

Adapted from Disability Concerns web site:

http://www.disabilityconcerns.ilstu.edu/fac%5Ffaq/working_with_stds_with_specf_disability.shtml

STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT OR HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

A student with AD(H)D has persistent patterns of frequent and severe inattention, hyperactivity, and /or impulsiveness. Academic settings can be difficult for the student due to the impact of this disability. As with a learning disability the impact varies with the individual and can often have the same characteristics as a learning disability. Characteristics specific to AD(H)D are:

- Poor organizational ability
- Time-management is a struggle
- Completion of tasks is difficult
- Inattentive and unfocused

Suggestions for working effectively with a student with Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder:

- Provide an environment with as few distractions as possible.
- Make explanations both written and oral. An AD(H)D student often misses just an oral explanation.
- Make sessions varied.
- When possible, start the session with a summary of the material to be covered or a written outline. At the end, summarize major points.
- Assist the student in breaking down longer projects or papers into the component parts. Set deadlines for each section.
- Provide opportunity for frequent feedback.

STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

A student who is deaf or hard of hearing may use communication techniques such as sign language, lip reading, oral communication, gestures or a combination of all of these. In the classroom setting, a student who is deaf or hard of hearing may use a sign language interpreter, a real-time captionist, hearing aids, or assistive listening devices. Don't assume that if a person is deaf he/she uses a sign language interpreter. Many individuals who are deaf do not sign. If you have a student who uses sign language and there is no interpreter, alternate methods can be used: For example, writing on paper or word processing on a computer.

Suggestions for working effectively with a student who is deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always speak directly to the student, not the sign language interpreter.
- Maintain visual contact with the student. Avoid presenting information while doing other tasks.
- Provide seating near you. This provides direct visual contact with you.
- Ensure that the interpreter is visible to the student – not by a window, nor in the dark if showing a video.
- Use videos, television or teleconference programs that are captioned.
- During discussions ensure that no more than one person speaks at a time. If questions are asked, repeat the question.
- When using a chalkboard or an overhead projector, pause so the student may look at the screen/board, and the interpreter to see what you are saying.
- When reading from a text, provide an advance copy to the student. Pause, if you interject information while reading the text.

STUDENTS WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

A Student with a Learning Disability has average or higher intelligence. The disability is a deficit in processing information. This can impact one or more of the academic areas such as reading, writing, or math. The impact of a learning disability is different for each individual.

Areas that are impacted in the educational setting are:

- Organizational ability
- Inefficient or slow reading
- Reading comprehension
- Organization of thoughts on paper
- Errors in simple math calculations
- Spelling is inconsistent
- Slower completion time for assignments

Suggestions for working effectively with a student with a learning disability:

- Books on Tape or E-Text
- Provide opportunity for frequent feedback.
- Group similar types of examples together. This allows for transition of thought.
- Use extra paper and encourage student to keep written notes orderly.
- Try using graph paper to ensure neatness and avoid confusion with math calculations.
- Allow plenty of time for the student to read examples and work problems.
- Suggest appropriate time management and study skills techniques.

STUDENTS WITH A MEDICAL DISABILITY

A student may have a medical disability that is invisible or not apparent, yet can impact the student's opportunity to learn in the educational setting. A medical disability can be unpredictable and fluctuate.

A student can be disabled by such condition as:

- Asthma
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Cardiopulmonary disease
- Cancer
- Seizure disorder
- Post-surgery
- Stress injury
- Back injury

The impact of a medical disability can be:

- Limited energy
- Difficulty walking, standing, or sitting for long periods of time
- Experience side effects of the pain or medication
- Dizziness or confusion
- Limited attention and focus

Suggestions for working effectively with a student with a medical disability:

- Allow for lateness to session
- May need to leave session
- Specific seating arrangements
- May need to move slowly through material

STUDENTS WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

A student with a physical disability can use various means to achieve mobility: a wheelchair, crutches, or braces. Often a student with a physical disability may use a device, walk more slowly or need more time for tasks that require hand usage. The abilities of the individual can vary widely. Remember that some individuals with a physical disability can leave the wheelchair and walk for short distances. Others have use of their arms and hands only.

A student with a physical disability can be disabled by such conditions as:

- Cerebral Palsy
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Hand or Arm Injury

Suggestions for working effectively with a student with a physical disability:

- Writer for notes from session
- Special seating or seating arrangements
- Allow for lateness to session
- When talking with the student who is a wheelchair user seat yourself at eye level with that student.
- A wheelchair is the student's personal space. Don't lean on the chair, touch or push it unless you are asked to do so.
- Expect extra time to complete work

STUDENTS WITH A PSYCHIATRIC / PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITY

A student with a psychiatric/psychological disability may have difficulty coping with the stresses in daily life. This disability can interfere with the ability to relate to others and often hinders the individual's ability to function effectively in everyday tasks. Most individuals with this disability are not violent.

A student with a psychiatric/psychological disability is disabled by:

- Mood Disorders: Bipolar, Depression
- Anxiety Disorders: Post-traumatic Stress, Phobias, Obsessive-Compulsive
- Psychotic Disorders: Schizophrenia, Paranoia

A student with a psychiatric/psychological disability can be impacted in the educational setting due to:

- Difficulty in focusing and maintaining concentration
- Completing work within a timeframe
- Ability to function varies from day to day
- Medication side-effects (drowsiness, headaches)
- The search for the most effective medication

Suggestions for effectively working with a student with a psychiatric/psychological disability:

- Extended time
- May need to leave session
- Allow for lateness to session

- Be calm and supportive. Pressuring the individual increases the impact of the disability.

STUDENTS WITH A VISUAL DISABILITY

A student with a visual disability requires written communication to be in an alternative format. The abilities of the individual can vary greatly. One student may have no vision, another may be able to read standard print if enlarged.

A student with a visual disability is impacted in the educational setting due to the inability to see:

- Syllabi
- Textbooks
- Videos
- Chalkboards or overheads
- Maps
- Printed exams, scantron sheets
- Laboratory demonstrations
- Internet websites designed to enhance class instruction.

Suggestions for working effectively with a student with a visual disability:

- Use of Assistive Technology: Zoomtext, JAWS, CCTV, E-Text, etc.
- Notetaker
- When using overheads or handouts, use a larger font or supply copies of the overheads depending upon the need of the student
- Allow use of a tape recorder for sessions
- Verbalize what you write on the board
- When referring to pages in a textbook or handout, allow time for the student to find the information.
- Don't worry about using common phrases in our language such as 'Do you see what I mean' or 'See you later'. Most individuals with visual disabilities don't find them offensive.