

Interview Questions – Do’s and Don’ts:

The fundamental guideline: “You can ask applicants about their abilities, but not their disabilities” - DBTAC– Great Lakes ADA Center

Exception to the General Rules: If you know that an applicant has a disability—because it’s obvious or because the applicant has volunteered information—and it is reasonable to ask whether the disability might pose difficulties when performing a specific task, you can ask whether the applicant will need “reasonable accommodations” to perform that task.

- If the answer is “no” then no further questions can be asked.
- If the answer is “yes” the employer may then ask about the type of accommodation needed (not the underlying medical condition).
- The employer may ask the applicant to describe or demonstrate how this task would be performed, even if other applicants do not have to do so.

Ok to ask:

- What education, skills, and training do you have that will help you succeed in this position?
- What certifications/licenses do you have?
- Can you perform all the required job functions, tasks, and/or duties listed here, with or without accommodation? (Include a detailed list of job functions with the job application/interview. If the applicant responds that he or she can perform the task(s) with an accommodation, you may then ask: How would you perform the task(s) and with what accommodation(s)?)
- Can you satisfy the physical requirements of the job? (Have a list attached)
- How would you perform the specific job functions? (If employer asks this, they must ask all applicants)
- What is your work history?
- Why did you leave your last job?

DON’T ask:

- Do you have conditions/disabilities that might affect your ability to do the job?
- Have you ever been treated for any mental health problems? Have you ever seen a psychiatrist?
- Have you ever been hospitalized? For what?
- What medications do you take?
- What’s your diagnosis?
- How many days were you sick at your last job?
- Will you need to take leave for medical or disability related reasons?
- Have you ever filed for worker’s compensation?
- Do you have a family member with a mental illness?

Sample questions for interviewing a candidate for a position that requires lived experience or family member experience:

- Tell me about your experience with the mental health system
- What kind of life experiences do you bring to this work and how do those make you a good candidate for this position?