

# **Mental Illness on Campus: Early Identification & Options**

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# **Transitioning from High School to College**

- **Disconnect between the educational experience in K-12 and post-secondary education for students with disabilities**
  - **Admission requirements**
  - **Eligibility for services**
  - **Reasonable accommodations**
  - **Responsibilities of students, parents**

# Objectives

- **To understand the differences between K-12 and Postsecondary education disability support services**
- **To focus on the areas where students “fall through the cracks”**
  - **Understanding responsibilities (student, parent, and UT)**
  - **Admission, orientation**
  - **Documentation**
  - **Under-prepared (rigor of college, success strategies)**
- **To discuss the various resources available to students, parents, and educators**

# K-12 vs. Postsecondary

## A Quick Comparison

- **K-12**

- Entitlement
  - Free and appropriate
  - Outcome oriented: successful learning
- Students sought out
- Testing provided
- Regular parent contact
- Monitor student progress
- Modified curriculum

- **Postsecondary**

- Must meet same admission and classroom requirements
- Provide access
- Must self-identify
- No testing provided
- Limited parent contact
- Student must self-monitor
- No modified curriculum

# ODS Mission Statement:

- **To provide each student with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the university's programs and activities. This mission is accomplished by:**
  1. Creating a physically accessible, programmatically accessible and attitudinally accessible community where people are judged on their abilities, not their disabilities.
  2. Promoting the development of a climate for everyone at the university that is conducive to learning, personal growth, acceptance, and appreciation of everyone without regard to disability.

# Common Disabilities Served by ODS

- Learning Disabilities
- AD/HD
- Emotional/psychological health
- Visually impaired/Blind
- Mobility
- Deaf HOH
- Traumatic/ Acquired Brain Injury
- Chronic health, (i.e. cancer, lupus, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease)

# ODS Responsibilities

- Ensure access to campus, curriculum, and programs
- Determine eligibility for services
  - Review documentation
  - Make recommendation for accommodations and services
- Assist students in understanding their disability
- Inform faculty members of agreed upon accommodations, and work together to determine what is/is not appropriate
- Refer students to additional resources on campus and within the community

# Sample ODS Accommodations

- Extended testing time
- Distraction-reduced testing environment
- Note-taking services
- Sign Language Interpreters and Transcribers
- Priority registration
- Permission to tape record lectures
- Assistive Technology
- Printed material in alternative formats

# Accommodations That Are Not Offered

- Tutors
- Course waivers
- Assignment extensions
- Test extensions
- Un-timed tests
- Personal Assistance
- Academic advising
- Fee waivers
- Handicap parking placards
- Editing services
- Retroactive withdrawals or grade changes

# Student Responsibilities

- **Build Self-Advocacy Skills**
  - Become more self-aware
    - Strengths/difficulties
    - Interests and preferences
  - Practice disclosing disability information
    - Not just to faculty and ODS
    - Also- advisors, career services, counselors
  - Ask for help before it is too late
  - Utilize accommodations

# Student Responsibilities cont.

- **Academic Preparation**

- Realistic goals
  - course load, major, extracurricular activities, etc
- Time management and study skills
- Utilize academic resources on campus
  - Tutoring services, writing and math labs
  - Understand how to use the college catalog

# Student Responsibilities cont.

- **Understand UT Policies/Procedures**
  - Attend Orientation
  - Use the Undergraduate Catalog
  - UTK Website
  - Hilltopics
  - Register for First Year Studies Course
  - ASK QUESTIONS

# Parent Responsibilities

- Support your student with the development of their self-advocacy skills
  - Help your student to understand his/her disability and be able to talk about it confidently
  - Encourage your student to work with the appropriate coordinator at the University
- Hold your student accountable, do not try to “fix” things for them
- Ensure documentation is appropriate
- Respect confidentiality- FERPA

# Examples of Transition Difficulties for Students

- Being responsible for obtaining services and additional help
- Following through
- Time management
  - Studying
  - Work, extracurricular activities
  - Managing assignments, tests, overall workload
  - Planning ahead
- Achieving independence
  - Decision-making
  - Financial responsibility
- Explaining their disability
- Being realistic
- Organizing oneself

# Examples of Transition Difficulties for Parents

- Letting go
- Holding student accountable
- Not understanding new policies/procedures related to disability services
- Not understanding university policies/procedures and expectations of students

# How you can help to prepare your student for college

- Encourage students apply for admission early and register with ODS upon acceptance
- Encourage students to use accommodations on any college entrance exams
- Encourage attendance to an EARLY orientation session
- Know documentation guidelines for various colleges/ universities in the state of TN
- Assist students in establishing a relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation
- Help students to have a thorough understanding of their disability

# Step 1: Applying For Admission

- Admission applications should not ask questions that would identify an individual as having a disability
- Individuals are advised not to disclose a disability at this stage
- Individuals must meet admissions requirements regardless of a disability

## **Step 2: Orientation, Housing and Contacting DS Office**

- Contact the Disability Services office as soon as the acceptance letter has been received and the decision to attend UT has been made to begin the intake process. Make sure documentation is current.
- Sign up for the earliest orientation session possible
- If housing accommodations are needed, talk with the ODS office and communicate with the housing office

# Step 3: Once The Student Arrives On Campus

- Check in with the Disability Services office
- Complete and submit any remaining paperwork
- Check your UTK email account for your accommodation letter
- Set up an appointment with each professor to present your accommodation letter, discuss specific accommodation needs and more importantly to establish rapport
- Use all available resources to ensure success
- Communicate with the Disability Services office should problems or concerns arise

# Documentation Requirements- Emotional/Psychological Health Disabilities

- Documentation must be on letterhead, typed, signed and dated
- Documentation must be current – within the past 6 months to 12 months and must be updated on a yearly basis
- Documentation should be from a psychiatrist, psychologist, or Licensed Clinical Social Worker, (LCSW)

# Documentation Requirements cont.

- Documentation should include DSM-IV diagnosis, medications prescribed along with probable side effects, summary of current symptoms, functional limitations and recommendations for accommodations
- If currently engaged in treatment, documentation should include any concerns or issues regarding the student's enrollment

# Documentation Requirements cont.

- Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if coexisting learning disabilities and/or other disabling conditions are indicated.
- Should problems arise while the student is at UT, a letter from the licensed mental health professional must be provided that states that the student is stable and able to resume living in an academic environment.

# Resources

- **UT website:** <http://www.utk.edu>
  - Admissions information
  - Orientation information
  - Undergraduate catalog
- **ODS Website:** <http://ods.utk.edu>
  - Documentation guidelines
  - Intake form and contact information for ODS
  - Accommodation Request forms
  - Disability-Careers Office

# Resources cont.

- **Dean of Students Office:** <http://dos.utk.edu/>
- **Disability Careers Office:** <http://career.utk.edu/dco.php>
- **Parent Association:**
  - <http://web.utk.edu/%7Eparents/default.html>
- **Student Success Center:**
  - <http://studentsuccess.utk.edu/>
    - **Early Alert Program:**
      - <http://studentsuccess.utk.edu/ea.html>
- **Safety, Environment, & Education Center:**
  - <http://web.utk.edu/~seeweb/>

# Resources cont.

- **Student Counseling Center:**
  - <https://my.tennessee.edu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/CC/COUNSELINGCENTERNEW/HTML/index.html>
- **Student Health Services:** <http://web.utk.edu/~shs/>
- **Minority Student Affairs:** <http://web.utk.edu/~omsa/>
- **Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD):** [www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)
- **Vocational Rehabilitation- (Contact your state office in your county)**
  - Possible funding opportunities
  - Additional support and guidance

# **Disability-Careers Office (DCO)**

In cooperation with UT Career Services and the Office of Disability Services, the purpose of the DCO is to assist individual college students and alumni, with various disabilities, by providing career planning services and guidance pertaining to their specific disability related issues.

# Disability-Careers Office (DCO)

- Created in 1999/2000
- Liaison between Office of Disability Services and Career Services
- Serve students who are registered with the Office of Disability Services and/or are supported by Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation
- Goal is to assist students in becoming competitive for employment and the transition into the world of work

# DCO Services Provided

## General

- Career path and major exploration through assessment tools
- Job seeking skills
- Interview techniques and preparation
- Informational resources for students, staff, faculty and employers
- Referrals to UT Career Services and the Office of Disability Services

# **DCO Services Provided Disability Specific**

- Self-advocacy skill development
- Self-disclosure techniques
- Process to request appropriate workplace accommodations
- Rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

# The Problem

- The unemployment rate for college graduates with disabilities is estimated in a range of **33% to 45%**
- A college graduate with a disability is **8 – 12 times more likely** to be unemployed than his peer without a disability
- Students with disabilities are **1/3 as likely** to use Career Services as their peers



Hennessey, M. L., Roessler, R., Cook, B., Unger, D., & Rumrill, P. (2006). Employment and career development concerns of postsecondary students with disabilities: Service and policy implications. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 19*(1), 39-55.

# Additional Concerns

- More students with psychiatric disabilities register with the DCO than any other population of students with disabilities
- However, very little research focused on college students with disabilities and employment is available to inform policy and practice
- The existing research does not disaggregate by disability type
- Within the existing research, college students and recent graduates with psychiatric disabilities are oftentimes not represented at all and/or do not consist of a representative sample
- This is related to the fact that providing services for students with psychiatric disabilities in higher education is still fairly new

# Literature Review

- As of 2005, students with psychiatric disabilities comprised approximately 13% of those registered with disability services offices nationwide (Collins & Mowbray, 2005).
- Despite these existing support structures, many students with psychiatric disabilities are not seeking assistance from disability services offices due to fear of disclosure and stigma (Collins & Mowbray, 2005).
- This fear of disclosure and stigma is transferred into the employment setting as well.

Collins, M. E., & Mowbray, C. T. (2005). Higher education and psychiatric disabilities: National survey of campus disability services. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 75(2), 304-315.

# Literature Review

- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities experience significantly higher unemployment rates than the general population (Baron & Salzer, 2002).
- Megivern, et al. (2003) found that only **45%** of individuals with psychiatric disabilities were in paid employment positions post college graduation.
- The NHIS-D (94-95) found very similar data; **43%** of individuals with mental health disabilities who had college degrees were not working (Kaye, 2002).
- Wahl (1999) found that fears about stigma appear to result in a reluctance to apply for education, jobs, or even to seek treatment.

Baron, R.C., & Salzer, M. S. (2002). Accounting for unemployment among people with mental illness. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 20, 585-599.

Kaye, S. K. (2002). Improved employment opportunities for people with disabilities. *Disability Statistics Report*, (17). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Megivern, D., Pellerito, S., & Mowbray, C. (2003). Barriers to higher education for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 26(3), 217-231.

Wahl, O. F. (1999). Mental health consumers' experience of stigma. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 25(3), 467-478.

# Literature Review

- Weiner and Weiner's (1996) study suggested that students with psychiatric disabilities are oftentimes worried about finding a job and living independently.
- In their study, students with psychiatric disabilities listed career counseling as a high priority.
- Students with disabilities have reported concerns about the knowledge of Career Services and Disability Services professionals as it pertains to disability in the workplace and reasonable accommodations (Rumrill, Koch, Murphy & Jannarone, 1999).

Rumrill, P., Koch, L., Murphy, P., & Jannerone, A. (1999). Technology transfer concerns of college graduates with disabilities: Profiles in transition from higher education to competitive careers. *Work, 13*, 43 – 49.

Weiner, E., & Wiener, J. (1996). Concerns and needs of university students with psychiatric disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 12*(1), 2-9.

# The Disclosure Dilemma: Experiences of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

- The purpose of the study was to explore the disability disclosure experiences of college graduates with psychiatric disabilities
- Participants (N = 5 Male)
- Psychiatric diagnosis – (2) Schizoaffective Disorder; (2) Bipolar Disorder; (1) Major Depressive Disorder
- Methodology – Phenomenology/Interviews
- Literature Review
  - Reasons to disclose – feeling comfortable, the presence of symptoms, being hospitalized, having difficulty in concealing limitations, the desire to be honest, and the opportunity to be more productive and efficient in the workplace
  - Reasons not to disclose – no accommodation needed, concern regarding potential termination, the stigma of violent behavior, the worry that judgments will be formed about performance ability, the desire not to be treated differently, and the fear of the supervisor misusing the information

# The Disclosure Dilemma: Experiences of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

- **Results: Reasons to Disclose**

- *Necessity*

“The main reason I let them know was because I was having a problem with being 10 to 15 minutes late.”

- *Not wanting to be misunderstood*

“I tried to dispel myths because several different things had gone on in the media about mental illness, so I wanted to reassure them that I was high functioning and wasn’t going to shoot or hurt anybody.”

# Disclosure Dilemma: Experiences of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

- **Results: Reasons Not to Disclose**

- *Stigma*

“I have done a really good job of disguising it because a lot of people don’t understand it. People get ‘weirded’ out and they don’t get it and they don’t want to get it. Therefore, I just have to take care of myself and keep things under control.”

“Although he didn’t say so, after I disclosed, I felt like my psychiatric disability created doubt in the supervisor’s mind about my ability to do the job.”

# Need for Additional Research

- Due to the staggering unemployment and underemployment rates for individuals with disabilities, there is a heightened need to understand career-related issues for these individuals (Yancheck, et al., 2005).
- As the number of college students with psychiatric disabilities continues to rise, research designed to clarify some of the particular career decision-making needs of students with disabilities is warranted (Enright, et al., 1996).
- Although a few employment concerns have been identified (Megivern et al., 2003), no qualitative research has been conducted to explore the experiences of college students with psychiatric disabilities in seeking employment.

Enright, M. S., Conyers, L. M., Szymanski, E. M. (1996). Career and career-related educational concerns of college students with disabilities. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75, 103-113.

Yanchak, K. V., Lease, S. H., & Strauser, D. R. (2005). Relation of disability type and career thoughts to vocational identity. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 48(3), 130-138.

# Presenter Contact Information

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