

Accessibility

Team 2: A1

Gene, Anika, Natasha, and Monique

01.

Intro

Our Team + Our Focus

Disability in the (Intern) Workplace

Visible

Can easily be noticed by other people. Some examples include blindness, deafness, physical disabilities.

Invisible

Cannot easily be noticed by other people. Some examples include medical disabilities, learning disabilities, and mental illnesses.

02.

Needfinding

Methodology + Key Quotes/Surprises

Interviews (So Far)



Interviewee 1

Blind Microsoft PM Intern
who is returning full-time.

Natasha, Anika



Interviewee 3

VP of People Ops who
manages recruiters.

Anika, Monique



Interviewee 2

SJSU student with autism who
has never interned before.

Gene, Natasha

Interviewee 4

Stanford student with medical
disabilities.

Monique, Natasha

Key Quotes / Surprises (Interns)



Interviewee 1:

- interview process was very pleasant and inclusive
- request for a high-GPU and RAM laptop with screenwriting software “was not fulfilled” even though accommodations were requested



Interviewee 2:

- Companies sometimes “ghost” applicants - no clear messaging about rejections (feels personal)



Interviewee 4:

- “It’s a perception game.”
- Only feels the need to disclose her disability when hospitalized and/or completely incapacitated.
- She has no control over her disability, but not disclosing her disability is the one thing she *can* control.
- Cannot imagine a world where ableist systems will change enough for her to feel comfortable disclosing her disability in the workplace

Key Quotes / Surprises (Recruiter)

Interviewee 3:



- Visible disabilities are easier to accommodate for
- "The most difficult thing that everyone has to deal with is mental illness. It's really hard to tell if a person is not performing because they're lazy or because it's disability related. Performance issues tend to crop up later."
- We could "help a lot of people" with a product that deals with mental health in the workplace

03.

Analysis

Empathy Map + Observations/Inferences

Interviewee 1



<p>Say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Only applies for companies that accommodate for her ("if you don't want to accommodate for me, I will not pursue your internship")Mac has better accessibility features than PCInterviews were smooth because she told recruiter about disabilityPrefers a mix of in-person and remote workDid not meet any blind folks at MicrosoftNever felt discriminated against through the recruitment processDifficult to meet teammates remotely, so in person is goodPeople were interested in learning more about disabilityFor SWE interviews, she asks for a verbalization on what was on the screenRecruiter always kept me in the loop	<p>Think</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Company didn't remember her in onboardingApplication is generally a smooth processMicrosoft employee is open-minded and helpfulBeing legally blind, not great eye contactHarder to connect with interview teamRecruiter being very open about what is going onFit in socially and made great friendsCannot ask for a competitor's laptopNever discriminated against through the recruitmentNot necessary to disclose explicitly
<p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Applied for PM @ MicrosoftDid not disclose disability up front2021 Lime Connect FellowNextGen Disability Leader 2022Put in HR request for screen-reader softwareReturning to Microsoft after good experienceWill request a Mac for full-time offerWent in-person 75% of the time for the first 5 weeks of internshipWent in-person 50% of the time for the next 7 weeks of internshipGoing to ask for a Mac for full time work	<p>Feel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Frustrated from onboarding weekAnnoyed it took her 4 days to get vision software installedExcited about returning full timeConfident in the interview processEmbarrassed/Uncomfortable to be asking for a MacSelf-assured in her blindnessSeen, as many people attended Disability ERG eventEven with vision software in PC, Mac is more accessibleFor the most part, felt comfortable asking for her needsHappy socially

Interviewee 2



- Say**
- "If I didn't hear back from a company, I try not to think about it and just let it go."
 - "Being a part of Lime Connect helped me learn about a lot of opportunities I had never heard of before."
 - "It does not feel good when you don't hear back."
 - "I never hear back. I really think people should reach out and say we are unable to offer you a position."
 - "I didn't disclose in my resume or cover letter because I didn't think it was an appropriate place to disclose. My high school special ed teacher said people discriminate against people with disabilities"
 - "I've applied to [Cisco, Linked-In, Google, etc.] and haven't heard back. I'm not sure if my resume isn't good enough. Maybe I'm wondering if it was my disability."
 - "Yes, now I disclose on applications in the Cover Letter now that I know how to disclose better."
 - "I think it is better to disclose now than when you get hired. It helps you get accommodations when you get hired"
 - "I applied to the Google Lime Scholarship and got rejected. So I didn't apply after freshman year."

- Think**
- Companies might not want him
 - Disclosing may disadvantage him
 - Not entirely comfortable with his disability
 - Thinks that tech companies might sometimes just say things for the sake of branding rather than genuinely meaning it (i.e. tech companies are not completely trustworthy)
 - Thinks he has to be a "good" or "token" disabled person in order for companies to notice his application.
 - Thinks that his view of disability has not changed throughout his life since he was diagnosed at age 4.5.
 - Thinks that disability community, mentorship, and resource sharing is a very important and game changing benefit when applying for internships.

- Do**
- Submits resumes, but does not get a call back
 - 2022 Lime Connect Fellow
 - Did not disclose disability because of high school messaging against disclosure
 - Discloses disability on his cover letter after Lime Connect
 - SJSU autism support group with weekly sessions
 - Smiles when talking about Lime Connect or disability support group
 - Pauses sometimes when going into specifics about his disability
 - Darts head back and forth between both interviewers when asked specific questions about his disability (i.e.)

- Feel**
- Angry that companies "ghost" him after he submits an application
 - Frustrated that none of his applications go through
 - Happy to meet the Lockheed Martin alumni who also has a disability
 - Uncertainty about why companies did not give him an interview and if he is qualified
 - Confusion from companies that give disability inclusive messaging, but never seem to respond positively to him.
 - Anxiety about disclosing disability due to facing discrimination
 - Pressure from how competitive/qualified you have to be in order to land an internship.
 - Excitement from connecting with other people with disabilities who can navigate the recruiting process together.
 - Grateful for mentors with disabilities who share resources/personal experiences about recruiting
 - Hopeful that disclosing disability in a positive way will lead to more success.
 - Comfort from self-talk about thinking of failure as a point of learning rather than a reflection on qualifications/disability
 - Inspired to bring the professional benefits and tight-knit community of Lime Connect to his disability support group and other organizations.

Interviewee 3



<p>Say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use a scorecard during interviews, rating people on their competence, adaptability, communication skills, main concern • ADA requires companies to not discriminate against those with disabilities • Company does not need or recommend early disclosure • Very easy to help for a visible disability • Does not always know what disabilities employees have - especially remotely • Employers will try as many accommodations as possible if one's disability does create an undue hardship for the company • If employers have tried all the possible accommodations but the business is still getting affected, then the employer may let go of the person • We accommodate things as they crop up • We would <i>never</i> ask if someone has disabilities • We rely on the person to tell us their needs so we can accommodate 	<p>Think</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of companies do not know how to deal with the mental health struggles of employees • Our company isn't big enough to encounter people with disability • The most difficult thing that everyone has to deal with is mental illness, such as depression • It's very hard to tell if someone is underperforming because they're lazy or if it's disability related (mental health) • It's hard to create understanding around mental health disabilities • The corporate world needs to understand how to appropriately give enough space + understanding for a person to be successful with whatever limitations they may have • You want to run a business, while also respecting people's privacy and being empathetic and caring • Someone's work experience/relevant skills matter the most • Helping employees with mental health is important for companies • Lots of potential in mental health in the workplace
<p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses applicant tracking software called Lever • Uses resumes and letters from LinkedIn • Makes sure that the applicant is local before checking credentials • Reviews applicant resume to ensure they have relevant skills/job experience • Reaches out to candidates they are interested in • Internal panel and hiring director interviews to decide hires • Encourages and includes people of all abilities • Makes teams flexible for new hires • Finds sourced candidates (reaches out to people on LinkedIn) • Give a general overview of the company, find out why the person is looking for this job 	<p>Feel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate about helping mental health in the workplace • Overwhelmed about how to address invisible disabilities at work • Empathetic towards people with invisible disabilities who are frequently misunderstood • Impressed by the adaptability of people with visible disabilities • Frustrated by the widespread misunderstanding of invisible disability • Inspired by apps such as ginger.io that provide therapy • Concerned about the price of therapy apps • Interested in the AI therapy options • Not sure about the accuracy of AI therapy options (currently) • Concerned about performance issues "cropping up later" in employees with mental illness

Interviewee 4



Say

- Cannot imagine a world where she would ever be comfortable disclosing her disability
- “clear disparity between what they say and what they do.”
- Academia has a hierarchy
- “It is a perception game.”
- I am hyper aware of disclosing because I heard horror stories
- “There is no winning” in reference to having a disability
- “The world operates differently for different people.”
- Ableism is tricky
- Disability is a “Threat to my own employment.”
- [BLANK] department made me regret choosing Stanford

Think

- Will be discriminated against
- Maybe it is just the academic field that she works in
- An unpaid experience + getting a job can hurt my health
- Wonders if profs remember the OAE letter sent 8 weeks ago
- If she discloses in class, one person knows.
- If discloses in work, everyone knows
- When I am in a flare, professors think I am being lazy
- Wishes there was more PTO or remote option for research
- Her experience with discrimination is the intersection of race, gender, and disability
- Cannot disclose in the finance industry

Do

- Never discloses her disability under almost any circumstance
- Discloses when she is in the hospital and completely incapacitated
- Did disclose under her current mentor because she knew her on a personal level
- Avoids disclosing in class when she might want pursue a research opportunity with the professor
- Relies on caffeine when she is in a flare and is working
- Quit a job when she started her flare
- Does not seek disability support groups
- Did an unpaid internship which was detrimental to her health
- Controls what people know of her disability
- Sends OAE letters to professors as early as possible but hopes for the best

Feel

- Unaccommodated in class and work
- Inconvenient to disclose
- Must compromise health to work
- Parents do not have graduate degrees, so must do more to fill in the gaps
- Complacent in an ableist society
- When one takes time off to take care of health, they feel behind
- Penalized when she discloses
- Lucky that she has never had a medical emergency at work
- Anxiety on disclosing based on what she has seen and received
- Wants to be in control

04.

Summary + Future

Key Learnings + What's Next

Our Learnings

Visible Disabilities

- Most companies that disabled people apply for will accommodate for them
- If companies do not seem accommodating, they will not want to apply.
- Onboarding needs to take account of disabilities (and it sometimes does not)

Invisible Disabilities

- It is difficult for managers to deal with mental health issues.
- Employers have to try exhaustive methods in order to accommodate mental health struggles in employees.
- Services with real therapists (e.g. Ginger.io) are expensive

Our Learnings

In General

- When companies don't respond to interns with disabilities, people may attribute the rejection partially or possibly to disability discrimination, even if it may be because of their technical qualifications
- Messaging about how to approach disclosing disability in the internship application process from trusted authority figures while going up deeply impact an intern's confidence and willingness to disclose their disability
- Interns may feel pressured to portray themselves as the "token" disabled person if they choose to disclose because they have to frame their disability very positively in order for companies to be less likely to discriminate
- Interns likely most often hear about resources for people with disabilities from mentors and peers who also have disabilities, rather than able-bodied people. Access to these communities/resources isn't as common before college

Future Work

More research into needs for invisible disabilities (in particular, mental health issues).

More research into the onboarding process for folks with disabilities.

More insight into how representation at the recruiting stage matters.



05.

Appendix

Appendix

Icons for the Interviewees:

- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Microsoft_logo.svg
- <https://1000logos.net/san-jose-state-spartans-logo/>
- https://www.flaticon.com/free-icon/recruitment_942830?term=recruiter&page=1&position=2&page=1&position=2&related_id=942830&origin=search
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stanford_Cardinal_logo.svg