Disability Disclosure and Self-identification: Benefits, Barriers and Implementable Solutions

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Our Presenters

Sarah von Schrader is the Assistant Director of Research at the Employment and Disability Institute, ILR School, Cornell University. Sarah has conducted research in several employer-relevant areas, including: disability disclosure, effective employer practices and disability employment discrimination charges.

Susanne Bruyère is the Director of the Employment and Disability Institute and Associate Dean of Outreach, Cornell University ILR School. Susanne is a Project Director and a Co-Principal Investigator of numerous research efforts focused on employment disability nondiscrimination and disability employment policy, funded by numerous federal agencies.

Michael Murray serves as the principal advisor to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Government-wide disability policies and programs. Before joining OPM, Murray was the Director of Programs at the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), raising over 4 million dollars and leading large national disability initiatives.

Attribution and Disclaimer

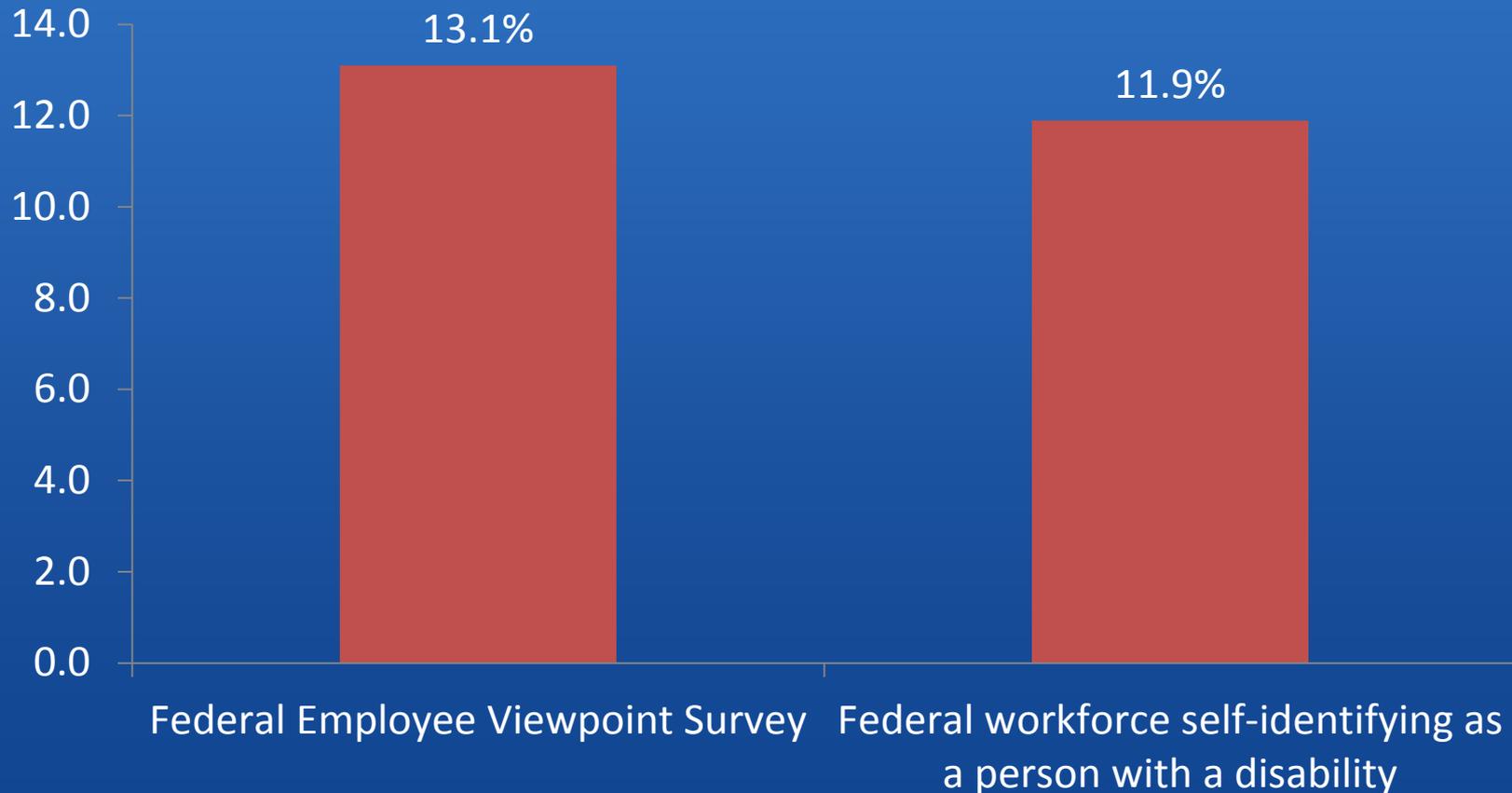# Why disability disclosure matters

- Accommodations

- Workplace culture

- Compliance

- Understanding disability in workplace
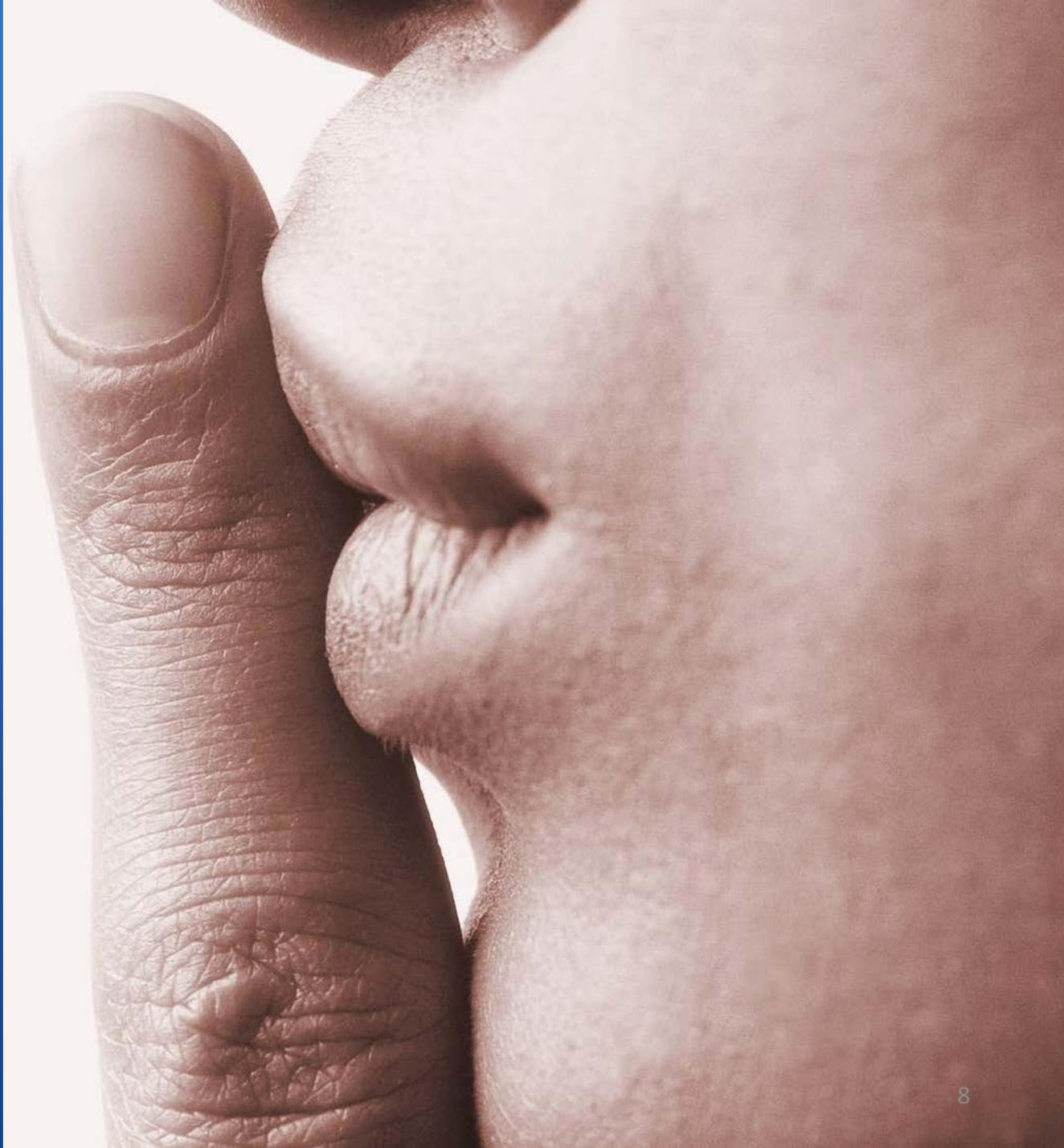
Understanding disability in workplace

		2009		2010		2011	
		Separations	%	Separations	%	Separations	%
Resignation	After Notice	36	0.38%	36	0.34%	47	0.37%
	Other	1,939	20.62%	2,203	21.00%	2,594	20.31%
	Sub Total	1,975	21.01%	2,239	21.35%	2,641	20.67%
Death	Other	405	4.31%	416	3.97%	434	3.40%
	Sub Total	405	4.31%	416	3.97%	434	3.40%
Termination RFI/Funds/etc	Other	17	0.18%	14	0.13%	58	0.45%
	Sub Total	17	0.18%	14	0.13%	58	0.45%
New Placement	Other	1,420	15.10%	1,554	14.82%	2,052	16.06%
	Sub Total	1,420	15.10%	1,554	14.82%	2,052	16.06%
Removal	Conduct	214	2.28%	234	2.23%	252	1.97%
	Conduct and Performance	45	0.48%	58	0.55%	52	0.41%
	Moved	8	0.09%	7	0.07%	52	0.41%
	Other	528	5.62%	504	4.81%	561	4.39%
	Performance	84	0.89%	98	0.93%	99	0.78%
	Sub Total	879	9.35%	901	8.59%	1,016	7.95%
Other	Other	66	0.70%	101	0.96%	114	0.89%
	Sub Total	66	0.70%	101	0.96%	114	0.89%
Retirement	Other	4,640	49.35%	5,264	50.19%	6,460	50.57%
	Sub Total	4,640	49.35%	5,264	50.19%	6,460	50.57%
		9,402	100.00%	10,489	100.00%	12,775	100.00%

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Will employees with disabilities disclose or self-identify?

Percent of federal employees self-identifying in 2012

Bar chart showing: Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey — 13.1%; Federal workforce self-identifying as a person with a disability — 11.9%

Concern about not being hired or being fired

Strategies

- Include disability in the company's diversity mission statement

- Extend recruitment efforts to target jobseekers with disabilities

- Establish and communicate fair systems and procedures

- Demonstrate commitment to disability hiring and retention by collecting data and explaining why

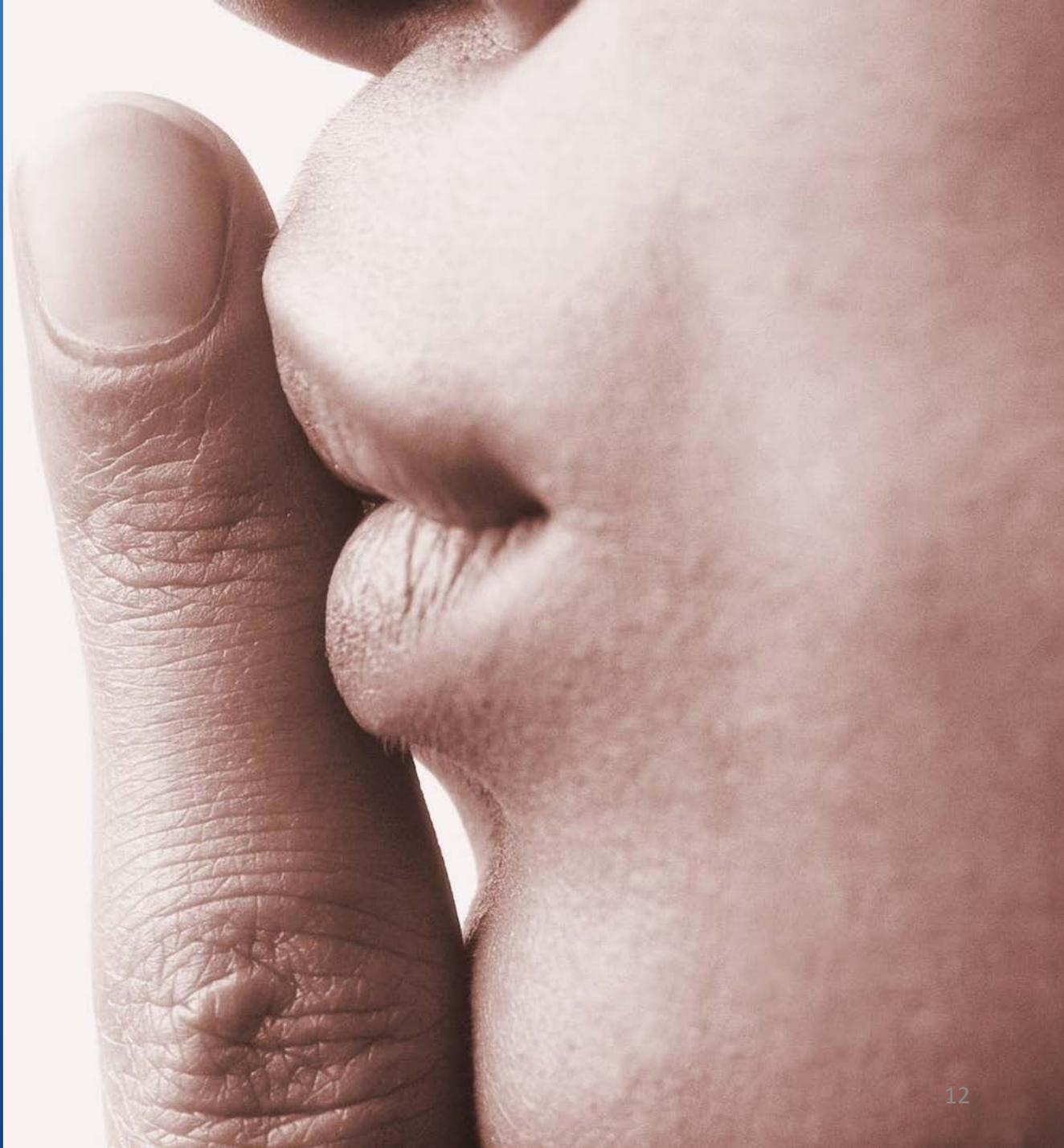- Create accessible workplaces, spaces, processes, and opportunities

Concern about losing promotion opportunities
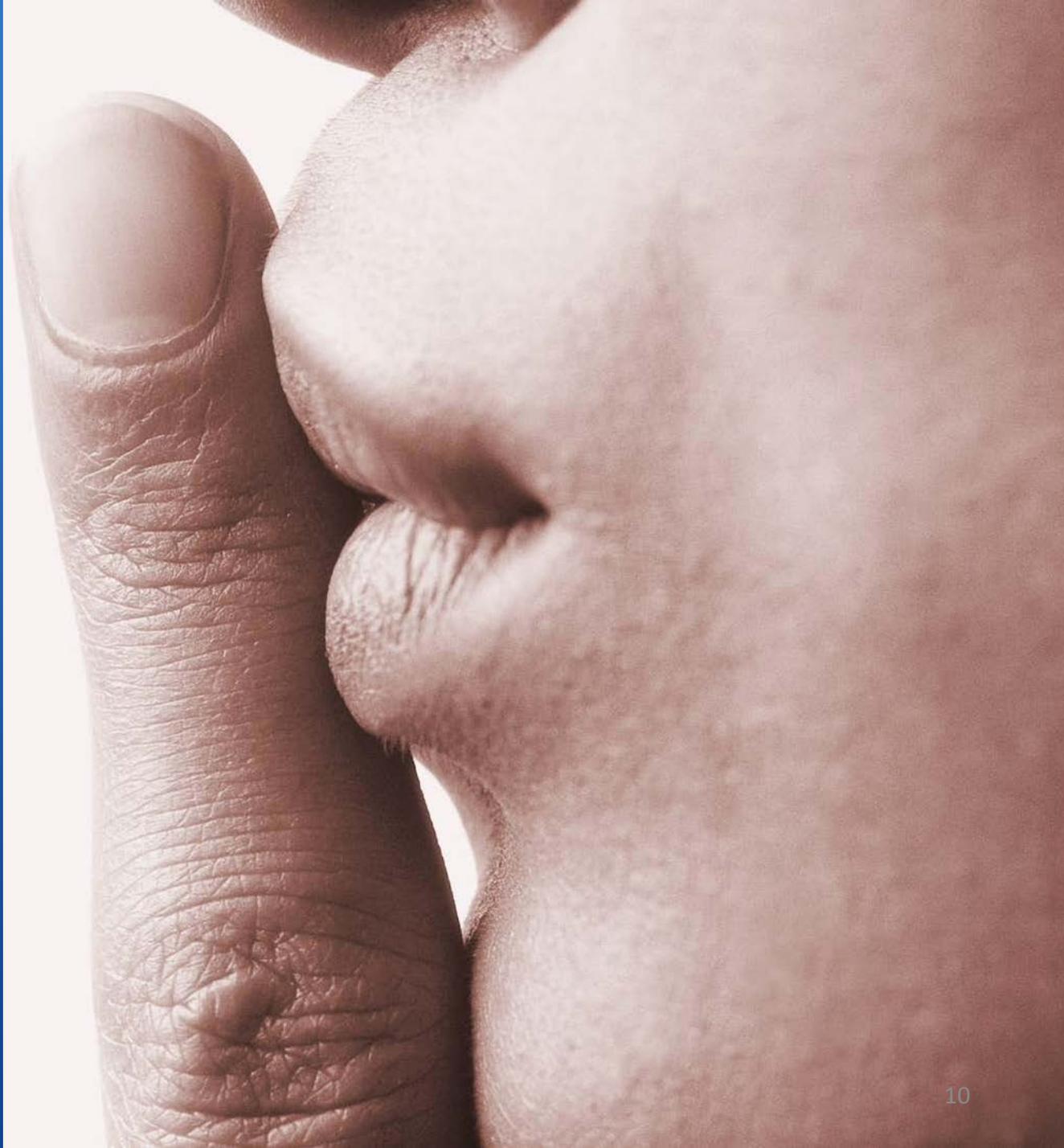
Strategies

- Implement professional development programs for employees with disabilities

- Share successes of individuals with disabilities in the workplace

Concern about being treated or viewed differently

Strategies

- Foster supportive staff-supervisor relationships

- Conduct disability awareness and diversity training for all employees

- Avoid focusing solely on disability or holding employees with disabilities to different (either higher or lower) standards

- Administer voluntary surveys to assess employee perceptions of inclusion

More Information

- von Schrader, S., Malzer, V., & Bruyère, S. (2013). Perspectives on disability disclosure: The importance of employer practices and workplace climate. Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10672-013-9227-9.

- Available at: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10672-013-9227-9

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Additional Resources

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) – www.AskEARN.org
    - Encouraging Disability Disclosure – http://askearn.org/refdesk/Recruitment/Encouraging_Disability_Disclosure
    - Creating an Inclusive Work Environment – http://askearn.org/refdesk/Inclusive_Workplaces/Creating_an_Inclusive_Work_Environment

- Northeast ADA Center Making Work Happen Online toolkits – http://www.makingworkhappen.org/

- HR Tips – www.hrtips.org

- Employment and Disability Institute (EDI) – www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi

- OPM Disability Employment – http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/getting-a-job/

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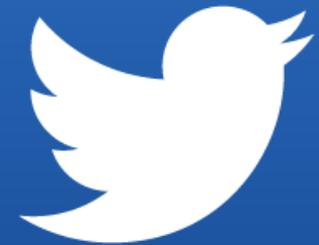
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