

If Asking for Support Feels Difficult

Self-advocacy can be especially hard when you are already tired, anxious, overloaded or worried about how you will be perceived. Make the process as accessible as possible.

Use writing first

Send an email or bullet-point note rather than trying to explain everything spontaneously.

Prepare three sentences

1. What is difficult. 2. How it affects work. 3. What would help. You can read these directly in the meeting.

Ask for questions in advance

Knowing what will be discussed can reduce processing pressure and help you prepare accurate answers.

Take support

Where appropriate and permitted, ask whether a colleague, representative, advocate or other support person can attend.

Reduce pressure to answer immediately

Use: "I need a little time to process that. Can I respond after the meeting?"

Use communication alternatives

Written chat, email follow-up, notes, communication cards or a prepared workplace passport can all help.

Start with one need

You do not have to solve every workplace difficulty in one conversation. Begin with the barrier creating the greatest impact.

Remind yourself

Requesting access is not asking to be treated as more important than others. It is asking for barriers to be considered.