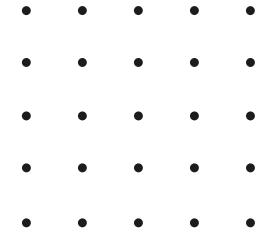


Disability in the Workplace

Team MANG: Monique, Anika, Natasha and Gene



Interview



Interviewee 5



Veterinary Student with bipolar disorder

Interviewee 6



Berkeley Student with ADHD

Interviewee 7



A blind Berkeley student with good recruitment and internship experience

Interviewee 8



Director of Professional Development at Lime Connect

POV 1

We met

an undergraduate **veterinary student with bipolar disorder** who has two summer internship experiences working in the veterinary field.

We were surprised

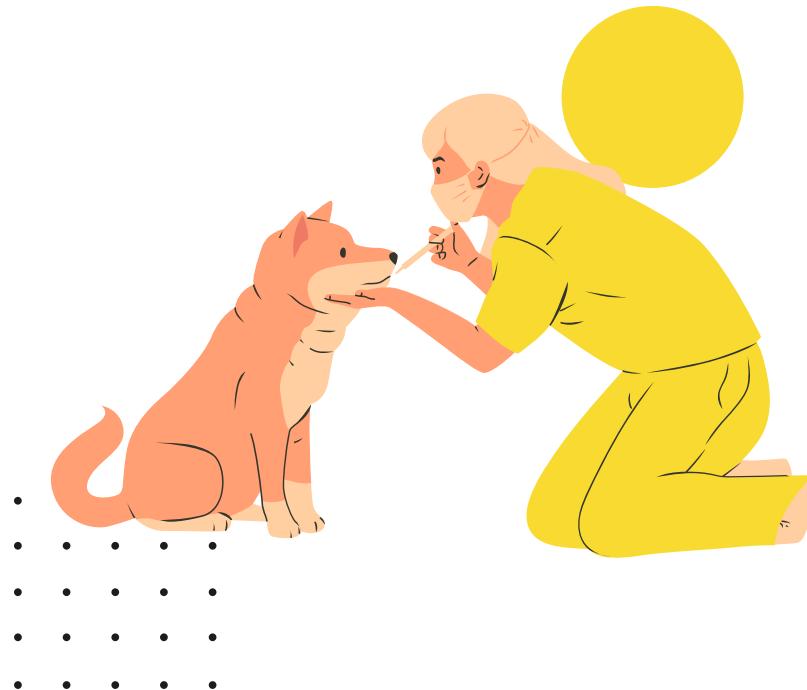
to realize that she **does not feel comfortable asking for accommodations** until a month or two into her job even though she **struggles with speed** due to her medication.

We wondered

if this means that **emotional care is more important than physical care** for her, even in the workplace.

It would be game-changing

to **foster emotional support** from managers to employees.



POV 2

We met

a Berkeley undergraduate student with ADHD who has had a negative experience with one 9 - 5 internship and has since interned at non-office roles ever since.

We were surprised

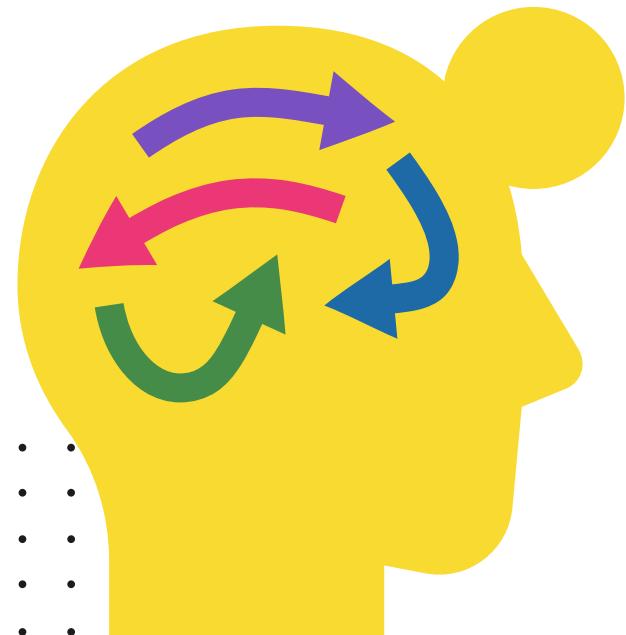
To learn that she continuously refuses to disclose her disability or ask for accommodations—even though she is feeling strained and anxious about unideal working circumstances—because she says she doesn't want to let down her employers.

We wondered

this Berkeley student feels like asking a company for accommodations would impose a burden on them because they are going out of their way to change the environment or task for her.

It would be game-changing

If we can empower this student to receive the accommodations she needs without creating a perceived, monetary, or practical burden on the company.



POV 3

We met

the director of professional development at Lime Connect, a professional development network for people with disabilities.

We were surprised

to learn that, despite iterating on robust inclusivity training for corporate managers, she felt that **she could not teach managers** the most crucial part of disability inclusion: **empathy**.

We wondered

If this means that she feels like simply providing information about disability statistics, laws, etc. via awareness trainings, while beneficial, inherently **cannot accomplish her ultimate goal of making all work places more accessible for people with disabilities**, because the key to disability inclusion is not solely more education, but **creating empathy** in the hearts of managers.

It would be game-changing

if we could help **plant a "seed" of empathy**, so that Interviewee 8's lessons can be more effective.



Top HMW

1. HMW make employees with mental health struggles feel more comfortable disclosing?



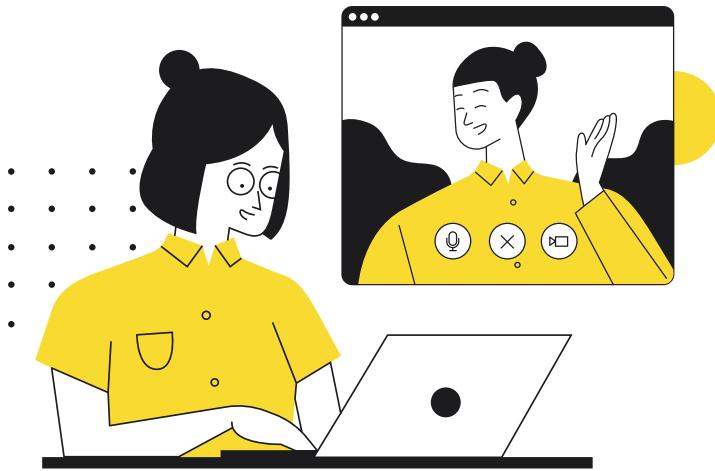
2. HMW help managers see the "humanity" of disabled employees before the "disability"?



3. HMW help employees know what is in their rights to ask for?



Solutions



Solution 1: Ongoing Ally

A chatbot that provides information on rights and accommodations across similar companies

Solution 2: Work-Plates

A group activity that bond people with similar interests and personalities

Solution 3: Anoynmous Accommodations

Offering accommodations without paperwork or documentation

Ongoing Ally

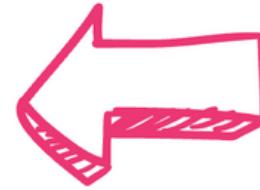
Have a chatbot robot friend who

1. Gives information about potential accommodations
2. Compare accommodations between similar companies; scrapes from a social media network / input where people can discuss their accommodations



Experience Prototype

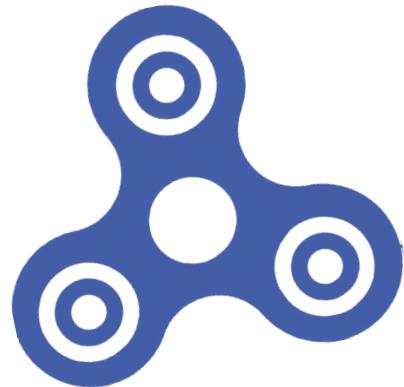
I have spoken with her and done the above I was hoping that I would get legal aid recommendations. It saddens me that the implication of resources like these is that people with disabilities haven't already worked within the system. I am tired and came here vulnerably to get resources but now I feel like maybe it's not even worth it anymore.



If you were uncomfortable with your manager asking about your disability, here is a link to report the interaction to HR: <insert link here>. Requiring a disclosure is against the law, so you are in your rights to talk to HR. If you were uncomfortable with the reduction in workload, I recommend talking to your manager or someone you trust in your team about getting more responsibilities.

Anonymous Accommodations

Offering “simple” accommodations without paperwork or documentation



“a fidget toy for meetings”

company cost: around \$5

Flexible Work Hours



- If your work does not require you to be available certain times of the day, that's okay
- If your hours will affect your work, then talk to HR
- "trusted third party" is her big thing = OAE (school) or HR (company)

Mental Health Days



- You can take sick days for mental health issues @ company
- You don't need to disclose anything

Fidget Toys



- Depends on the price
- The money you spend on employee for tools = laptop + monitor + tools = thousands of dollars annually
- a \$100k-\$200k salary person probably has ~\$3k worth of tools

Color Customization



- Hired employees who are colorblind
- They haven't done anything systematic
- Shift what colors they have in order to help those employee

Work-Plate for Empathy

Automatically set up plates/connections between employees to optimize groups of people with shared interests/high friendship potential

- Gamify this process in order to encourage people to make repeat connections/deeper friendships
- Use video bios beforehand
- Ask interest questions, frivolous questions, and more deep questions



Experience Prototype

How would you like to meet your plate? *

- Over a meal
- Over coffee/tea
- Over drinks
- Something outdoors
- Something active
- Something adventurous
- Something spontaneous
- At the office
- Remote / Prefer not meeting in person

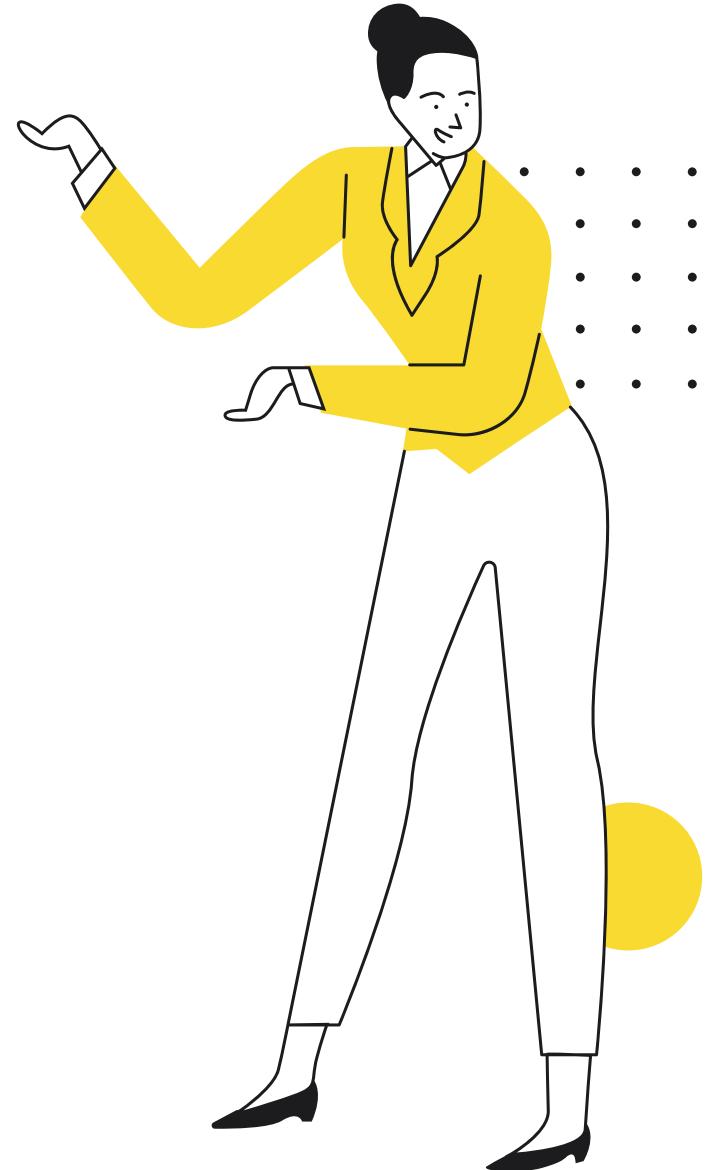
How much time can you dedicate to plate bonding? *

- 30 minutes
- 1 hour
- 2 hours
- 3+ hours



Next Steps

1. Solution: Work-Plate for Empathy
 2. Might create token disability or diverse friend
 3. Serves: Outgoing, extroverted people
- Excludes: Introverted folks



Appendix

Here are some of our more detailed notes.

Vet student with BPD

Says

"Couldn't do it" = regarding a depressive period she experienced at school	Internships want "reliable" interns	Afraid they will look at [her] differently if they find out about her disability	"Out of [her] control, but feels like a weakness"	Had never ever thought about disclosing before	If "bipolar" was listed under disabilities, she would feel better about checking off the box	It takes time to build a connection with an employer = 1-2 months minimum	She has had good experiences so far; future employers may not be as accommodating
Good relationship with employers help because they believe you when you say "personal reasons"	Some friends have horror stories about vet studies	Shared passions + a lot of time = a good relationship	"Definitely not in the first few weeks" (won't ask for time off really early on)	The issues she struggles with cannot be fixed by an employer	If she couldn't show up for a whole week, she wouldn't expect them to give her a job back	Expects the same obstacles (from her disability) that she's faced in education to occur in the workplace	It's very important for an employer to be understanding
Being understanding is important for an employer	She would quit "before getting fired" if she couldn't show up	If she had to take an extended mental health break (one week or more), she would probably just stop working there	Wants a "mutual agreement" about not discriminating when hiring But if there are no accommodations, she won't give up	Thinks the industry is not understanding towards and is doubtful of women	It's her responsibility to make sure her coworkers aren't affected by her mental health flare ups		

Thinks

Does

Took a break from classes when the depressive state began	Applied to vet school recently	Did first vet job 1.5 to 2 years post-diagnosis	Used "mental health issues" as a catch-all when explaining academic transcript to vet school	Values "reliability" and doesn't always see it in herself	Surprised to know that invisible disabilities "count" on applications	Relieved to know that invisible disabilities "count" on applications	Determined to keep going, even if no accommodations are available
Fills out "no" in disability section of forms	She hasn't told her employer about mental illness	She will take "personal reasons" days off if things get overwhelming	Has told her close friends, but not all friends in college	(now that she knows that bipolar disorder counts as a disability) she feels like she has to be "honest"	(now that she knows that bipolar disorder counts as a disability) she would feel "guilty" not doing it	Obligated to persevere through any mental health flare-ups as much as possible, since taking the day off affects all of her coworkers (rehabilitation center)	Afraid that employers will look at her differently if they know about her bipolar disorder
Doesn't remember seeing anything referencing mental health on her veterinary internship application website	Medications affect the way her brain process things = she can't think as fast	Answered the questions thoroughly and seemed interested in our project	Upon learning that bipolar counts as a disability, she *immediately* and confidently said that she'd disclose	Feels that her bipolar disorder is a weakness since it's out of her control	Very lucky to have understanding employers who she feels comfortable asking for days off from		

Feels

Berkeley student with ADHD

Says

Traditional 9-to-5 jobs don't work for her	Companies are "one size fits all"; they think everyone can work a 9-to-5 and has the ability to one thing in one way	"Disability is a spectrum"	People with disabilities are sometimes treated too differently	Treat people with special needs the way normal human beings are	People won't believe her if discloses her disability
"When I started taking medications, I realized how it was supposed to be."	I never got accommodations for ADHD, as I did not know I had it for the longest time.	People treat people with ADHD differently	It's easier to tell the disparity between able-bodied people and people with disabilities in school	With ADHD, everything around you is a distraction	Thinks that she wouldn't need accommodations if she was truly a good student
I feel like I am letting down someone when asking for accommodations	ADHD is often goes undiagnosed, especially in women	"I didn't notice myself as different until I started talking to doctors etc. until I started talking to other people and doctors etc."	Needs to please people, not cause anyone trouble	Thinks accommodations/as king companies to change their behavior on her behalf is burdening to them.	Thinks it is better to be uncomfortable and power through an unideal set up for a job task rather than impose to ask for accommodations or risk being viewed negatively.
Office job is not something I can do, while also maintaining good mental health			Thinks she is simply unable to do many 9 - 5 jobs so it is okay to mostly skim or skip them during career search		

Does

Does not disclose	Was a youth camp counselor, museum docent, journalism	Looks down her lap	Determined when saying "ADHD is not a defining feature of my life"	Everyone is different from you. A disability is just one way I'm different from someone else.	Feels like she has no direct negative experiences living with disability because it's just a part of her.
Noticeably pauses before sharing personal thoughts about disability sometimes	Smiles widely as she describes her positive work experiences	Laughs apologetically after giving a longer response to a question	Guilty for going on tangents or seemingly unrelated topics	Matter-of-fact when saying her inability to work in a rigid traditional office environment precludes her from applying to many jobs.	No direct negative experiences living with disability when recounting stories of successful job tasks she completed that fit her working style with disability
Pauses, smiles, exhales once, then laughs slightly when noticing she may have miscommunicated something/tries to clarify what she said earlier in the interview, especially when it relates to more sensitive topics.	Speaks very quickly, even when not excited.	Her fingers are constantly fidget	Semi-reluctant but acquiescent when telling us that "I guess it makes sense that having a script looks bad during an interview"	Happy that she has gotten to know her interests	Apprehensive when recalling a challenging experience where she was not able to use a script during an interview though it would've helped with her disability

Thinks

Feels

Director of Lime Connect

Says

Companies pay a fee to join the Lime Connect	"We have got so focused on technology in the past years, and that's great, but we have kinks to work out."	"When we do training, it's about whether your technology is fully accessible."	A lot of companies use third party resources like higher view, which are not entirely accessible	No company is perfect, it is always a work in progress	Becoming a partner is more of a process	Standard accommodations may not work for everyone	Companies are trying, but people with disabilities are often falling through the cracks.
The question is not whether you news disclose rather what do you need to be successful in your role	"We want you to recognize that you bring perspectives. You need tools, but other people need tools as well. We want to give you confidence and help you frame it in a way that is beneficial."	Pyramatics isn't accessible. How is a mobility disability person going to press a space bar a hundred times	If manager is unsupportive, then you have to go around them and find an HR person to be your advocate	Just because something hits certain guidelines does not mean it is actually accessible	People with disabilities often don't know who to ask for accommodations	People don't know what accommodations that their eligible for	If companies showed off their Disability ERG, then might encourage people with disabilities to apply

Does

Oversee 1-on-1 coaching	Career Coaching and Resume Interview Process	Extensive Career for recruiting/onboarding for employees with disabilities	Make training modules	Grateful to have had great experiences so far working with such a diverse set of people	Fondness of past Lime Network members she has worked with	Pondering how to best improve her trainings, especially to reach people who may not even show initial interest in accessibility and accommodations	Frustrated when sharing that not being able to teach empathy was the biggest road block in her trainings
Tearing up when talking about Lime Connect Fellowship	Smiled when I mentioned that past interviewees mentioned that Lime Connect Fellowship helped people embrace their disability	Voice gets noticeably higher when talking about ableism in the workplace	Collect feedback about inaccessibility/unaccommodating processes from members of her organization so that she can incorporate them into trainings and advocate for the members.	Proud when sharing all of the work her organization did to raise awareness about disability and accommodations in the work place.	Empowered when retelling success stories from people she's mentored	Righteous anger when retelling examples of unaccommodating practices by companies (e.g. using highview or coding games)	Excited about a new corporate partnership with her organization and the opportunity to start fostering disability inclusive culture.
Voice gets louder when talking about challenges Lime members have faced in accessibility in the work place.	Laughs at the irony of hiring software claiming to be accessible when it is not in actuality			Curious to know how accessibility can be improved in the work place beyond her current work		Feels excited to learn and grow, especially when sharing about how she incorporates her mentees' feedback into disability awareness training for companies.	

Thinks

HMWs

HMW make employees with mental health struggles feel more comfortable disclosing?	HMW make more connections between employers/managers and employees with disabilities?	HMW ensure that hiring managers do not discriminate against disabled intern applicants?	HMW teach employers the necessity of mental health breaks?
HMW make employees more comfortable asking for accommodations?	HMW build more trust between employers and disabled employees?	HMW hold employers accountable for their anti-discrimination policy?	HMW find accommodations for bipolar/mental illness?
HMW make the workplace as supportive as possible in the 1-2 months that the employee isn't comfortable asking for accommodations yet?	HMW shorten the period of time in which the employee feels uncomfortable to ask for accommodations?	HMW provide accommodations without the employee having to ask?	HMW make any workplace friendly to people with mental illness?
HMW help people understand that mental illness flare ups can be entirely out of one's control?	HMW allow time off without affecting coworkers' responsibilities?	HMW make the employee not afraid of judgment?	HMW make employees feel confident in disclosing their disability?



Solutions

HMW help managers see the "humanity" of disabled employees before the "disability"?

Employee can choose an activity to do with manager (during the workday, paid) to spend quality time (getting a meal outside of the office, going to a sports event, bowling, doing tourist activities together in the city)

Automatically set up plates/connections (Stanford marriage pact, but for employers/employees) to optimize people with shared interests/high friendship potential

Create a game where managers and employees get points for doing actions that increase company inclusive culture

Connect employers and employees with funny icebreakers so that there's friendship

[1M Dollars] Manager and employees go on retreats to get to know each other

Team bonding activities that involve vulnerability on the part of the employer and the employee (leveling the playing field)

[Magic] Manager is initially unaware of employee's accommodations or disability and only sees the quality of their work before learning of their disability and needs

[Get You Fired] Cards against humanity

Employee can choose an activity to do with manager (during the workday, paid) to spend quality time (getting a meal outside of the office, going to a sports event, bowling, doing tourist activities together in the city)

Extensive manager/employee bonding as part of the onboarding process

[Magic] Employer knows learns about accommodations but forgets the disability

Paid retreats where employees and employers get to know each other

Automatically set up plates/connections (Stanford marriage pact, but for employers/employees) to optimize people with shared interests/high friendship potential

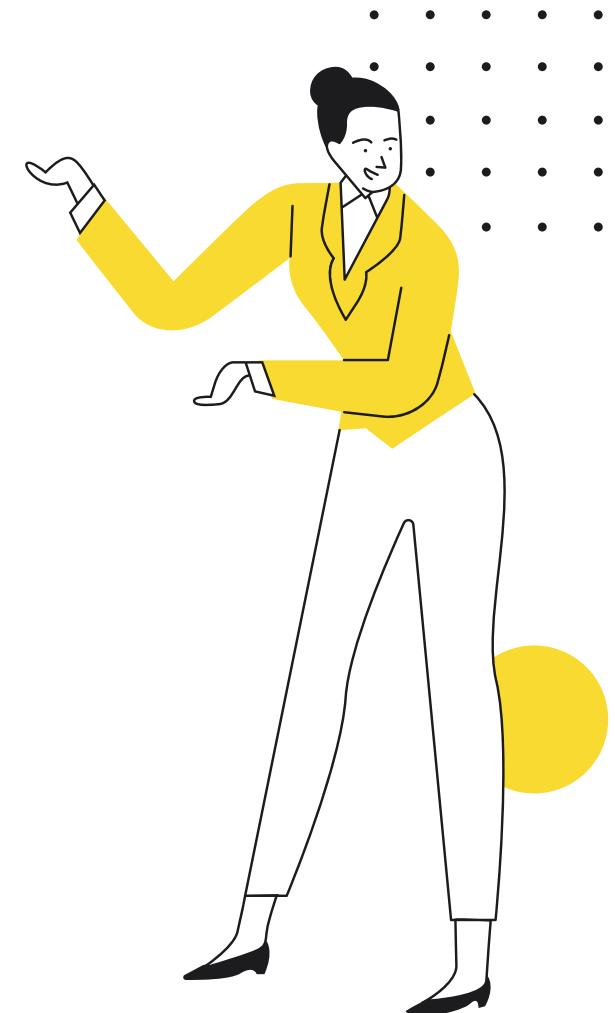
Have managers watch TikToks/social media being exposed to more stories of people with disabilities

Create a game where managers/employees get points for doing actions that increase company inclusive culture

[1M Dollars, Get You Fired] Make everyone go sky diving so they share a near life-ending experience and trauma bonding

Host talent shows for people to learn about different skill-sets others have

For people with disabilities, disclosure circle (like they did in Lime Connect)



Experience Prototype

Hi! This is an accessibility chatbot. We are here to help you with whatever questions you may have.

Hello

This is 100% anonymous. None of your data will be shared externally.

How are you doing?

Ok

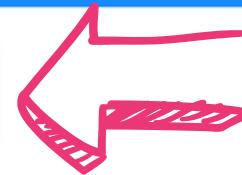
I tired

Sorry to hear that. Hope you get some rest soon.

Do you have any questions about accommodations in the workplace?

If you feel comfortable disclosing your disability, I can help with that too.

Yes— how should I proceed if I am asked about my disability post hiring and I choose not to disclose, but my managers asks me and then reduces my workload.



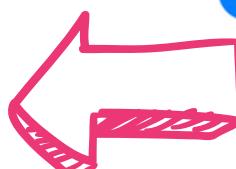
Could you please clarify? Is your manager insinuating that you didn't disclose, and therefore, they are reducing your workload?

No. They reduces my workload after asking me directly about my disability. I chose not to disclose initially.

Would you say that your manager forced you to disclose your disability?

No they asked about it

I feel like this is unhelpful



Ongoing Ally

Assumption:

Employees would be willing to chat with a chatbot about their disabilities / preferred accommodations.

Prototype:

Student chats with one of us behind the scene to test if they were actually receptive to the chatbot

Anonymous Accommodations

Assumption:

Employers would be willing to pay for accommodations for anyone who asks

Prototype:

show requests for “low-cost” accommodations (the request, the cost, the reason) - ask if folks would approve it with or without the reason

Work-Plates for Empathy

Assumption:

People would be willing to do plates

Prototype:

1. Google form for getting info on user
2. Create a bunch of fake personas with personality quirks / interests
3. Ask if the test subject would be interested in going to plates with a “match”

Links for Experience Prototype Interview Results:

EP #1:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/13wvpOia3cyOm6P8exmkCMPfPByPRhV86HwKjNVil4tU/edit?
usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13wvpOia3cyOm6P8exmkCMPfPByPRhV86HwKjNVil4tU/edit?usp=sharing)

EP #2: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cMiGhkLo6iuegBhdoJhTEWN8OMZ2YwPOmCO1-
zEPd1w/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cMiGhkLo6iuegBhdoJhTEWN8OMZ2YwPOmCO1-zEPd1w/edit?usp=sharing)