## Helpful Links

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - Easy Read](#)

[Human Rights Commission - Complaints](#)

[People with Disability Australia \(for advocacy services in NSW and Queensland\)](#)

[Youth Disability Advocacy Service \(for youth advocacy services in Victoria\)](#)

[Ask Izzy \(to find an advocacy service near you\)](#)

[Lifeline](#)

[QLife](#)

# Disclaimer

CYDA's DREAM resources have been created to provide general information to employers and young people with disability who may be seeking employment. The content has been informed by a co-design process with employers and young people with disability. Funding for the project was provided by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services, as part of a Disability Youth Leadership Grant.

This fact sheet was current as of September 2023 and may not contain the most recent information and updates. Information is provided as a general guide and should not be considered legal or professional advice.

