



TEACHING SELF- ADVOCACY

Sandra Bens, M.Ed.
College of Mount St Joseph

Great Expectations:

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SELF-DETERMINATION

- **Independent performance**
 - Ability to start and complete tasks through self-management strategies
- **Self-evaluation**
 - Ability to self-assess performance and determine when a goal or task has been satisfactorily completed
- **Adjustment**
 - Process of revising one's goals and plans to improve performance or success

Why is self-determination important for students with disabilities in post-secondary education?



SELF-DETERMINATION

○ Self-awareness

- Ability to identify and understand one's needs, interests, strengths, and limitations

○ Self-advocacy

- Ability to express one's needs, interests, strengths, limitations and values

○ Self-efficacy

- Self-confidence; the belief that one will attain a goal

○ Decision-making

- Complex skill of setting goals, planning actions, identifying information and choosing the best option to reach one's goal



SELF-DETERMINATION

○ Self-determination:


a critical skill for success

- After high school graduation people with disabilities are no longer entitled to the services detailed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA)
- For this reason, it is essential to teach students how to advocate for their needs in post-secondary settings



SELF-ADVOCACY: A CRITICAL SKILL FOR SUCCESS

○ In the post-secondary setting:

- People with disabilities must disclose and describe their need for accommodations to the Disability Services Office
 - The Disability Services Office determines a student's eligibility for accommodations
 - Students with disabilities may need to advocate for accommodations that are not readily offered
 - People with disabilities may also need to explain their accommodations to others, for example professors or roommates
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SELF-DETERMINATION: KEY TO ACHIEVING GOALS

- **Students in a post-secondary setting must:**
 - Advocate for disability related accommodations
 - Believe that they can be successful
 - Make decisions
 - Act independently
 - Evaluate and modify performance in various situations
 - Adjust goals and plans to improve performance

Adapted from: NCSET, Self-Determination for Post-Secondary Students,
<http://www.ncset.org/topics/sdpse/faqs.asp?topic=7>



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Clearly explain special talents and abilities
- Describe disability so that others understand strengths and limitations
- Keep copies of evaluations that document the impact of the disability
 - Understand and discuss the content of these reports
- Explain learning style and how to compensate in the areas of difficulty
- Discuss academic adjustments, accommodations and services appropriate for the disability
- Know where, when and how to apply for disability services
- Seek assistance for academic and other problems
- Know and understand legal rights and responsibilities

Adapted from Virginia's College Guide for Students with Disabilities (2003 Edition)


<http://www.pen.k12.va.us>



DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS AND RELATED SERVICES IN COLLEGE

- The only way to receive college level academic accommodations and services related to a disability:
 - Contact coordinator of disability services on campus
 - Register prior to entering college
 - Provide the required documentation of disability
 - Show eligibility and specific accommodations & services needed
 - If disability testing is needed after high school, the student must pay for this testing and it can be expensive
 - Request services each academic term
 - Self-advocate to make needs known and request additional help if provided supports are not addressing learning needs
 - Work out specific accommodations
 - Be willing to experiment and make adjustments

*Adapted from: Ladders to Success: "A Student's Guide to School after High School,"
Puget Sound Educational Services District, 1966.*




DISCLOSURE:

WHY DISCLOSE AT COLLEGE?

- To obtain information about available supports and services and access reasonable accommodations
- To discuss academic requirements and practical components of a course of study
- To ensure that faculty members implement the reasonable accommodations required for success
- To provide legal protection against discrimination (ADA, etc.)
- To assist generally in the transition to the post-secondary setting



WHEN TO DISCLOSE?

- Prior to enrollment
 - If accommodations are needed during the application process
 - At the time of admission or enrollment
 - Disclosing early allows disability support services to plan and arrange needed accommodations
 - During course of study
 - If it is discovered while taking classes that accommodations are needed
 - After being diagnosed
 - If disability is acquired during course of study and accommodations are needed for successful completion of courses
 - Never
 - If accommodations are not needed
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HOW TO DISCLOSE?

- Determine personal privacy and boundaries regarding information to share with others
- Carefully and thoughtfully explain needs
- Focus conversation on abilities; be self-determined and practical
- Practice disclosure conversation to gain experience and comfort



WHAT TO DISCLOSE?

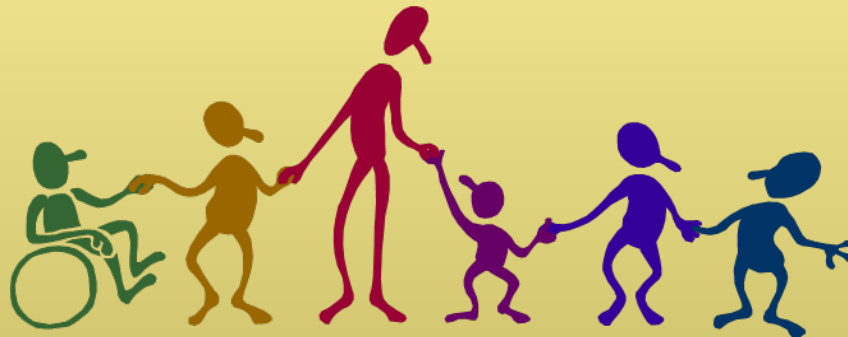
- Information about disability including assessments and documentation
- Types of academic accommodations that have worked in the past
- Types of academic accommodations that are anticipated for needs in the post-secondary setting
- How disability and other life experiences can contribute to success in studies
- How disability affects capacity to learn and study effectively



DISCLOSE TO WHOM?

- Individuals who have a need to know for arranging accommodations
 - Disability Services Office
 - Disability support services' staff
 - Academic advisor
 - On application or to admission's officer
 - Disclosure of a disability is always voluntary

Adapted from: US Department of Labor, <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/wwwwh.htm>



COLLEGE LEVELS OF SUPPORT

○ Structured Program

- Fees for services
- Trained professionals with expertise in delivering services
- Separate application
- Documentation required
- Regular scheduled meeting with assigned learning specialist
- Coordination of accommodations, assistive technology, and tutoring
- Specialized advising & priority registration
- *Strategy and skill instruction provided*



COLLEGE LEVELS OF SUPPORT

○ Coordinated Services

- Learning Specialist involved with support and coordination with campus resources
- Learning specialist available to meet with students on as needed basis
- No separate application
- May require additional fees
- Documentation required
- Tutoring often delivered by peers
- Student responsible for arranging accommodations
- Support available to all students



COLLEGE LEVELS OF SUPPORT

○ Support Services/Accommodations

- Student has solid knowledge of how disability impacts learning
- Student must be articulate and a strong advocate to access and obtain support and accommodations
- Academic support may not, and generally is not, centralized
- Student is responsible for arranging all accommodations
- Documentation required
- Tutoring often delivered by peers
- Support available to all students
- Documentation approved by 504 coordinator
- Student must be completely independent when seeking support
- Students may meet only once per semester to receive letter of accommodation
- Most require no fee



COLLEGE LEVELS OF SUPPORT

- **Exclusive Program for Students with Learning Disabilities and ADD or ADHD**
 - Some colleges are exclusively for students with learning disabilities
 - Landmark College, Vermont
 - Beacon College, Florida

