

Disabilities and Intersecting Identities Winter Advising Forum 2018

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Pronouns: She/her

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Learning objectives:

- ▶ Who we are, what we do, and why
- ▶ Disability trends
- ▶ Disability diversity
- ▶ Disabilities and other intersecting identities
- ▶ Inclusive practices for student meetings

What the DRC Does

- ▶ The Disability Resource Center is committed to recognizing disability as a valued aspect of diversity
- ▶ Authorizes accommodations for students to provide equal access to the campus environment
- ▶ Ensures equal and meaningful access to campus programs in collaboration with students, staff, and faculty

Definition of Disability

- ▶ Under the ADA: Any condition that substantially limits one or more major life activity(ies). This includes people who have a record of such, or those who are regarded as having a disability.
- ▶ Disability Law Expansion in 2008 broadened the definition of disability to include impairments that are episodic or in remission.

Disability

Is unique to the individual

Ted Talk - Rosie King

How autism freed me to be myself

Disability...

- ✓ Is also only one part of a person's identity
- ✓ Is diverse: Race, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic factors intersect with the experience of disability
- ✓ Can also intersect with other disabilities
- ✓ Like identities, does not exist in a vacuum

Disability Trends

- ▶ DRC affiliation on campus has increased every year.
 - ▶ In 2012 we served 790 students
 - ▶ We currently see over 1800 students per quarter and serve over 2000 students per year
 - ▶ Majority are students with unseen disabilities
 - ▶ Currently, about 50% of all DRC affiliated students have a psychological diagnosis
 - ▶ Most have more than one disability and/or other intersecting identities

Psychological Disability Impact

- ▶ Currently about 50% of DRC students have a psychological disability
- ▶ Psychological Disabilities are the largest disability group on campus and in higher education
- ▶ Psychological disabilities can co-exist with other disability categories (e.g. ASD, ADHD/LD other conditions)

Why is the Population Growing?

- ▶ College age is the age that many students are diagnosed with a disability for the first time
- ▶ Students who never had access to educational assessments before can now be assessed for a disability
- ▶ Other factors impacting all students

Best Practices for Student Meetings

- ▶ Define your scope of work
- ▶ Establish safety/welcoming space
- ▶ Work in partnership with the student
- ▶ Ask the student how they prefer to receive information
 - ▶ Provide visual supports to promote understanding
 - ▶ Make directions clear and provide step by step instructions in written format

Problem-Solving & Prioritizing

- ▶ Listen and establish goal(s) or need(s) unique to the individual
- ▶ Break action items or processes into smaller steps
- ▶ Prioritize items requiring immediate action (why, how, when)
- ▶ Establish roles: Who does what part (you, student, someone else)

Reframing When 'Stuck'

Ask the student questions to gather information and promote self-reflection:

- ▶ Why do you think that _____ happened?
- ▶ What would you be willing to do differently next time?
- ▶ What do you expect will happen if you don't change anything?
- ▶ What resources will you need?

Taken from: Fostering Success Coaching Training, Center for Fostering Success, Western Michigan University.

Disability Can Also Impact

- ▶ Any student who is highly stressed or in crisis
- ▶ How a student accepts or receives support
- ▶ How a student views you--may see you as the adversary, especially if triggered
- ▶ How a student receives information from you
- ▶ Executive functioning (focus, attention, memory, and planning skills)

Student Scenarios



Student Scenario # 1

- ▶ Final exam week is approaching and a student comes to advising hours and reports to you they sustained a head injury over the weekend. The student asks for your help understanding their options because they are worried about final exams.
- ▶ The student also mentions they are a first generation college student, they are working and sending money home to help support their family. They are concerned if they do a medical withdrawal from their classes they will have to pay back the aid they received.
- ▶ As you talk with the student you notice the student seems distracted, is not making eye contact, and you are not sure the student is understanding the information you are providing.
- ▶ How do you best support the student?
- ▶ What are some possible referrals you might make?



Student Scenario #2

- ▶ A student comes to advising hours and is very overwhelmed. He has a consistent pattern for requesting Incomplete Grades each quarter.
- ▶ The student disclosed he has multiple concerns and multiple disabilities that impact his ability to manage coursework and communicate with his instructors.
- ▶ The student keeps emailing advising for support with his instructor, but it is not clear what he is asking for.
- ▶ The student tells you he is planning on taking 17 credits this quarter.
- ▶ How do you best support the student?
- ▶ What are some possible referrals you might make?



Student Scenario #3

- ▶ A student comes to advising hours and reports to you that she did not pass a class for the 2nd time and wants to appeal to take the class for the 3rd time because she is concerned about how the bad grade will impact her GPA.
- ▶ The class is not required for the major the student plans to declare.
- ▶ The student is running out of time to declare so you attempt to redirect the student to a class she will need to declare her major.
- ▶ You are not sure if the student understands the options you are providing to her.
- ▶ The student's voice begins to raise and she is insistent that she wants to appeal to take the class a 3rd time.
- ▶ How do you best support the student?
- ▶ What are some possible referrals you might make?

Going Forward...

What is one thing you will add or do differently after what you've learned today?