Beyond Accommodations: Strategies for College Students with LD and ADHD
Presenters

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The manual: *Beyond Accommodations*

- The primary role of most disability support offices is to provide accommodations; however, students’ disability-related needs may extend beyond accommodations.

- The manual was developed to provide focused, practical resources for DS providers to use in direct work with college students with LD/ADHD.
In this session, we will preview our approach, which includes:

- listening to the student’s account of his/her unique situation
- asking questions to gather more information
- providing recommendations and concrete supports

Finally, though the presentation is geared toward DS providers working with students with LD/ADHD, you may find the ideas, methods, and strategies applicable to other students as well.
Difficulties for students with LD/ADHD include:
• reading, writing, and math

As well as:
• executive functions
• metacognition
• motivation and control
Executive functions (EF)

EF:
• plan and organize activities
• make good decisions and control impulses
• manage time
• monitor behavior and progress toward goals
• initiate tasks and follow-through on them
• pay attention
Executive functions

What you might see:
• not getting to class
• difficulty with transition
• not starting or completing assignments
• making plans but not following through
• difficulty accessing or making good use of supports
Metacognition involves students’ understanding of how they learn and what strategies will work best for them.
Metacognition

What you might see:
• using same strategy despite poor outcome
• using the same approach for all subjects
• no comprehension-checking
• little self-understanding
Motivation and control

Motivation
• starting, sustaining, completing
• recovering and being resilient
• knowing the answer to the question, “what’s in it for me to complete this task?”

Locus of control
• internal: feeling of control over an event happening
• external: not feeling in control over an event happening
Motivation and control

What you might see:
• not committing to a certain approach, goal or plan
• easily losing enthusiasm for a plan
• avoidance
• deflecting or blaming
Scenario: At the start of the term, Robert walks into your office and tells you that he is already feeling very overwhelmed. Because he is not receiving any help, he is concerned that he is “letting things slip.” In the past, he had support to understand how to fulfill the expectations of the class; he knows he will not get this same support now that he’s in college, but he is uncertain if his approach is correct.

Reaction: What would you do? What questions do you ask?
What questions can we ask?

- How have you succeeded in the past? What strategies have been useful?

- How will you be assessed in your courses? What are the expectations of each course?

- What are you anticipating might be difficult in your courses?
“Understanding the Impact of Your Learning Disability and/or ADHD”

Use it to:

• gauge student’s awareness of his disability
• help student to frame conversations with instructors when disclosing
• discuss past use of skills and strategies and how they can be useful now
“Syllabus Survey”

Use it to:
• understand the course format and assignments
• identify what the professor expects of the students and what the students can expect from the professor
• help student understand what he needs to do to earn a good grade in the course
• assist student to mine the syllabus for other important information that can be useful at other times in the semester
“Grade Tracker”

Use it to:
• provide a format for student to keep track of multiple assignments
• allow student to make informed decisions about prioritizing
• provide a visual model of progress in courses
How has this helped the student?

In using these supports, we have:

• identified an area of need
• created self-awareness of student’s LD/ADHD
• evaluated use of skills and strategies
• made recommendations to support academic success
Clearing the hurdles

• **Scenario:** Suzy, a first year student, comes to your office in tears. Midterm grades have been posted, and she performed badly on the exams. She says she studied “really hard.” You check and see that she is eligible for extended time on her exams and for note-taking services. She tells you she used extended time for all her exams. When you ask about her note-takers notes, she asserts that she “looked at them all!”

• **Reaction:** What would you do? What questions do you ask?
What questions can we ask?

- Tell me about *how* you study.

- How much of your extended time do you use? How do you use it?

- How do you use the notes from your note-taker?

- What resources are you using outside of class? What other resources might be helpful?
“Mid-Semester Reflection Sheet”

Use it to:
• guide a metacognitive conversation
• support student’s expression and evaluation of her work
• discuss, course by course, what is working and what isn’t
• assess student’s approach and adjust it, if she is not meeting success
• evaluate student’s goals and revise as needed
“Making Good Use of Accommodations: Extended Time on Exams”

Use it to:

• frame a discussion with student
• offer specific instruction in how to use accommodations
• encourage student’s thinking about how an accommodation works for her
“How to Use Your Note-Taker’s Notes”

Use it to:

• frame a discussion with student
• encourage student’s thinking about how an accommodation works for her
• offer specific instruction in using accommodation as an active study strategy
“When Should I Go to a Tutoring Center?”

Use it to:

• frame a discussion with student about available resources
• support a referral to campus tutoring services
• encourage student to view tutoring as a strategic resource, not a safety net or a Band-Aid
In using these supports, we have:

• facilitated metacognitive conversations
• supported goal-setting
• offered specific instruction in using accommodations
• encouraged effective use of university supports
• required student to be an active participant in her learning
Crossing the finish line

• **Scenario:** Jake, a student with whom you have not met, comes to see you at the end of the semester, because his mom told him that he “needs help.” He reports that his ability to pass many of his courses relies on doing well on his finals. But, he’s “really on top of everything” and even has a plan to do well on his finals. When asked about this plan, he responds by saying that he will study in a group once the study guides are posted.

• **Reaction:** What do you do? What questions do you ask?
What questions can we ask?

• Why is your mom concerned? What concerns do you have?

• What changes can you make in your approach? What changes are you willing to make?

• Does studying help? How do you study? Where do you study?
“Finals Preparation”

Use it to:

• prompt student’s thinking about final exams
• establish a baseline of work or studying to complete in order to earn a passing grade
• break down the task of studying into more manageable actions
• set goals and deadlines
• assist student in developing and committing to a reasonable plan
“No Study Guide?”

Use it to:
• encourage student to prepare for his exams independently, using all available materials
• identify areas of weakness or areas that need clarification
• recommend a way to review notes actively and purposefully
“Identifying and Creating Your Ideal Study Environment”

Use it to:

• communicate the key parts of any study environment
• encourage student to identify which of these components are important to him
• identify where student’s ideal study environment exists
How has this helped the student?

In using these supports, we have:
• activated feelings of motivation and control
• determined what needs to be done
• planned how, when and where it will get done
• increased self-awareness and independence
Questions?