

NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION

IF YOU *stutter*, YOU ARE NOT *alone*.



**Tuesday, October 22, 2019**

## **Stuttering and Employment Law Webinar**

Companies and employees who are misinformed about stuttering may, (consciously or unconsciously), treat people who stutter differently than “fluent” employees. Employment laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, protect people who stutter from bias, retaliation and discrimination. This webinar discusses basic employment rights of people who stutter, how to access/ensure those rights and guidance on workplace accommodations.

**(Facilitators – Greg Chiarello, Esquire,  
Mitchell Trichon, Ph.D., CCC/SLP and John Moore)**

<b>Behind the Scenes - Chat Room Excerpt</b> <b>(Typed Questions and Comments from 48 Webinar Participants)</b>	
Olivia:	Under what circumstances is being a person who stutters not protected? In a similar vein, what happens when “excellent verbal communication” is a job requirement? I have gotten some push back on that point in jobs.
Patrick:	Your presentation assumes stuttering is a disability. Therefore, we are allegedly covered.

Pamela:	But if a mild stutter makes the person petrified to speak on phone and chooses silence, couldn't that be disabling?
Aliya:	I didn't even know that stuttering was considered a disability. Interesting!
Pamela:	Yes, in the USA, not necessarily other countries.
Olivia:	Not disclosing assumes you have a mild enough stutter to "hide" it. Some do not have that luxury.
Pamela:	Is it a good idea to disclose stuttering during the interview process? The interview is considered pre-employment process and still protected. Employers cannot ask you about a disability.
Richard:	If you need to disclose your stutter in the interview, then it means that it is not obvious!
Ginger:	Any suggestions for dealing with savvy harassers? Those who are really good at cloaking their aggressive behaviors in "harmless" comments?
Pamela:	"Savvy harassers," micro-aggressions, bias and covert prejudice were covered in the August Webinar on advocacy.
<b>Link to August 27, 2019 – Self Advocacy at Work Webinar: <a href="https://youtu.be/tqMcokHDB7k">https://youtu.be/tqMcokHDB7k</a></b>	
Pamela;	Or you want to mention that it's not because of nervousness or incompetence.
Olivia:	I agree with Pam. I always disclose and follow it by, "It does not mean I am nervous, scared, or uncomfortable. It is just the way I speak."
Pamela:	I like how you put that, Olivia.
Ginger:	I was just wondering where the line is drawn when/before bringing in legal counsel.
Pamela:	Keep a paper trail.
Nicole:	I used to not disclose during the phone screen, and I was not getting second and third interviews. The feedback from recruiters was I sounded nervous and not confident. Once I started disclosing at the beginning of every interview, I got second interviews (and more). This has been the case with multiple companies. The feedback from recruiters when disclosing is that it shows I'm honest, authentic and builds trust.
Pamela:	Nicole - very good point. People really respect when we are authentic and transparent.

Aliya:	I think what has helped me with my stutter was a change of mindset. I never considered my stutter as a disability and instead used it as a strength to improve my speech by applying some techniques I have learned through self-work which has also helped me to become a better speaker. I understand that stuttering ranges in different spectrums and not everyone will share my experience, but claiming your power in a situation does help. In terms of interviews, it's best to go with passion and confidence AND if you do have a severe stutter, disclose it during the in-person interview.
All:	Thank you! Wonderful presentation, very informative! Nicely done. The information will be very helpful for our clients. I appreciate you folks sharing this wonderful information. Great information – thanks for sharing.

*See also, Link to all archived WeStutter@Work Career Success Webinars:*

<https://westutter.org/careersuccess/webinars>