

Confidentiality & Trust after an ND Disclosure

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- What happens after a disclosure matters as much as the conversation itself.
- Confidentiality isn't just about not gossiping — it's about actively protecting information, being clear about who needs to know what, and following through consistently.

A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

Why This Matters

A breach of confidentiality — even a small, well-intentioned one — can undo trust permanently, not just with that person, but with everyone who hears about it.

People decide whether to disclose based partly on what they've seen happen to others' disclosures.

Getting this right protects the individual and your team's wider culture of openness.

What This Might Look Like

- Someone asks you not to mention their diagnosis to their team, but you slip it into a group conversation "helpfully."
- HR needs to know about an adjustment, but the specific diagnosis doesn't.

- A colleague asks you directly why someone has different working arrangements.
- Someone worries that disclosing to you will affect how you rate their performance.

What You Can Do

1. Ask explicitly what can be shared, and with whom.

- Don't assume — ask directly who else, if anyone, should know, and how much detail.
- Revisit this if circumstances change; permission given once isn't permission forever.

2. Share the minimum necessary, not the full picture.

- HR or occupational health may need to know about an adjustment, without needing the underlying diagnosis.
- Colleagues rarely need to know anything beyond “this is how we're working now.”

3. Have a ready, bounded response for curious colleagues.

- Protect the person's privacy without lying or being evasive in a way that draws more attention.
- Redirect firmly and move on, rather than over-explaining.

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

Asking what can be shared:

“Just so I get this right — is it okay if I mention to the team that your hours are changing, without saying why? Or would you prefer something else?”

Responding to a curious colleague:

That's between me and them — but if it's ever relevant to how we work together, they'll let you know themselves.”

Quick Tips

- Always ask explicitly what can be shared, and with whom — never assume.
- Share only what's operationally necessary, not the full picture.

- Permission can change — check in again if circumstances shift.
- Have a firm, kind response ready for curious colleagues.
- A single breach can undo months of trust-building.
- Confidentiality protects your team's culture, not just one individual.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: “Psychological Safety Frameworks” for the wider practices this sits within.
- Speak with HR or your Data Protection Officer about specific confidentiality obligations under UK data protection law.
- See “Avoiding Tokenism” for handling visibility around adjustments respectfully.

Before You Go

Trust is built slowly and lost quickly — confidentiality is one of the few things fully within your control.

Getting this right consistently is one of the most protective things you can do for your team.