Part 1: Student Self-Assessment

Overview

The Higher Education Support Toolkit offers simple, practical assistance designed to improve the likelihood of students with psychiatric disabilities to achieve their goals in college. The following guidelines suggest ways in which you can use this toolkit:

• Identify common difficulties experienced by students
• Assess student difficulties in adjusting and managing classroom and campus life
• Consider strategies and/or accommodations to help students
• Identify campus resources that are available to assist students at your institution

Forms for Part 1: Student Self-Assessment

• Student Self-Assessment Checklist
• Student Self-Assessment of College Classroom Difficulties

Using the “Student Self-Assessment Checklist”

The “Student Self-Assessment Checklist” (pages 9–11) can be used to help assess generalized problems that a student may be experiencing and can assist the student in clarifying the health, personal, interpersonal and/or academic issues that may be hindering his/her academic success and satisfaction. For example, a student may experience difficulty with communication skills, relationship skills, or skills related to self-care.

When it is challenging for a student to explain the issues that they are facing within the academic setting, ask the student to complete the “Student Self-Assessment Checklist” as a helpful starting point.

Through a review of the completed “Student Self-Assessment Checklist,” areas of student concern will be revealed. Further exploration may help the student to clarify the underlying issues and to explore possible campus and community resources that could be helpful.

Use this form to:

• Assess generalized problems that a student may be experiencing
• Assist the student to clarify health, personal, interpersonal and/or academic issues
• Review and discuss the need for additional campus supports
Using the “Student Self-Assessment of College Classroom Difficulties”

The “Student Self-Assessment of College Classroom Difficulties” (pages 12–16) can be used to help assess classroom-specific problems that a student may be experiencing. This checklist delineates actions the student can take on his or her own that may ameliorate the difficulties along with possible accommodations that can be formally requested if the student actions alone are not adequate.

Use this form to:

• Help a student to identify common disability-related limitations
• Review and discuss particular classroom difficulties
• Explore the suggested actions that the student could assume independently to address the problems that he or she reports experiencing
• Explore possible accommodations that could be formally requested if the individual efforts of the student are not sufficient
Student Self-Assessment Checklist

The following is a list of challenges that you may be experiencing right now on campus. Often these challenges will impact your academic success. This checklist is tended to help identify your personal challenges, so that helpful resources and suggestions can be determined.

Please put a checkmark (✔️) next to any of the statements that apply to you.

1. Psychosocial Skills
   _____ It is difficult for me to ask for help.
   _____ Sometimes I feel withdrawn even when I’m around people.
   _____ I reject most people I go to school with.
   _____ Sometimes I don’t understand what people mean or why they act the way they do.
   _____ I easily get over stimulated by all the activity around me.
   _____ I tend to stay away from people at school.
   _____ I am frequently rejected by others at school.
   _____ It’s easy to misinterpret what others say or do.
   _____ Sometimes I feel suspicious of other people around me.

2. Communication Skills
   _____ I talk so much sometimes that people have to interrupt me.
   _____ Sometimes I speak so softly no one hears me.
   _____ Others have said they don’t understand what I am trying to say.
   _____ I would rather read directions than listen to them.
   _____ Sometimes I don’t answer others or respond with only one or two words.
   _____ I interrupt others quite a bit.
   _____ It can be difficult to listen to and understand others.

3. Behavior
   _____ I sometimes act without thinking.
   _____ I can talk too much or too loudly.
   _____ Sometimes strange things just happen so it’s hard to meet deadlines.
   _____ Sometimes I threaten to quit when I am angry.
   _____ I blame others for my mistakes or find some excuse.
   _____ Sometimes my behaviors seem strange or different to others.
   _____ Sometimes I “lose time” and don’t have any time left for studying.
   _____ Sometimes I turn to drugs or alcohol because I feel so stressed.
   _____ I get physically ill when there are too many demands on me.

page 1 of 3

Student Self-Assessment Checklist

4. Perception
   _____ It can be hard to understand others’ words.
   _____ Sometimes I hear voices or sounds others don’t.
   _____ I get suspicious of others at school.
   _____ Sometimes I believe things others don’t.
   _____ If I explain what I see or think, people usually don’t agree with me.
   _____ Sometimes I feel like I’m not real or the world around me is not real.

5. Relationships
   _____ General conversations like “small talk” are difficult.
   _____ I usually don’t have anything to discuss with others at school before and after class.
   _____ I don’t know how to act when people make statements I don’t like.
   _____ It really bothers me to hear negative comments about people with mental illnesses.
   _____ Sometimes certain people make me feel like it’s not going to work.
   _____ It’s difficult to agree with someone.

6. Thinking/Learning
   _____ Sometimes it’s difficult for me to concentrate for very long.
   _____ It can be hard to learn new information at times.
   _____ I am easily distracted.
   _____ It can be difficult to shift my focus from one task to another.
   _____ Sometimes it is hard to think things through.
   _____ I can only do one thing at a time.
   _____ If I have a task I don’t usually do, I get confused.
   _____ I have problems making decisions.
   _____ I often reach the wrong conclusion.
   _____ I am disorganized.
   _____ I don’t have enough energy to do my work.
   _____ Sometimes ideas come to me too fast.
   _____ I get too restless.
   _____ I start to panic when I have deadlines or exams.
   _____ I have difficulty remembering verbal commands.
   _____ I get overwhelmed easily.
   _____ Sometimes my mind goes blank when I’m called on in class or during exams.
   _____ I have difficulty dealing with unexpected changes.
   _____ I experience a lot of memory problems.

7. Medication
   _____ I get drowsy at school or when doing my homework from my medication(s).
   _____ I am thirsty a lot.
   _____ My vision gets blurred.

page 2 of 3


© 2009, Trustees of Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
Student Self-Assessment Checklist

_____ I am embarrassed to take medication when I’m with my classmates.
_____ Sometimes my hands shake.
_____ My medication slows my thinking too much.

8. Self-Care
_____ At times, I don’t eat very well.
_____ I don’t sleep as much as I would like or need.
_____ I need to sleep a great deal.
_____ At times, it is easy to skip some of my daily hygiene tasks.
_____ I don’t take my medication as my doctor prescribes.
_____ I don’t exercise or do any physical fitness activities.
_____ I can’t always predict when I’m going to have an increase in my symptoms.
_____ Sometimes I work long hours and don’t take any breaks.
_____ I don’t go to church (synagogue/other) as often as I should or would like to.
_____ I don’t utilize my spiritual practices as much as I would like to.

9. Emotions
_____ Sometimes I worry so much, it’s hard to be in school.
_____ I get afraid of people, places or activities.
_____ Sometimes I over react.
_____ It’s hard to hear others express strong feelings.
_____ Sometimes it seems my reactions don’t match with the others I’m around.
_____ I get too afraid to approach my professor(s) or advisor(s).
_____ Even when I get good grades, I’m terrified that I’m going to fail.
_____ Sometimes I feel so good that I take on more than I can handle.

10. Treatment Needs
_____ I need to see my doctor, therapist, case manager, etc. during regular work hours.
_____ I may need to be hospitalized for my illness in the future.
_____ I need to get to my 12-Step meeting(s) at least ____ times per week.
_____ I need to keep in contact with my support system.
_____ I need to stay in touch with my spiritual advisor/priest/rabbi/other.

11. Resource Needs
_____ I don’t have enough money for books and supplies.
_____ I can’t get a meeting with an academic advisor.
_____ I don’t have a place to study.

If any one of these challenges is consistently difficult for you, please feel free to add information on the back in more detail. Also, feel free to add challenges that you experience that are not listed.

page 3 of 3

### Student Self-Assessment of College Classroom Difficulties

The following is a list of difficulties that you may be experiencing while attending class. Often these difficulties impact your academic success. This checklist is intended to help identify your personal challenges. It also offers strategies that you can try on your own and/or post-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Possible accomodations that you can try</th>
<th>Possible actions that you can try on your own or request from your professor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscle tension</td>
<td>Request prearranged breaks to get fresh air and to move around.</td>
<td>Organize time to do homework in short periods, even if more frequent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind going blank</td>
<td>Relaxation exercises/deep breathing</td>
<td>Request pre-recorded class and/or request an notetaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to filter out distractions (internal or external)</td>
<td>Request to take tests in a distraction-free environment.</td>
<td>Request to tape-record class and/or request a note-taker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty concentrating; decreased attention span and difficulty with doing homework and test-taking</td>
<td>Request to prepare a paper instead of an exam.</td>
<td>Request a note-taker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty sitting still, restlessness</td>
<td>Request to take home exam.</td>
<td>Request to tape-record class and/or request an notetaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small hand/foot exercises that can be done discreetly at desk in class</td>
<td>Small hand/foot exercises that can be done discreetly.</td>
<td>Small hand/foot exercises that can be done discreetly at desk in class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please check any difficulty below that you are experiencing.

- [ ] Muscle tension
- [ ] Mind going blank
- [ ] Difficulty concentrating; decreased attention span and difficulty with test-taking
- [ ] Difficulty sitting still, restlessness
- [ ] Small hand/foot exercises that can be done discreetly

---

© 2009 Trustees of Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Possible actions that you can try</th>
<th>Possible accommodations that you may be able to request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decreased stamina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule courses during your best time of day</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged to contact and inform professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling courses on different days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring rest time between courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise before class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drying mouth from medication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily overwhelmed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty remembering verbal commands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request assignments in written form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request decreased course load without hospitalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent from class due to different situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request assignments without losing full-time status for financial aid and decreased stamina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request classmate to verify that you understood the assignment correctly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing things down to help accuracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing things down to verify that you understood the assignment correctly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep a schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep small, manageable goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break tasks into small, manageable pieces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance loss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise after class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease stamina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty remembering commands and problems with verbal commands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease stamina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased stamina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request assignments during your best time of day and/or schedule courses on different days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible actions that you can try</td>
<td>Possible accommodations that you may be able to request on your own</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing panic attacks</td>
<td>Request to have prearranged breaks during class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalating symptoms</td>
<td>Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caught up in perfectionism</td>
<td>Use relaxation and meditation practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend an inordinate amount of time</td>
<td>Use monitoring log of symptoms so you can intervene early enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauterize in perfectionism</td>
<td>Use negative thinking to counterbalance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successfully complete tasks</td>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing tasks, but unable to</td>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult dealing with unexpected changes, assignments, tests, etc</td>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty dealing with unexpected changes, assignments, tests, etc</td>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative thinking</td>
<td>Request to have prearranged breaks during class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use postive self-talk to counterbalance</td>
<td>Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let professor know why you're not coming—don't just let it go</td>
<td>Use cold water on face or hands in the room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit near the door so you can easily leave</td>
<td>Go to class ahead of time to get feel of classroom and pick a location to sit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days</td>
<td>Request for prearranged breaks during class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to have prearranged breaks during class</td>
<td>Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use relaxation and meditation practices</td>
<td>Use monitoring log of symptoms so you can intervene early enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing thoughts, over-stimulation</td>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible actions that you can try</td>
<td>Possible accommodations that you may be able to request on your own</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please check any difficulty below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Possible action(s) that you can try</th>
<th>Possible accommodations that you may be able to request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty concentrating in class due to anxiety</td>
<td>Deep breathing exercises; Touch something (books, desk) - note temperature, texture, etc. - really focusing</td>
<td>Request a note taker; Request to tape record class; Request professor to arrange breaks during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent from class due to hospitalization</td>
<td>Inform professor rather than just letting it go; Arrange to do homework assignments if you can</td>
<td>An absent record class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent from class due to panic attack or hospitalization</td>
<td>Inform professor rather than just letting it go; Request to arrange an “incomplete”</td>
<td>Report a note taker; Request to tape record class; Request professor to arrange breaks during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels safer</td>
<td>Go to classroom early to get seat that feels “safe”</td>
<td>Use self-talk, “I am in a classroom, I am in control.” Got to restroom and put cold water on your face or wrists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to arrange record class</td>
<td>Concentrate on note taking, feel something and concentrate on texture, etc. (grounding skills)</td>
<td>Request a note taker; Request to tape record class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypervigilance and/or increased startle response</td>
<td>Uses self-talk, “I am in a classroom, I am safe.” Go to restroom and put cold water on your face or wrists</td>
<td>Request a note taker; Request to tape record class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flashbacks, intrusive memories or hypervigilant thoughts, general feeling of “out of touch”</td>
<td>Concentrate on note taking, feel something and concentrate on texture, etc. (grounding skills)</td>
<td>Request a note taker; Request to tape record class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please check any difficulty below that you are experiencing:
Distracted by internal/external stimuli

- Arrive at class early enough to be able to sit where you want/need to
- Request to tape record class
- Request to take breaks during classes and exams
- Request a note taker
- Request to decrease course load without losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance
- Try to learn to use relaxation and self-soothing exercises
- Try to learn to use positive self-talk
- Put cold water on face or hands

Feeling agitated, restless or unable to sit still

Pressure by voices or other stimuli

- Schedule courses during your best time of day
- Request to take breaks to get a breath of fresh air and refocus
- Request to decrease course load without losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance
- Try to learn to use relaxation and self-soothing exercises
- Try to learn to use positive self-talk

Feeling self-conscious and paranoid

- Try to learn to use relaxation and self-soothing exercises
- Try to learn to use positive self-talk

Feeling agitated, restless or unable to sit still

Feeling agitated, restless or unable to sit still

- Schedule courses during your best time of day
- Request to take breaks to get a breath of fresh air and refocus
- Request to decrease course load without losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance
- Try to learn to use relaxation and self-soothing exercises
- Try to learn to use positive self-talk

Put cold water on face or hands

Try to learn to use relaxation and self-soothing exercises

Try to learn to use positive self-talk

Possible actions that you can try:

- You may be able to request:
  - Possible accommodations that you can try on your own:

Possible actions that you can try on your own:

Possible accommodations that you can try on your own:

Please check any difficulty below that you are experiencing.