From Admission to Graduation: Supporting Disabled Students in Higher Education

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Road Map

- General info on disability
- Relevant laws
- Transition from high school to college
- Accommodations at colleges and universities
- Common barriers to access
- Disability Identity Development
- Graduation and beyond

A note on language:

Person-first language (Medical Model)

Distances the person from the disability. It separates the person from the negative connotations and stigma with which we have all been socialized.

As professionals, many of us have been taught that person-first language is preferable, and some disabled individuals choose to identify as a person first, based on their personal orientation to disability.

Example: I am a woman with a disability. I am separate from the stereotypes and stigma you associate with disability.

Identity-first language (Social Model)

Challenges negative connotations by claiming disability directly.

References the variety that exists in how our bodies and brains work, that there are a myriad of conditions that exist, and highlights the *role of inaccessible or oppressive systems, structures, or environments are what make someone disabled.*

Example: I am disabled, queer, and Latinx. I have a disabling condition, and I am disabled by societal barriers.

(Association on Higher Education and Disability, 2020)

? Thoughts?

Why is this important?

According to World Health Organization, 15% of the world's population has some sort of disability

- 217 million people worldwide live with a moderate to severe visual impairment
- 74.6 million people in the U.S. have some type of physical disability

The National Center for Education Statistics reports that about 20% of college students, and 12% of postbaccalaureate students are disabled

Students **disclosing** disabilities at colleges and universities is steadily increasing.

- At RBHS, students registered with the Office of Disability services increased 20% from Fall 2021-Fall 2022 semester

Categories of disabilities:

- Physical
- ADD/ADHD
- Psychological
- Sensory
- Autism Spectrum
- Learning

Relevant Laws

Title II of the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008

"The ADA defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity"

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Transition to College

K-12	Higher Education
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) • Guarantees success • FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education) • Schools are responsible for identifying disabled students, performing evaluations, and implementing accommodations	Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act ADA (Title II) • Guarantees equal access • Students are responsible for disclosing to Disability Services and requesting accommodations • Students are responsible for sharing approved accommodations with instructors and notifying the school if accommodations are not received

Process of Requesting Accommodations

Students can request accommodations at any point in their academic career, or during the semester...

However, accommodations are **not retroactive**.

Complete registration form

Schedule initial meeting

Submit appropriate documentation

ODS reviews accommodations request and notifies student of status

Accommodations Approved! Now What?

- Varys by institution, however, most commonly Letters of Accommodations are shared with instructors, housing staff, dining staff, etc.

- Students are responsible for confirming receipt and discussing logistics of implementing accommodations

- **Accommodations** are shared with faculty and staff on a **need to know basis.**
  - **Student accommodations or disability status should not be shared widely across campus**
  - **Protected under FERPA**

Accommodations/Auxiliary Aids

Accommodations	Auxiliary Aids
• 50% extended time on timed assessments • Reduced distraction testing location • Permission to audio-record lectures • Peer note taker • Enlarged font • **Early registration** • Accessible classrooms • Access to water/food/medical equipment during classes/labs/clinicals • Breaks during exams without time penalty • Emotional Support Animal • Single residence hall room	• Alternative Formatted Textbooks/Course Materials • Brailed textbooks • Use of a text reader • FM System • ASL Interpreters • CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) • Adaptive lab equipment • Emergency alert tools (bed shakers, strobes, etc.)

Common Barriers to Access

- Connecting to care/receiving a formal diagnosis

- Acquiring updated documentation, if diagnosis is dated

- Students (and faculty/staff) are unaware of services available at the college level

- Stigma and ableism make students hesitant to reach out

What can you and your colleagues outside of Disability Services do to create a more welcoming and accessible institution for disabled students?

Social and Psychosocial Disability Identity Development

Acceptance Status:
- Become disabled and/or born with disability
- Person accepts own disability
- Close friends and family are accepting of the disability

Relationship Status:
- Person meets other disabled people
- Engages in conversation with these individuals
- Learns about the ways of the group

Adoption Status:
- Adopts the shared values of the group

Engagement Status:
- Become a role model for others
- Help those with their own acceptance
- Give back to the disability community

Credit to Dr. Anjali Forber-Pratt

The Heumann Perspective: Patrick Cokley- Disability, Identity and Work

Graduation and Beyond

- Students can request accommodations on assessments (MCAT, GRE, GMAT, etc), graduate school, and the workplace

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - Career counseling
  - Accommodations, job equipment, vehicle modification, assistive technology, etc.
  - Skills training, educational resources

- Job Accommodation Network
  - Examples of workplace accommodations
  - Resources for job seeking

THANK YOU! Questions?

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