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This research explores the key issues surrounding teacher/staff disability disclosures in England’s further education (FE) sector. Further education (FE) includes any study after secondary education that's not part of higher education (that is, not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree). Courses range from basic English and math to Higher National Diplomas.

Two major outcomes include the following: the desire for teaching staff to “come out” and make a disability disclosure and the perception of disability as a “deficit”. Some of the staff that disclosed their hidden disabilities stated they would not do so again. To avoid the negative side effects, developing a “culture of disability disclosure” and providing long-term employer support are necessary. It was pointed out that contemplating disability disclosure is not an isolated event but rather, a never-ending process that can generate significant fear, uneasiness and anxiety that may remain indefinitely throughout one’s employment term or even career lifetime. Teachers within the case organization who disclosed their learning disability to their line manager often felt “overwhelmed”, “anxious” and “tired”, despite having disclosed in what they felt was the proper way.

This will be useful to my project because it presents a point of view from a different employment area (teacher/staff disability) than I’ve previously explored. It was interesting in this research that the reactions to initial disclosure influenced other teacher’s decisions to disclose a disability in the future. As long as disability disclosure was perceived as a deficit, then personal fears and employee anxieties are likely to remain. Another interesting finding was that none of the teachers who disclosed a learning disability had ever been promoted. It is also clear that teachers with a disability were less likely to apply for promotion due to perceptions of disability being perceived as a deficit.