

**Going to College
For Students with Psychiatric
Disabilities ---Accessing Services
Some things to know**

Transition Academy – October 19, 2011

Sandy Hall – Madison Area Technical College

**The Gaps Continue to Narrow
2010 Harris Poll**

- 17% of Americans with disabilities don't complete high school (compared to 11% without disability)
- Only 19% graduate college vs. 27% w/o disabilities
- HS graduation increasing - 83% in '10 - up from 61% in '86
- SWD more likely to attend technical college

2010 Harris Survey Con't

- Employment Gap Narrows
- 1998 – 50pt difference
- 2010 – 38 pt difference
- 21% with disabilities employed compared to 59% w/o disability

A Couple Other Statistics

- College grads earn average \$22,000 more per year than HS Grads in the years right after college
- Over a life time college grads earn 65% more than HS grads
- NIMH reports that mental health disorders are the leading cause of disability in ages 15-44
- Students with EBD in HS continue to have highest drop-out rate and only 1 in 5 attend post secondary

In Wisconsin

- In Wisconsin, (08/09) 53% enter post-secondary education
- 31% attend a technical college (08/09)
- Here's the challenge:
 - 55.3% did not consider self to have a disability
 - 8% considered self to have disability but didn't inform school
 - Those with mental health disorders don't know that there are services and accommodations that can help

Some Additional Concerns

- Students, family and teachers do not see "disability"
- Therefore many do not have IEP's or 504 plans
- Even with psychiatric diagnosis lack of understanding about potential academic accommodations

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504

*No **otherwise qualified** individual with a disability in the US... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Americans with Disabilities Act

- Considered civil rights legislation for people with disabilities
- Eliminates discrimination in employment, public transportation & accommodations & post-secondary institutions
- Auxiliary aids and services must be provided at the post-secondary level

Expectations for Admissions Held to Same Standards

- **4 year institutions**
 - Admission requirements
 - Required high school course work
 - Minimum ACT/SAT scores
 - Placement tests
- **Technical College System**
 - Open admissions
 - Specific program requirements
 - Placement tests

Post-Secondary Disability Requirements

- Self Identify to Disability Services
- Provide disability documentation
 - Qualified appropriate professional
 - Confirms bona fide disability
 - Outlines functional limitations
 - Describes impact disability has
 - Suggests accommodations
- Follow Disability Procedures
 - Talk to faculty about disability

More on Documentation

- Psychiatrists and Support programs can help
- Must contain clear diagnosis
- Discuss the impact of medication
- Requested accommodations must be supported by documentation
- Joint UW System/WTCS Booklet

Confidentiality

- Student must share specific disability information to disability services (DS)
- DS staff can not share with faculty w/o release
- Student must self identify to instructors each semester
- Faculty must protect student's privacy
- FERPA -- no communication with parents w/o release

Typical Post Secondary Accommodations

- Testing Accommodations
 - Extended time (double or 1-1/2)
 - Reduced distraction room
 - Accessible format
 - Scribe/reader
 - Use of computer
 - Adaptive technology
- Accessible Media
 - Large print or Braille
 - MP3 player (no longer books on tape)
 - Books scanned for computer

Accommodations - continued

- Note takers
- Taped lectures
- Priority registration
- Sign language interpreters -- captionists
- Preferential seating
- Reduced course load
- Speech to text software i.e. Dragon Dictate

Accommodations - continued

- Assistive technology
- Potential course substitutions
- Allowing personal aides in class/campus
- Allowing service animals
- In class aides for access (low incidence)
- Dorm related accommodations/modifications
- Program access to all aspects of college
- FM systems
- Beverages permitted in class
- Advocacy

What Is Not Reasonable

- Fundamental alteration of class and/or how it is delivered-- Curriculum modifications
- Eliminating technical requirements (essential functions)
- Alterations that pose undue financial hardship
- The accommodation/or individual poses direct threat to health and safety
- Code of conduct still applies

What's Not Allowed

- Modified curriculum
- Modified grading
- Notes for all tests
- Retaking exams
- Extended time on assignments
- Modified assignments
- Provision of one-to-one aides

Supportive Services

- Tutoring
- Math and writing labs
- Mentors
- Assigned support specialists
- Learning Center
- Counseling services
- Resources available to all students

Determining Best Fit

- Career Goal
- Type of Learner
- Broad based knowledge vs skill specific knowledge
- Campus and class size
- Location and terrain
- Residential experience
- How soon do I want to work?
 - 6 weeks vs 6 years

College Choices -- Disability Services

Find out about disability services (through visits to campuses and web sites)

- Documentation Requirements
- Nature of Mandated Services
- Experience in working with students with psychiatric disabilities
- Availability of Supportive Services
 - Mentors, Tutors
 - One-to-One Staff Support
 - Help with Advocacy

Madison College

- Over 140 Vocational Programs ---welding, auto tech, cosmetology
- 16 Apprenticeship Programs
- Small Class size, Less Expensive
- College Parallel Programs
 - Transfer to 4-year institution
 - Undecided on a career
 - Complete admission requirements/improve GPA

Madison College –Disability Resource Services

- Open Admissions
- Placement Tests (w/wo accommodations)
- It's a Whole New Ballgame-summer orientation
- Assigned DRS specialists (6 FT and 2 PT)
- Special Needs Instructors
- Peer Tutors/Learning Center
- 2 Sign Language Interpreters
- Counselors

Top 10 Tips for Smooth Transition to College

1. Understand your illness and how it affects you
2. Identify why you want to attend college
3. Start college selection process early and visit them, meet with disability staff to determine best fit
4. Meet with Disability Staff BEFORE you start to assist with registration and understand the process
5. Learn about the college and Financial Aid
6. Plan to attend Part time
7. Determine the typical College Accommodations that work for you
8. Learn assistive technology (e.g., Kurzweil)
9. Be Prepared to take developmental courses
10. Be a good self advocate and be able to discuss your disability


