



Easter Seals Ontario Youth Conference: Pathways to Success



Helping Kids with
Physical Disabilities
Succeed

Maria Collins
March 29, 2025

Disclosing Disability Information Accommodation Requirements General Interview Skills

“We may be living in uncertain times, but thankfully Easter Seals has remained steadfast in their commitment to always being there to support exceptional children and their families.”

- An Easter Seals Parent



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Agenda

- 1) Disclosing Disability Information
- 2) Accommodation Requirements
- 3) Sample Resumes
- 4) General Interview Skills
- 5) Practice
- 6) Resources





Should I disclose I have a disability?



Disclosing Disability Information - Tips

Be Honest and Positive: If you feel comfortable, you can disclose your disability, but focus on how you manage it and any accommodations you might need to perform your best.

Focus on Your Abilities: Highlight your skills, qualifications, and experiences that make you a strong candidate for the job.

Know Your Rights: Familiarize yourself with the laws and regulations that protect you, such as the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act)





Disclosing Disability Information - Tips

Prepare for Questions: Think about how you will respond to questions about your disability. Practice your answers to ensure you feel confident and comfortable.

Request Accommodations: If you need specific accommodations for the interview or the job, be clear about what they are and how they will help you succeed.



Remember, the goal is to show that you are capable and ready to contribute to the organization.



Accommodation Requirements

Identify your Needs & Engage in an Interactive Process





Types of Accommodations

Physical: Accessible workstations, Ergonomic furniture, assistive devices

Environmental: Adjusting lighting and noise levels, providing a quiet place, temperature control

Policy: Adjustments to attendance policies (flexible work hours, additional breaks), modified job duties, allowing service animals

Sample Resumes

Sample Resume - High School - No Work Experience

John Smith

Toronto, ON - Phone # - Email Address - LinkedIn Profile

Team Player ♦ Customer Service ♦ Public Speaking

Overview

Hardworking, dependable, responsible, attention to detail, honest, respectful, with a positive attitude to get the job done.

Education

Arlington High School, Arlington, Virginia
2008 - 2012

Experience

Pet Sitter

2010 - Present

- Provide pet sitting services including dog walking, feeding and yard care.

Child Care

2009 - Present

- Provide child care for several families after school, weekends and during school vacations.

Achievements

- National Honor Society: 2010, 2011, 2012
- Academic Honor Roll: 2009 - 2012

Volunteer Experience

- Big Brother / Big Sisters
- Arlington Literacy Program
- Run for Life

Interests / Activities

- Member of Arlington High School Tennis Team
- Girl Scouts
- Piano

Computer Skills

- Proficient with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, Facebook, Twitter, Internet, Cell Phone Technology

William Smith

Phone: +1-416-512-8549 | Email: william.smith@email.com

Professional Summary

A highly experienced computer programmer with 10 years of software Development experience in Analysis, Design, Development, Data Modeling, Performance tuning and implementation of Business Applications using Oracle Database Management System (RDBMS). My knowledge and experience has helped my companies improve its overall sales and this has given me the opportunity to receive awards.

Employment History

May 2018 to June 2021

New York, USA

Programmer Analyst, Oracle Corporation

Successfully upgraded Banner System into version 9 by migrating oracle forms into Java Pages.

Develop complex Oracle PL/SQL programs (procedures and functions) to generate JSON output to be used for web display as well as manipulate data in the database (inserts, deletes and updates).

Oct 2014 to December 2017

California, USA

Senior Software Developer, Google, Inc.

Instigated continuous improvement and cost cutting initiatives by eliminating 5 hours/week of manual processing by automating purging of credit card tokens resulting in increased team productivity.

Decreased the ticket count by 10% in a span of 3 months where I wore multiple hats.

Education

July 2008 – December 2012

Harvard University

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Academic Scholar Licensed Number 05782

Awards and Achievements

April 2010 to July 2011

Innovation Award, Oracle New Tech Awards

Sample Resumes

CHARLOTTE ROBERT

EMAIL
crobert@email.com

PHONE
(123) 456-7890

WEB
linkedin.com/crobert

EDUCATION

ROBERTSON COLLEGE
September 2018
Business Administration - Executive Assistant Diploma

**LANGARA COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**
May 2014
Bachelors of Business Administration

SKILLS

Microsoft Office
Google Workspace

Organization • Time management
Decision-making • Team-driven
Communication • Flexibility

PERSONAL SUMMARY

Business professional with 9+ years of experience in assistant roles. Diligent, punctual, and reliable with superior schedule management, communication, computer, and strategic planning skills. Looking for a senior-level Executive Assistant in the public health field.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
February 2018 – present
Senior Living Center of Kelowna - Kelowna, British Columbia

- Coordinates the executive team's calendars.
- Produces marketing materials for presentations and the Center's website and social media accounts, which boosted resident intake by 30%.
- Acts as the Center's liaison between the public and third-parties by attending events and board meetings and managing the Center's email.
- Keeps up to date on compliance and provincial regulations.
- Works with the Community Manager in coordinating two resident outings every month, improving resident satisfaction by 80%.

SECRETARY
May 2014 – January 2018
Boutique Medispa & Esthetics - Kelowna, British Columbia

- Managed foot, email, and phone traffic.
- Coordinated 4 Estheticians' calendars and scheduled appointments using calendar software.
- Processed client payments using point of sale software.
- Kept regular stock of inventory and ordered products when low.
- Acted as the business's main Social Media Manager by planning out content and responding to followers, which resulted in a 45% increase in followers in 6 months.

First Name Second Name

your living city | +999999999
mail@gmail.com

Dedicated Mechanical Computer Science Engineer with [X years] of experience in [industry/field]. Adept at [list key skills and competencies], seeking a challenging role to contribute technical expertise and innovation in [specific domain].

Team Player ♦ Customer Service ♦ Public Speaking

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Title Jan 2023 - Present
Employer, City

- Spearheaded the development of [specific project or system], resulting in [quantifiable achievement or improvement].
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to optimize [specific process or system].
- Conducted thorough testing and analysis to identify and resolve technical issues, ensuring seamless integration of [technology/software].
- [Any other significant achievements or responsibilities relevant to the position]

Title Jan 2020 - Jan 2022
Employer, City

- Assisted in the design and analysis of [specific components/systems].
- Conducted experiments and collected data to support engineering evaluations.
- Collaborated with team members to deliver project milestones within deadlines.

EDUCATION

College/University Name, City Feb 2023 - Jun 2023

Degree - Aviation Jan 2017 - Jan 2019
College/University, City

SKILLS

- Programming Languages: [List relevant programming languages, e.g., Python, Java]
- CAD Software: [Specify software, e.g., AutoCAD, SolidWorks]
- Simulation and Analysis: [Specify tools, e.g., ANSYS, MATLAB]
- Project Management: [Specify relevant project management skills]
- [Any other technical skills relevant to the role]

Certifications:

[List any relevant certifications, if applicable]
Professional Memberships:
Member, [Relevant Professional Organization]

Projects:

[Describe any significant projects you have worked on, highlighting your role, contributions, and outcomes.]



Olivia
Martinez

Contact

Phone: (123) 456-7890
Email: oliviamartinez@email.com
linkedin.com/omartinez

Summary

Enthusiastic and detail-oriented individual with a passion for creating memorable experiences. Possess strong organizational and interpersonal skills, seeking an entry-level event planning position to leverage academic knowledge and develop a successful career in the events industry.

Skills

Project management

Vendor management

Creativity

Budgeting

Customer service

Problem-solving

Event logistics

Communication

Office 365 proficiency

Volunteer Experience

Volunteer Coordinator
Hope and Harmony Foundation
(2022-2023)

- Recruited and managed a team of volunteers for charity events
- Assisted in event planning and execution for quarterly events
- Gained hands-on experience in event design and setup

Education

**Event Planning and
Hospitality Diploma Program**
Robertson College
Remote (May 2024)

Relevant coursework:

Event Management
Wedding Planning
Event Coordinating
Hospitality Sales & Marketing



Cover Letters



Your Name



555 555 5555



youremail@host.com



1 Street, City



LinkedIn.com/in/name

Dear Name, [Try not to say "To Whom it May Concern"; you can try and find the manager, recruiter or department head's name by doing a LinkedIn search].

Opening Paragraph: Briefly state who you are and why you are applying. You can start by expressing your passion for the role/company/industry, or by outlining your expertise and/or transferrable skills and how they make you an excellent candidate (keep it high level). Check out the company's website or social sites to get a sense of their culture, values, and mission. Not only can this help inspire you, it will also demonstrate that you've done your homework: you understand who they are and what they do.

Middle Paragraph: This is where you provide back up. Add details to support why you are a great fit for both the role and the company. It is really important to highlight that you have the skills required for the specific job you are applying for as opposed to generically stating your talents. So, be sure to read the job posting carefully, pick out the unique requirements for the job, and then provide the best example(s) of how you have demonstrated those skills. Also, don't simply repeat what you have captured in your resume. Lastly, you can add anecdotes about your personality and work ethic that make you uniquely suited for the position, or how you went above and beyond to achieve success. When possible, include numbers or insights that illustrate the positive results of your efforts.

Final Paragraph: Show gratitude to the employer by thanking them for their time and consideration as well as re-expressing your interest in the role/company. Keep it short and succinct. Stay professional but don't be overly formal either (it can sometimes make you seem robotic and impersonal).

Signature: End your message with a formal closing, such as *Sincerely*, *Regards* or *Best regards*. If your closing contains more than one word, capitalize only the first word, as in *Best regards* or *Sincerely yours*. Be sure to also put a comma after your closing. A common error in business communications is the omission of that comma.



Resume Tips

- Tailor your resume for each job application, emphasizing the skills and experiences most relevant to the specific position.
- Use **action verbs** and quantify your achievements whenever possible.
- Keep your resume to a maximum of two pages for clarity and conciseness.
- Proofread carefully to ensure there are no grammatical or typographical errors.



Action Verbs - Examples

Communication & Collaboration	Technical & Creative	Planning & Organization	Problem Solving & Analytical	Leadership & Management
Presented	Designed	Scheduled	Developed	Supervised
Collaborated	Programmed	Planned	Analyzed	Directed
Wrote	Created	Organized	Researched	Coordinated
Facilitated	Implemented	Managed	Solved	Organized
Advised	Produced	Streamlined	Identified	Led



Should I Mention my Disability in my Resume?

Relevance to the Job: If your disability has provided you with unique skills or experiences that are directly relevant to the job, it might be beneficial to mention it.

Comfort Level: Only disclose your disability if you feel comfortable doing so. You are not obligated to mention it on your resume.

Be Prepared: Be ready to explain how your disability might impact your work and focus on the solutions of what accommodations you might need to perform your best.

Focus on Strengths: If you choose to disclose, frame it in a way that highlights your strengths and how you manage your disability effectively.

Alternative Timing: You can choose to discuss your disability during the interview or after receiving a job offer, rather than on your resume.

Ultimately, the decision is yours.
The key is to present yourself as a
capable and qualified candidate.



General Interview Skills

Anticipate Common Questions: Focus on your strengths, weaknesses, and experiences. Highlight your skills and qualifications.

Highlight Your Abilities: Emphasize your skills, experiences, and how you can contribute to the organization.

Prepare for Disability-Related Questions: If you disclose your disability, be ready for follow-up questions. Prepare how you will explain gaps in your resume, how you handle specific tasks, and what accommodations you might need.

Practice with a Friend: Conduct mock interviews with a friend or family member. This can help you practice your responses and get feedback on how to improve.

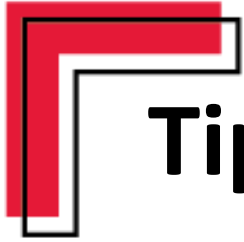
Stay Positive and Confident: Confidence is key in any interview. Believe in your abilities and convey that confidence to your potential employer.



General Interview Skills

The goal is to show you are qualified and can contribute positively to the organization.

Your disability is just one aspect of who you are. Make sure to showcase your overall qualifications.



Tips for Practicing Your Answers

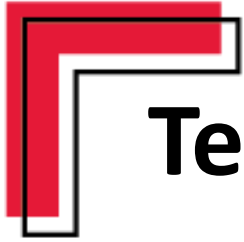
- ✓ Write Down Your Responses
- ✓ Practice Out Loud
- ✓ Use the STAR Method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)
- ✓ Record Yourself
- ✓ Get Feedback
- ✓ Stay Positive and Confident
- ✓ Tailor Your Answers
- ✓ Practice

By practicing these common questions and refining your answers, you'll be well-prepared to impress your potential employer.



Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why do you want to work here?
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
4. Describe a challenging situation and how you handled it.
5. Where do you see yourself in five years?
6. Why should we hire you?
7. Can you explain a gap in your employment history?
8. How do you handle stress and pressure?
9. Tell me about a time you worked as part of a team.
10. Do you have any questions for us?



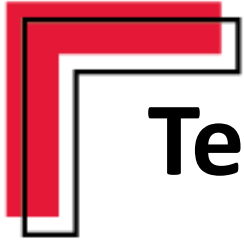
Tell me About Yourself?

1. Start with Your Background
2. Highlight Skills and Strengths
3. Discuss Your Goals
4. Keep It Job-Focused
5. Address Your Disability (If You Choose to Share)

If your disability has shaped your unique approach to problem-solving, adaptability, or resilience, you might choose to frame it as a strength.

"Overcoming challenges in my personal life has strengthened my adaptability and problem-solving skills, which I bring into my work."

Ensure the response focuses on your ability to contribute to the team and fulfill the job requirements



Tell me About Yourself?

Sample Response

"I'm a recent graduate with a diploma in marketing, where I developed a strong foundation in communication and creative problem-solving. In my volunteer role, I spearheaded a project that increased community engagement by 30%, showcasing my leadership skills. While my disability has presented challenges, it has also strengthened my adaptability and resilience—qualities I value and bring to every team I join. I'm excited to contribute my skills to your team and grow professionally in this role."



Strengths & Abilities

Your disability does not define your strengths; instead, it has likely shaped incredible skills and qualities that can set you apart and make you uniquely qualified

Adaptability: You've likely honed the ability to navigate challenges and adapt to new situations with resilience. This can be a significant strength in fast-paced or ever-changing work environments.

Problem-Solving Skills: Overcoming obstacles can enhance your resourcefulness and creative thinking, making you excellent at finding solutions in complex situations.

Empathy and Teamwork: Your experiences may give you deeper insights into understanding and connecting with others, fostering better collaboration and leadership

Time Management and Prioritization: Balancing tasks while managing personal challenges often sharpens organizational skills and the ability to focus on priorities.

Perseverance and Determination: Your drive to succeed, despite any challenges, speaks volumes about your work ethic and commitment.

Attention to Detail: Your unique perspective may contribute to a more meticulous and thoughtful approach to work tasks.

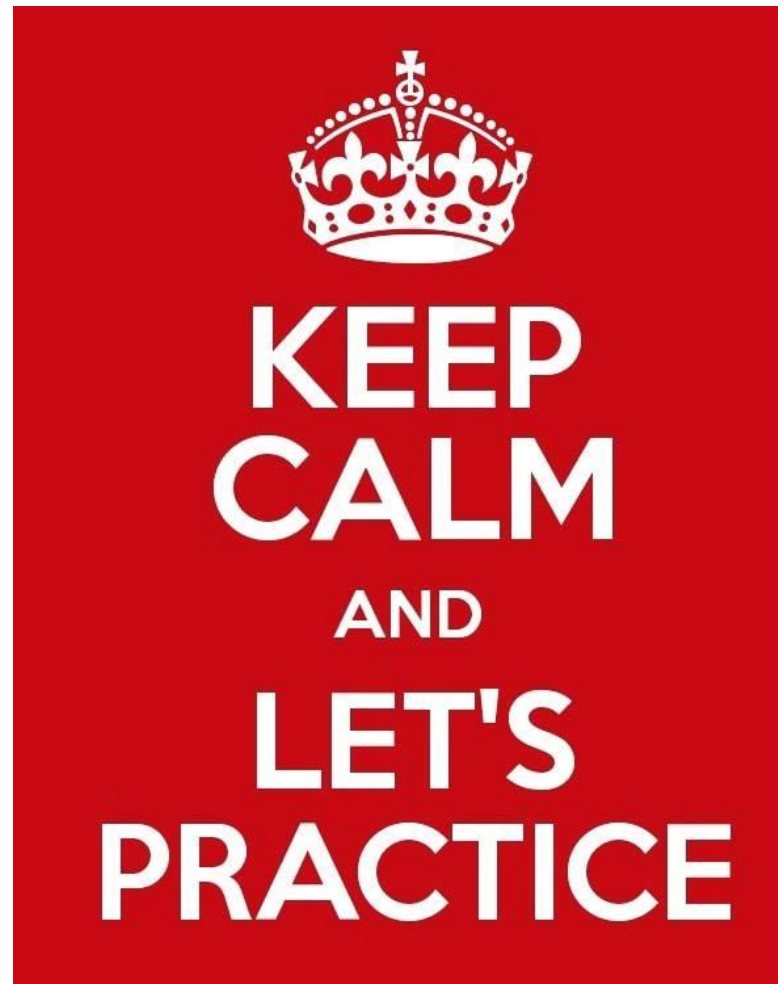
"In my last role, I used my strong problem-solving skills to address [specific challenge], which resulted in [positive outcome]."



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Tell me About Yourself?



What are Your Strengths?



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Resources

Employment Ontario <https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>

- Offers a range of employment services, including job search assistance, resume writing, interview preparation, and training programs. These services are available to all job seekers, including those with disabilities.

Free Self-Assessment Tools

1. **Personality Type Assessment:** <https://mypersonality.net/>
2. **HIGH5 Strengths Test:** <https://high5test.com/self-assessment-test/>
3. **Wingfinder by Red Bull:** <https://www.redbull.com/int-en/wingfinder/career>

Tips:

- ✓ Be Honest
- ✓ Reflect on Results
- ✓ Combine Assessments



Resources – Where to Look for Jobs

Company Websites / Banks / Networking

Accessibilities Expo Trade Show

Indeed: <https://ca.indeed.com/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/>

Local Employment Centres & Community Groups

Employment Ontario <https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>

Employee Ontario Works <https://eoworks.ca/>

Ontario Government: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/careers-ontario-public-service>

Federal Government: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/opportunities/government.html>

Job Bank Canada for Disabled: <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/persons-with-disabilities>



Resources - What *NOT* to Say in Job Interviews

What *Not* to Say in Job Interviews And What *to* Say Instead

✗ **Don't say:** "I don't have questions"

? **Why:** That's a big missed opportunity - and a red flag in terms of your curiosity

✓ **Say:** "What would success look like in the first 6 months of this role?"

✗ **Don't say:** "I'm looking for any job right now"

? **Why:** Seems desperate, rather than genuinely interested

✓ **Say:** "I'm looking to use XYZ strengths, and I'm excited about how this role aligns"

✗ **Don't say:** "I hated my last boss"

? **Why:** Never bash a former boss to a future boss

✓ **Say:** "I learned a lot in my previous job, especially about X, but I'm excited for a new challenge now"

✗ **Don't say:** "I don't know much about your company"

? **Why:** Suggests a lack of preparation and interest in the role

✓ **Say:** "I've researched the company and I'm particularly impressed with X - I'd love to hear your perspective on it"



© George Stern

✗ **Don't say:** "How much does this job pay?"

? **Why:** You can get this answered without sounding like you care more about pay than the role itself

✓ **Say:** "I'm excited about this, and I'd love to understand the comp range to ensure it fits my expectations"

✗ **Don't say:** "I don't have weaknesses"

? **Why:** This seems arrogant and like you lack self-awareness

✓ **Say:** "I've been working to improve on X recently, and after taking Y steps I've grown substantially"

✗ **Don't say:** "I'm not great at time management"

? **Why:** On the flip side, don't just say weaknesses without also showing growth

✓ **Say:** "Time management has been a focus for me - I now use X tools to stay organized and hit deadlines"

✗ **Don't say:** "I know I'm underqualified, but..."

? **Why:** Don't undercut yourself - focus on your strengths

✓ **Say:** "I'm excited to use my experience to lean into the challenges of this role and learn and grow quickly"

✗ **Don't say:** "I was fired from my previous role"

? **Why:** Fair or not, being fired carries a stigma

✓ **Say:** "My previous role ended unexpectedly, but it gave me the chance to reflect and strengthen my skills in X"

✗ **Don't say:** "I don't really have career goals"

? **Why:** Most employers prefer to see a degree of hunger to learn and grow

✓ **Say:** "My short-term goal is to excel in this role, and long-term, I aim to grow in X areas"

✗ **Don't say:** "When can I get promoted?"

? **Why:** In contrast to the last one, blatant climbing isn't ideal either

✓ **Say:** "What does career growth look like, and how are employees supported in reaching their potential?"



