



CURRENT CHALLENGES

Lucas has just been diagnosed with adult ADHD and dyslexia. He has not disclosed this to his employers. He first sought some professional advice when he found he couldn't focus or finish tasks and was suffering from chronic insomnia. He describes ADHD to people who don't understand it as follows: 'think of my brain a bit like a computer, I'm searching sites and I've got hundreds of tabs open and my energy and attention can be pulled by any one of these tabs, then I forget other stuff'. Sometimes he struggles to focus at work and he feels he could get more support. He was advised to disclose his disability to take advantage of funded reasonable adjustments at work and he could be allocated a 'disability mentor'.

LUCAS

Software Developer

AGE 24

GENDER Male

NATIONALITY British

FAMILY SITUATION Single, lives alone

JOB/CAREER Software Developer in a small company, checking the viability of apps and mobile-friendly enabled websites. He is a graduate and working towards a Masters in Cybersecurity. He develops apps, runs an eBay account and is a YouTube influencer in his spare time.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON GENDER EQUALITY Has some knowledge of disability rights but has no patience with the details of such things.

ATTITUDES AND EMOTIONS

- Lucas would like the additional support, but he is wrangling over whether to disclose as he feels he is 'too young to be disabled'. Having extra kit makes it look as if he's got something wrong with him. His diagnosis got him down, it's a lot to take on board but it also explains a lot. Some mornings he just can't get started on work tasks. He has seen colleagues snigger when he gets caught taking orders on his ebay shop at work. They don't understand... if he gets an impulse, he has to act on it.

MOTIVATIONS

- Lucas wants to progress at work. He has looked at the job description of the team leader job (the next grade up) and he feels he could do the job. One thing that worries him is they have to write reports for clients. At the last selection process, they asked candidates to complete an in-tray exercise, prioritising tasks, writing emails and dealing with queries. He'd have to write longhand. Normally he uses a spell checker and grammar checking websites if he produces text as he can't spell, therefore typing would be his preferred method. This would expose his dyslexia and might mean he has no chance of promotion.

WORK SITUATION

- Lucas gets side-tracked with personal tasks which has been noted by colleagues and managers. He is trying to work on this, but planning is very difficult for him.
- He is more than capable of moving up the hierarchy, but probably needs to have more appreciation of a manager's point of view when dealing with individuals. He needs to understand equality and fairness when it relates to himself and others. He tends not to talk to older colleagues much as he gravitates to people of his age. His colleagues have noticed 'he often gets the wrong end of the stick' and bypass him sometimes as he can cause project delays because he can't concentrate.

Manager's questions

- How do I balance an understanding of individual needs and the requirement to get the work done to strict deadlines?
- The policy I saw discussed an acceptance of individual differences; should we add more detail to the policy about what is and is not acceptable?
- How do I ensure fairness across the team? (Some people think Lucas 'gets away with a lot').
- What additional skills would I need to see evidence of before Lucas can progress?
- I suspect he might be dyslexic, but I've never asked—am I allowed to ask?
- Is dyslexia considered a disability?
- What is the role of Human Resources in all this? I think I need more support as I'm out of my depth with disability issues.
- Do we need to revise recruitment and selection processes to be inclusive and to what extent?

Peers/colleagues' questions

- Why is he allowed to miss deadlines and we aren't?
- Why does he feel entitled to demand a lot of attention from managers?
- He's always requesting talks about his career, questioning them about recruitment and selection and wants to go on expensive courses. Why don't we get these opportunities?
- Some older colleagues have been a bit frustrated: These 'snowflakes' always want to be special and singled out. People should serve a bit more time before being noticed'. Why are training funds allocated so unfairly?



Individual's questions

- Do I disclose my ADHD or dyslexia or not? Both or just one?
- What's in it for me?
- How will I be viewed by others?
- I don't know what I'm entitled to. What's the law?
- Extra support could help, but how will it affect my career?
- Why are others so horrible to me?

Policymakers' questions

- Do policies on disability fail to take account of the challenges of disclosure?
- Does the organisation monitor the careers and trajectories of those who disclose and those who don't?
- Is the current policy on disability fit for purpose?
- How do we generate a climate of inclusion in teams?
- How do we address tension in teams and discuss disability without stigmatising individuals?

