

Welcoming, Identifying and Accommodating Students with Mental Health Disabilities

Virginia *AHEAD* Conference

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Barbara Blacklock, MA, LISW

Disability Resource Center, University of Minnesota



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Agenda

- Overview
- Welcoming
- Identifying
- Accommodating
- Educating



- How many of you know someone who has struggled with the symptoms of a mental illness? (e.g. depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, eating disorder)
- How many of you know someone with a mental illness who is professionally successful?



- What are some characteristics of those individuals you know who are professionally successful and have a mental illness?



Myths and Facts

1. Half of all college students report feeling so depressed they have trouble functioning.
2. 23% of freshman come to campus with mental health diagnosis.
3. 5% of freshman come to campus on psychotropic medications
4. The most common barrier for students with mental health disabilities is stigma.
5. Most college students think others will think less about them if they seek mental health treatment.



FOUR

www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/sos

My name is Alice Johnson. I'm a student here at the University of Minnesota and am involved in the group Active Minds.

I began having issues with anxiety and depression in high school. I had always been a worrier and was extremely aware of my social surroundings. I avoided situations. I've come to understand that social anxiety is a part of who I am. Now it won't just go away, but through therapy and personal growth I've come to live with it.

Sharing my story will encourage others to get help that they need and reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illness.



ONE IN FOUR

www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/sos

Everyone is affected by mental illness. Let's start talking about it.



U of M students has been diagnosed with a mental illness during their lifetime. Everyone is affected by mental illness. Let's start talking about it.

My name is Joe Card. I'm a family social science major at U, and I'm involved in Active Minds and Stamp Out Stigma.

Throughout my adolescence, I've experienced depression and anxiety. My mental health became so bad that I was breaking down. I needed help to tell my story and to come to terms with it.

I know that my story can help others and reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

PEAK STIGMA
Community of Minn.



Over Half Report Negative Impact on School Performance



-2013 BHS College Health Survey



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**Less than Half
of Depressed
Students are
Receiving
Treatment**





National Institute on Mental Health

- Major depressive disorder is the leading cause of disability among Americans age 15 to 44
- Majority, even those with the most severe depression, can get better with treatment
- Medications, psychotherapies, and other methods can effectively treat people with mental illness



National Institute on Mental Health

- The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is
- There are many barriers to seeking treatment
 - Stigma
 - Access
 - Lack of awareness
- Onset of most serious mental illnesses begin between ages 18-24



Transition





Why Should we be Concerned?

When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless and intelligence cannot be applied.

Herophilus of Chalcedon



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Negative Impacts



Who are we working with?



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Welcoming

- Art/Posters
- Syllabus statements
 - Mental Health
 - DRC
- Provide examples of disability conditions (Ensure mental health disabilities is included)
- Follow-up on missed appointments
- Student groups
 - Active Minds
 - NAMI on-campus



Mental Health Syllabus Statement

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via

www.mentalhealth.umn.edu

Developed by Provost's Committee on Student Mental Health 2006

Endorsed by Senate Committee on Educational Policy 2009



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DRC Syllabus Statement

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (**e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, or systemic**) are invited to contact DRC to arrange a confidential discussion at 612 626-1333 (V/TTY)
- Students registered with DRC, who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester to discuss accommodations outlined in their letter

Additional information is available at the DRC
website: <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/home>



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Welcoming

- Other ideas?

Identify two additional ideas for creating a welcoming office environment for students with mental health disabilities.



Identifying

- Listen for examples of mental health challenges
 - Problems with sleep
 - Concentration changes
 - Significant losses
 - Flat affect, lack of interest
- New student orientation
 - Make sure mental health resources/supports are represented.
 - Normalize help-seeking



Identifying

- Ensure departments know how to refer to the Disability Resource Center (DRC)
 - Have presentations from DRC staff
 - Have words and examples ready ahead of time
- Be aware of community resources students can access or know who on campus has that information
- Other?



Accommodating

- When does a mental health condition become a disability?
 - Diagnosis from the American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition
 - Symptoms significantly interfere with a major life activity



Life Activities

- Eating
- Sleeping
- Concentrating
- Thinking
- Learning
- Communicating
- Working
- Motivation
- Stress Management
- Managing Distractions
- Self-care



Accommodating

- Student's input and medical documentation determine if student has a disability
- Documentation
 - Current dx
 - Describes how student is impacted
 - Identifies side effects of medication
 - Optional: Recommends accommodations

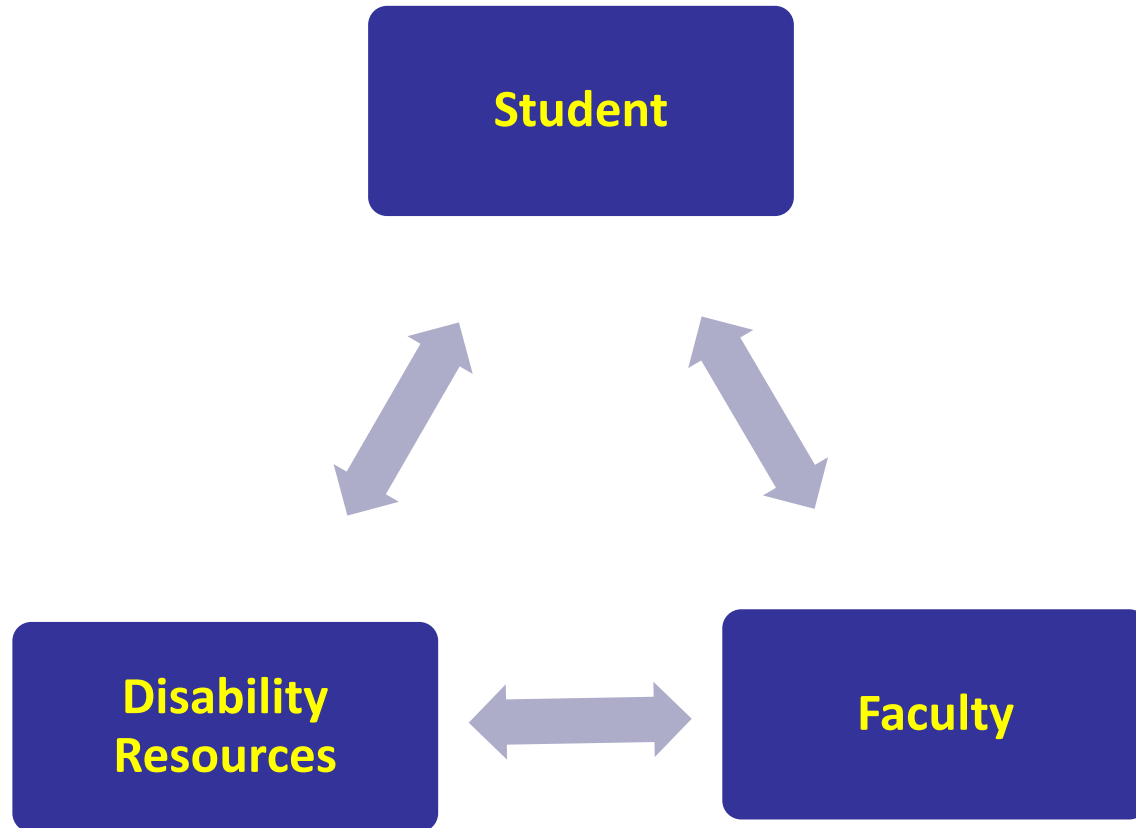


Accommodating

- On a case-by-case basis
- An individual assessment
- An interactive process



Interactive Process



Accommodating

- Barriers to learning/working/participating
 - Course specific barriers
- Communication to faculty
- Same benefits/experiences as peers
- Does not place undue burden on the student



Common Conditions

- Major Depressive Disorder
- Anxiety Disorders
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder
 - Panic Disorder
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Eating Disorders



Common Accommodations

- Reduced courseload
- Private test environment
- Extra test time
- Modified deadlines
- Modified schedule
- Modified attendance
- Notetaker
- Priority seating
- Extra feedback
- Financial aid adjustments



Less Common Accommodations

- Service Animals
- Emotional Support Animals
 - Local ordinances
 - Fair Housing
 - The existence of a disability
 - Relationship between the disability and the relief the animal provides
 - The need for the animal in order for the student to use or enjoy on-campus residence
 - Be clear regarding student responsibilities



Educating: Students

- The Jed Foundation
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- NAMI On-campus
- Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
- MentalHealth.gov
- The National Institute on Mental Health
- Active Minds
- Campus Specific Information
www.mentalhealth.umn.edu



Educating

- Campus partners
 - Counseling, Health Center, Sexual Violence Center
 - International Student and Scholars Office
 - Learning Abroad
 - Registration
 - Judicial Affairs
- Provide cross-training
- Formal liaison relationships



What is your campus doing to...

- Educate
 - Students
 - Faculty
 - Other departments?



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Removing Barriers



Changing the Environment



Create environments conducive to seeking help and develop culturally appropriate messages to de-stigmatize mental illness and mental health treatment.

Report to the President: On Issues raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy
June 12, 2007



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What is your campus doing to:

Create an environment that is conducive to seeking help and developing culturally appropriate messages to de-stigmatize mental illness and mental health treatment?



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