

## **Amanda - Disclosing that you're Autistic or being openly Autistic at work.**

**Amanda:** I was diagnosed as an adult, so already been through school, university, and work, struggling, not realizing I was autistic.  
I also went through being bullied in my school and work life because I was picked out to being different.  
I was a stay-at-home mom at the time and deciding when I was going to return to work.

**Amanda:** I am trained in the field of education as a primary school teacher and specializing in disability education.  
Entering back into a school setting, I was trying to decide if I was going to be open about being autistic or not.  
So many different sides to the argument was going through my head.  
Will they think I can do my job okay?  
Will they hire somebody else instead of me?  
But at the end of the debate, the turning point for me, was me thinking how can I encourage my autistic and neurodivergent students to be proud of who they are or show them that they can achieve anything they put their mind to, if I don't share that I'm autistic myself.  
In addition, I wanted to also make sure that I was asking for any accommodations and adjustments that I needed to be able to be successful in my work.

**Amanda:** I'm currently working for an organization that advocates for individuals, with a disability or disabilities to be able to live the life that they want.

In my role, I am supported to be openly, openly autistic.

**Amanda:** I had to make the decision whether to just share with my supervisors and the CEO that I was Autistic.

Or if I was going to share this with my work colleagues as well.

I made the decision to be openly autistic, with the whole organization.

I'm very grateful I did this.

**Amanda:** It has allowed me to share my own experiences with my colleagues.  
It has allowed me to feel comfortable to ask for adjustments and accommodations that I needed to be able to manage my work environment.

Some of these include working from home and if I do come into the office, working in a room where I have the option to dim the lights if I need it. Sitting away from the busy areas and having noise cancelling headphones on without people feeling like I was being rude or antisocial.

**Amanda:** In addition, it has encouraged my work colleagues to learn about autism that they can take into their own work and own advocacy work as well.

And they can take this information that I'm sharing with them and educating them on, into what they're doing, in the disability community themselves.

**Amanda:** People feel comfortable in asking me questions about my disability. So, then they can see how they better can support their own organization, businesses and individuals that need our support that come to our organization.

**Amanda:** Best of all, I feel I am accepted as me. I don't have to hide something that is such a huge part of who I am and my own identity. I can be proud of who I am and for what I've achieved in my life without hiding who I am.