

LET'S LEARN ABOUT POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION!

Know your rights and responsibilities

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE ADHD?

- One of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood
- Usually first diagnosed in childhood and often lasts into adulthood
- Symptoms may cause difficulty at school, at home, or with friends

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A LEARNING DISABILITY?

- Basically, a learning disability is a disorder in the way someone processes language – written or spoken
 - As a result, the person may experience an imperfect ability to:
 - Listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations
 - So, the person has to modify the way he or she learns new information

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE ADHD?

- A person with ADHD may:
 - Daydream a lot
 - Forget or lose things a lot
 - Squirm or fidget
 - Talk too much
 - Make careless mistakes or take unnecessary risks
 - Have a hard time resisting temptation
 - Have trouble taking turns
 - Have difficulty getting along with others

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE MILD AUTISM?

- Asperger syndrome (AS) is an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), one of a distinct group of complex neurodevelopment disorders characterized by social impairment, communication difficulties, and restrictive, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE MILD AUTISM?

- Difficulty knowing what to say or how to behave in social situations. They may appear awkward or rude, and unintentionally upset others.
- Trouble with “theory of mind,” that is, trouble perceiving the intentions or emotions of other people, due to a tendency to ignore or misinterpret such cues as facial expression, body language, and vocal intonation.
- Challenges with “executive functioning,” that is, organizing, initiating, analyzing, prioritizing, and completing tasks.
- A tendency to focus on the details of a given situation and miss the big picture.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE MILD AUTISM?

- Intense, narrow, time-consuming personal interest(s) — sometimes eccentric in nature — that may result in social isolation, or interfere with the completion of everyday tasks.
- Inflexibility and resistance to change. Change may trigger anxiety, while familiar objects, settings, and routines offer reassurance.
- Feeling somehow different and disconnected from the rest of the world and not “fitting in”—sometimes called “wrong planet” syndrome.
- Extreme sensitivity—or relative insensitivity—to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or textures.

http://www.aane.org/about_asperger_syndrome/what_is_asperger_syndrome.html

WILL MY RIGHTS CHANGE FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE?

- Yes!
 - Now, you pretty much have whatever accommodations your teachers feel you will benefit from; if you need extra-time, you get extra time. If you need a separate setting, you get a separate setting. Here, your teachers keep a close eye on how you are doing in your classes and monitor your grades and the quality of your work.

WILL MY RIGHTS CHANGE FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE?

- In college, the school's only requirement is to give you academic accommodations like extra time on tests or a separate setting.
- Your professors may not recognize when you are having difficulty and they may not seek you out in order to encourage you to get help or to advocate.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

- You may wonder if colleges can deny your admission because of your disability – but they **CAN NOT!**
- As long as you meet the admissions requirements, the school can **not** deny you admission based on a disability; it is against the law!

TELLING THE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY

- You do **NOT** have to inform the school about your disability; that is your choice.
- But, if you do not inform them, you will not be able to get your accommodations; the only way to get your accommodations is by disclosing your disability and giving them documentation.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS IN COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

- Academic accommodations are based on your disability and your specific needs
- For example:
 - Extended time on tests
 - Separate setting for tests
 - Note-takers
 - “Live readers” (i.e., having the test read to you)
 - Ability to record lectures
 - Professor-provided notes
 - Preferential course selection

HOW CAN I ACCESS MY ACCOMMODATIONS?

- Each college or university has an office of disability services (though they may call it something different like the learning support center).
- You will need to tell the office of disability services that you have a documented disability and would like your academic accommodations.
- Only you can tell the office of disability services that you have a documented disability.

HOW CAN I ACCESS MY ACCOMMODATIONS?

- The school's website probably has paperwork online or you can get the required paperwork from the office of disability services.
- The paperwork will tell you what documentation you will need to show them in order to get your accommodations.

WHEN DO I REQUEST ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS?

- It is best to contact disability services when you know you are going to that particular school.
 - Contact the office of disability services before you graduate.
 - Be sure you ask exactly what documentation you need to provide in order to get your academic accommodations.
 - Make an appointment to meet with one of the counselors.
 - They will discuss your disability and the impact it has on your academics with you and together you will determine the academic accommodations that will be most beneficial.

DOCUMENTING YOUR DISABILITY

- You will need to “prove” to the school that you have a documented disability, so they will want to see your most recent psychoeducational testing (within the past three years).
- Your testing report has your disability(-ies) listed and a list of recommended accommodations.
- Your teachers also create a list of accommodations which you have used and which have been helpful for you – that is a good document to bring as well.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SELF-ADVOCATE?

- Self-advocacy means understanding yourself
 - Strengths, interests, needs, goals
- Knowledge of rights
 - Understanding personal, community, consumer rights, resources
- Good communication
 - Using effective body language, listening skills, understanding how to deal with differences of opinion, understanding/reading non-verbal language
- Leadership
 - Advocating for others, knowledge of groups' rights and resources

EXPECTATIONS

- Once the school has the necessary documentation, you will meet with the office of disability services to identify the appropriate academic accommodations
- Your parents do not need to be at the meetings; however, if you want them there, you will need to sign paperwork permitting them to communicate with the office of disability services
- The school is interested in interacting with you; it is your job to take the lead to get and use your academic accommodations.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS

- Throughout your time here, you have learned to be good self-advocates; however, the college environment is different.
- I'm here to teach you a very specific set of skills to help you request academic accommodations from your professors and to learn how to handle the situation if the professor is not willing to grant your accommodations.
- My goal is to help you become an excellent self-advocate!

BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE SELF-ADVOCATE

- Self-advocacy skills are important for every person because we all have to self-advocate throughout our lives, not just in school.
- As an adult, you are the one who needs to advocate for yourself – not your parents or your friends!

LET'S HEAR FROM COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH A LD
AND/OR ADHD



REFERENCES

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- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Students With Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities*, Washington, D.C., 2011.