

Explaining Your Needs Without Oversharing

You can explain a workplace need without giving every detail of your health, diagnosis or personal life. It can help to decide beforehand what information is relevant to the workplace conversation.

Focus on function

Describe what you find difficult at work and how it affects your ability to complete tasks, communicate, travel, concentrate or manage the working day.

Use a simple formula

BARRIER: what creates difficulty → IMPACT: what happens → SUPPORT: what could make the task accessible.

Example — sensory

“Background noise makes it difficult for me to process information. A quieter workspace or appropriate headphones would reduce that barrier.”

Example — fatigue

“My energy drops significantly later in the day. Adjusting when I complete high-concentration tasks would help me work more consistently.”

Example — communication

“I process complex information better in writing. A short written summary after meetings would help me complete actions accurately.”

Set a privacy boundary

Try: “I’m happy to explain how this affects me at work, but I’d prefer to keep the wider medical details private.”

Redirect intrusive questions

Try: “The important issue for work is the impact on this task. Could we focus on what adjustment might remove that barrier?”

Remember

Sharing less does not make your need less valid. The goal is enough relevant information for a constructive support conversation.