

On-campus Resources

Teaching Support Services (TSS)

Instructional Support

Advice on designing accessible courses/curricula
Peter Wolf - ext. 52468, pwolf@uoguelph.ca

Courseware Support

Advice on designing accessible on-line courses
Kyle Mackie - ext. 52936, kmackie@uoguelph.ca

Classroom Technology

Advice on designing accessible teaching spaces
Steve Borho - ext. 52956, sborho@uoguelph.ca

Universal Instructional Design (UID)

UID is about universal thinking - consider the potential needs of all learners when designing and delivering instruction and minimize the need for special accommodations.
www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid/

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)

Advisor, Students with Learning Disabilities
Melissa Beacom - ext. 54238, mbeacom@uoguelph.ca

Individual Accommodations

Information on accommodations for exams and FAQ's can be found at
www.slcs.uoguelph.ca/csd/faculty_guide.cfm

Library Centre for Students with Disabilities (LCSD)

Students registered with CSD have access to computer lab/study space in the Library.
www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/LCSD

Off-campus Resources

W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

List of points to check your web content for accessibility
www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/checkpoint-list.html

Canadian Mental Health Association

<http://www.cmha.ca/youreducation/introduction.html>



Teaching Students with a

Mental Health Disability

The Challenges

Students with mental health issues may be limited in the amount or kinds of activities they can perform due to the presence of an emotional, psychological or psychiatric condition.

Mental health issues can include but are not limited to

- heightened anxieties, fears, suspicions, blaming others
- marked personality change over time
- confused or disorganized thinking; strange or grandiose ideas
- difficulty concentrating, making decisions, remembering things
- extreme highs and/or lows in mood

Consider the Following...

Teenagers and young adults aged 15-24 experience the highest incidence of mental or psychological disorders of any age group in Canada.

University environments can present distinct challenges for people with mental health issues but research and experience has shown that with some accommodations a person's education does not have to be derailed by their problems.

Encourage open communication and comfortable exchange of information between people. Respond to student needs. Be patient and calm.

If conversation is lengthy and disorganized or makes no sense, ask them what you can do for them. Ask questions that require "yes" or "no" answers.

Adaptive Technologies

Optical Character Recognition allows scanned text to be read aloud by the computer's sound card; speech recognition software allows the spoken word to be converted to printed word on the computer screen.

Best practices

“Mental health problems do not affect three or four out of every five persons but one out of one.”

Dr. William Menninger

...in General

- Be flexible in structuring assessments.
- If the student is being abrupt, acknowledge the request without commenting.
- Be courteous, remain calm.
- Use positive statements such as “What we usually do is...” or “What I can do is...”

...in the Classroom

- Change delivery mode or activity every 20 minutes or permit the student to leave class periodically.
- Incorporate a variety of learning styles: auditory, visual, kinesthetic, experiential.
- Permit a peer note-taker.
- Permit note-taking technology (laptop, PDA) or photocopy another student's notes.
- Permit taping the lecture.
- Provide preferential seating near the door to allow leaving class for prearranged breaks.
- Provide step-by-step instructions.
- Make syllabus and course material available electronically in advance.
- Provide printed course material on audiotape.
- Provide copies of overheads/class notes.
- Provide feedback in private.
- Permit the student a beverage if medication causes them to be thirsty.

...Assignments

- Permit a tutor to edit essays, organize, and clarify.

- Make readings and assignments available in advance.
- Permit software with spelling and grammar checker.
- Extend deadlines to complete assignments.
- Substitute assignments in specific circumstances.
- Permit assignments being handwritten rather than typed.
- Consider the option of written assignments in lieu of oral presentations or vice versa.
- Consider alternate assignments in dramatic formats such as demonstration or role-play.

...Exams

- Provide preferential seating to reduce visual and audible distractions or permit exams to be taken in CSD exam rooms.
- Break exams into segments with supervised breaks.
- Permit exams to be rescheduled at the time of day when the student does their best work.
- Extend the time allotted to take exams.
- Permit the student a beverage.
- Consider exams in alternate formats (e.g., from multiple choice to essay, oral, presentation, role-play, or portfolio).
- Consider adaptive computer software (e.g. Optical Character Recognition that allows scanned text to be read aloud by the computer's sound card or speech recognition software which converts the spoken word to printed word on the computer screen).

Avoid...

- taking responses personally
- assuming a therapeutic role (instead refer student to appropriate service)
- stressful situations such as abrupt sounds, flashing lights, confrontational interaction
- pushing social interaction as group work (may be difficult for student)
- negative statements such as “We don't do that.” or “I cannot...”