

A Reflection on the Job Application Process as a Young Patient: To Disclose or Not to Disclose is the Question

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In the EPF Youth Group of course we are all young patient advocates and active volunteers, but many of us are also university students pursuing a range of professions and young adults entering the world of work. For me personally in addition to being the President of the EPF Youth Group, I am also a university student completing my Postgraduate Certificate in Education and completing my teacher training. Once many of us complete university, then comes applying for jobs and working. A big question many of us young patients ask ourselves when applying for jobs is “do we disclose our condition within the application?” or we deliberate within ourselves about “when is the best time to disclose information about our condition”.

Personally, prior to applying for jobs, I have never thought twice about whether to tell those around me about my condition because it was not something that I wanted to hide, but in fact something that I was proud of. However, when I began to complete and submit applications for teaching jobs, people around me who knew about my condition began to ask me “are you going to share that you have a chronic condition or disclose that you have a ‘disability’ on the form?”. Some people have even questioned and undermined my decision in choosing to disclose such information. As proud as I always have been and will be about being a young patient and patient advocate I did begin to question within myself whether I would be denied a job or the potential for an interview, simply because I checked the “disability box” on an application. I am passionate about education and educating the next generation of children and young people to embrace every part of themselves, especially what makes them different and even what might bring them daily challenges, and this begins with us.

Ultimately, upon reflection I realised so many of my life experiences, like being a part of the EPF Youth Group and the skills that I have developed that have helped me become who I am today, are because of me being a young patient. Therefore when applying for jobs and specifically when writing my personal statement it was nearly impossible to explain why I was most fit for the position because of my adequate skills and experience, as many of them I have developed from being a young patient advocate and therefore having a chronic condition. I was confident that if I was questioned about it that I would be able to respond in a positive manner. Furthermore, in complete honesty, the response of a job towards me having a chronic condition would have been a clear

representation of their ethos and values as a workplace, and be an opportunity for me to question whether it was the most suitable working environment for me. I am pleased to announce that I have not had any negative experiences in regards to disclosing my condition and that I will be beginning my new job as a class teacher in September 2025.

To gain a deeper insight on the opinions of other young patients across Europe regarding their struggles and successes when it comes to employment check out [The EPF Work and Youth Strategy \(WAYS\)](#) project, which was one of our previous youth group projects that we conducted. In respect of the project being completed, we continue to aim to develop the self-awareness and confidence in young people seeking employment across Europe. However, it does change some of the questions that we ask ourselves as young patients when entering the employability world.

Remember this: As much as you need a job as a young patient, the response of a workplace towards your disclosure of your condition is a big indication of the work life you will have at the job and how you are treated on a daily basis.