Higher Education Support Toolkit: 
Assisting Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

*Guidelines for Disability Service Staff to Assist in Assessing Student Difficulties, Connecting Students to Campus Resources, and Planning Strategies for Assistance*

The Higher Education Support Toolkit (HES) was developed by Lyn Legere, Kathleen Furlong-Norman, Christine Gayler, and Cathy St. Pierre

The Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation is partially funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
## Contents

### Background

### Introduction

### Part 1: Student Self-Assessment

- Overview .......................................................... 7
- Using the “Student Self-Assessment Checklist” .................... 7
- Using the “Student Self-Assessment of College Classroom Difficulties” ...... 8
- Student Self-Assessment Checklist ........................................ 9–11
- Student Self-Assessment of College Classroom Difficulties ............ 12–16

### Part 2: Getting Connected to Campus Resources

- Overview .......................................................... 17
- Completing a “Campus Resources Assessment Form” .................... 17
- Campus Resources Assessment Example ............................... 19–21
- Campus Resources Assessment Form (blank) ........................... 22–24

### Part 3: Actions and Accommodations in the Classroom

- Overview .......................................................... 25
- Using the “Guide to Psychiatric Disorders, Related Difficulties, and Possible Actions” .............................. 25
- Guide to Psychiatric Disorders, Related Difficulties, and Possible Actions ........................................... 26–33

### Information and Resources

- Organizations and Websites ........................................ 34
- Fact Sheets .................................................................. 35
- Articles ..................................................................... 36
Background

About 9% of all undergraduates in higher education in the United States report having a disability, a percentage that has tripled in the last two decades. This amounts to about 1.3 million students (Wolanin & Steele, 2004). Students with psychiatric disabilities are well represented in this trend, with one national survey citing an 85% increase over the last five years in the numbers of students identified with psychiatric/psychological disabilities (Meyer, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Sharpe and colleagues (2004) cite the proliferation of individuals declaring a psychiatric disability as one of the more significant developments that has occurred in the field of postsecondary disability supports over the past decade. Eudaly (2003) notes that the increasing number of students with psychiatric disabilities appears as a “rising tide” on college campuses nationwide. The increase in students disclosing a psychiatric disability has required colleges and universities to develop strategies to meet the legal requirements of equal “access” of all students under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to ensure student “retention” which is a critical component to the ongoing success of any postsecondary institution.

Disability services professionals, people serving in other student affairs roles, faculty, and students themselves have all faced challenges in shifting the culture of college campuses to be both accommodating and welcoming of students with psychiatric disabilities. Focus groups held at 13 schools that represented significant demographic differences queried students, faculty, student affairs staff, disability services providers, and college/university administrators about their opinion(s) on barriers impeding the success of students with psychiatric disabilities on campus (Blacklock, et al., 2003). Not surprising, all groups endorsed discrimination/stigma and stereotypes as the primary barriers. The complex nature of psychiatric disorders and the lack of knowledge about how to serve these students were also identified by staff and administration. Students highlighted lack of access to knowledge about mental illnesses and available school resources, while faculty expressed concern about classroom behaviors (Blacklock, et al., 2003).

More recently, awareness of student mental health issues has expanded greatly in response to a growing number of suicides on campus (NAMI, 2004). However, resources focusing on strategies for the equal access and retention of students with psychiatric disabilities remain few (Sharpe et al., 2004). This Higher Education Support Toolkit: Assisting Students with Psychiatric Disabilities attempts to address this critical gap.
References


Introduction

Over the past 15 years, the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University has provided skills teaching and practical supports to assist students with psychiatric disabilities achieve their education goals. Beginning with the creation of an on-campus program at Boston University that focused on career planning and the later development of an education program model known as “Supported Education,” the Center has been a leader in emphasizing the value and importance of education for students experiencing psychiatric disabilities. Center staff have also developed resources and tools to help students to identify and acquire needed skills, supports, and accommodations to successfully complete a course or program of academic study. (Anthony, Cohen, Farkas & Gagne, 2002; Sullivan Soydan, 2004; Sullivan Soydan & Legere, 2004).

Building on the Center’s work, the major focus of the *Higher Education Support Toolkit: Assisting Students with Psychiatric Disabilities* is two-fold:

1) to assist students in clarifying the issues that are hindering their academic success and satisfaction, and

2) to assist students in discovering the skills, supports, and strategies that will enable them to overcome the barriers to achieving their educational goals.

The Toolkit is intended for use by a broad audience within the network of campus services such as disability services, behavioral health, and student affairs. The parts of the Toolkit include:

**Part 1: Student Self-Assessment**

Self-Assessment Checklists (two checklists) are provided to assist the student in clarifying the health, personal, interpersonal and/or academic issues that may be hindering their success and satisfaction.

**Part 2: Getting Connected to Campus Resources**

Campus Resource Forms are provided to encourage campus service providers to compile a comprehensive and easily accessible resource list from which students can customize resources to meet their individual needs.

**Part 3: Actions and Accommodations in the College Classroom**

A Guide to Psychiatric Disorders is provided to assist providers with a better understanding of the common difficulties and/or limitations that students experiencing a psychiatric disability may encounter in class. Possible strategies that can be implemented and/or adjustments that a student may be entitled to are highlighted in the Guide.

**Information and Resources**

Organizations, websites, fact sheets, and articles relevant to students with psychiatric disabilities and those who are supporting them in achieving their educational goals are listed.
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
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.
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

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.
### Possible accommodations that you can request:

- Go to classroom before classes start to determine the best place to sit.
- Request prearranged breaks during class.
- Request to tape record class and/or request a note taker.
- Request to take home exam.
- Request to prepare a paper instead of an exam.
- Request to take tests in a distraction-reduced environment.
- Request prearranged breaks to get fresh air and move around.

### Possible accommodations that you may be able to request:

- Arrive at class early to be able to sit where you want/need to.
- Request to photocopy a classmate's notes.

### Possible actions that you can try on your own:

- Difficulty concentrating; decreased attention span and difficulty with doing homework and test taking.
- Arrangetophotocopyaclassmate'snotes.
- Organizetime to do homework in shorter sittings, even if more frequent.
- Relaxeddiepbraathing.
- Smallhand/footexercisesthatarendone discreetly at desk in class.
- Muscle tension.

### Please check any difficulty below that you are experiencing:

- Difficulty sitting still, restlessness.
- Small hand/foot exercises that can be done discreetly at desk in class.
- Muscle tension.
- Mind going blank.
- Relaxation exercises/deep breathing.
- Difficulty concentrating; decreased attention span and difficulty with doing homework and test taking.
- Inability to filter out distractions (internal or external).
- Difficulty sitting still, restlessness.
- Go to class room before classes start to determine the best place to sit.
- Request prearranged breaks during class.
- Request to tape record class and/or request a note taker.
- Request to take home exam.
- Request to prepare a paper instead of an exam.

### The following is a list of difficulties that you may be experiencing while attending class. Often these challenges 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 possible accommodations that you can request to help you manage any difficulties that you are experiencing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible actions that you can try</th>
<th>Possible accommodations that you may be able to request</th>
<th>Possible action 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>Exercise before class</td>
<td>Decrease classroom difficulties</td>
<td>Decrease classroom difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Ensure test time between courses</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule courses during your best time</td>
<td>Request to complete homework</td>
<td>Request a decreased course load without health insurance</td>
<td>Request a decreased course load without health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent from class due to hospitalization</td>
<td>Request to arrange an “incomplete”</td>
<td>Write things down to help accuracy</td>
<td>Write things down to help accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to arrange an “incomplete”</td>
<td>Be on time to class</td>
<td>Bring beverage to class</td>
<td>Bring beverage to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request assignments from hospital</td>
<td>Keep a schedule</td>
<td>Difficulty remembering verbal commands and problems with memory</td>
<td>Difficulty remembering verbal commands and problems with memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to complete homework</td>
<td>Write things down, keep a journal and ask a classmate to verify that you understood the assignment correctly</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request a decreased course load without health insurance</td>
<td>Request a decreased course load without health insurance</td>
<td>Request an “incomplete” rather than fail a course</td>
<td>Request an “incomplete” rather than fail a course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily overwhelmed</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty remembering verbal commands and problems with memory</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mouth from medication</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing from professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please check any difficulty below that you are experiencing:
### Difficulties Experienced:

<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>Racing thoughts, over-stimulation</td>
<td>Use relaxation and meditation practices on different days</td>
<td>Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days</td>
<td>Request prearranged breaks during class</td>
<td>Request prearranged breaks during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalating symptoms</td>
<td>Exercising panic attacks</td>
<td>Request to have prearranged breaks during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Userelaxation and meditation practices</td>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time-management and organizing skills</td>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time-management and organizing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult dealing with unexpected changes, tests, etc, etc.</td>
<td>Let professor know why you're not letting professor know why you're not</td>
<td>Let professor know why you're not letting professor know why you're not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to get advanced notice of exams</td>
<td>Use positive self-talk to counterbalance negative thinking</td>
<td>Use cold water on face or hands in the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caught up in perfectionism</td>
<td>Successfully complete tasks or organizing tasks, but unable to spend an inordinate amount of time</td>
<td>Stay ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty dealing with unexpected changes, tests, etc, etc.</td>
<td>Go to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time</td>
<td>Go to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing panic attacks</td>
<td>Go to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time</td>
<td>Go to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Possible Accommodations:

- Request prearranged breaks during class.
- Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days.
- Use cold water on face or hands in the room.
- Go to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time.

### Possible Actions:

- Use relaxation and meditation practices on different days.
- Request to work with tutor on time-management and organizing skills.
- Request to have prearranged breaks during class.
- Use positive self-talk to counterbalance negative thinking.
- Use cold water on face or hands in the room.
- Go to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time to get feel of going to class ahead of time.
- Exercising panic attacks.
Please check any difficulty below that you are experiencing:

Possible accommodations that you can try:

Possible actions that you can try:

Hospitalization Absent from class due to

Feels safest Go to classroom early to get seat that feels safe.

Use self-talk, "I am in a classroom. I am safe.”

Deep breathing exercises

Touch something (books, desk) - note temperature, texture, etc. - really focusing on texture.

Concentrate on note taking, really focusing on objective.

Go to restroom and put cold water on your face or wrists.

Request a note taker

Request to tape record class

Request prearranged breaks during class

Rather than fail a course Request to arrange an “incomplete.”

Inform professor rather than just letting it go.

Arrange to do homework assignments

It’s go: and inform professor rather than just letting it go.

Absent from class due to hospitalization

Flashbacks, intrusive memories or reality generally “out of touch” with

Hypervigilance and/or increased startle response.

Hypervigilant and/or increased startle response.

Request to arrange breaks during class

Request to tape record class

Request a note taker

on object (grounding techniques)

on object (grounding techniques)

Touch something (books, desk) - note temperature, texture, etc.

Deep breathing exercises:

You may be able to request:

Possible accommodations that you can try:

Possible actions that you can try:

Student Self-Assessment of College Classroom Difficulties

© 2009 Trustees of Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
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
- You may be able to request: Possible accommodations that you can try on your own:

Feeling agitated, restless or unable to sit still

- Put cold water on face or hands
- Possible actions that you can try:

Feeling self-conscious and paranoid

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

Feeling pressured by voices or other stimuli

- Schedule courses during your best time of day
- Request to decrease course load without fresh air and refocus exercises
- Request to take breaks to get a breath of air
- Request a note-taker

Health insurance

- Losing full time status for financial aid and
- Request to decrease course load without

Paralyzed

- Feel unable to request

Possible accommodations that you may be able to request:

Please check any difficulty below:

- Pressed by voices or other stimuli
- Distracted by internal/external stimuli
- Feeling self-conscious and paranoid
- Feeling agitated, restless or unable to sit still
- Feeling pressured by voices or other stimuli
- Health insurance
- Feeling self-conscious and paranoid
- Feeling agitated, restless or unable to sit still
- Feeling pressured by voices or other stimuli
- Pressed by voices or other stimuli
- Distracted by internal/external stimuli
- Health insurance
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 2: Getting Connected to Campus Resources

• Campus Resources Assessment Example (Boston University)
• Campus Resources Assessment Form (blank)

Completing a “Campus Resources Assessment Form”

Compiling a campus resources list will enable campus providers to have at hand, a comprehensive list of current resources and services. A blank “Campus Resources Assessment Form” (pages 22–24) and an example of a completed form (pages 19–21) are included in this section.

“Information is power” is an old adage. A knowledgeable understanding of what resources are available both on campus will assist students in discovering the possible resources that can support them in overcoming the identified barriers to achieving their educational goals.

Your school’s website may be a helpful starting point in identifying what resources are available on your campus. A Microsoft Word® document that you can use as a template for developing your own institution’s campus and community resources can be downloaded at: http://www.bu.edu/cpr/resources/supportstudents/index.html.

You can make copies of the “Campus Resources Assessment Form” to use when you meet with individual students. Once the student and campus service provider have a clear understanding of the issues, the “Campus Resources Assessment Form” can be helpful in considering what specific resources can
address the issues. If a resource is currently needed by the student, note “Yes” and discuss his or her needs and preferences and then set up a time table to address the student’s needs.

If a resource need is identified, but not currently available on your campus, note needed resource in the column labels “Other” and research options with the student to develop and/or access a suitable alternative resource. Make copies of the completed plan for both student and office use. Use the “Campus Resources Assessment Example” as a guide to assist you in creating your own form.

Use these forms to:

• Create a comprehensive list of campus resources and services
• Assist students to discover resources that can support them in overcoming barriers to achieve their educational goals
• Create links with campus resources to support student goals
• Use “Campus Resources Assessment Example” as a guide
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Resource/Service</th>
<th>Assistance Needed?</th>
<th>Notes and Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of Disability Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bu.edu/disability/">http://www.bu.edu/disability/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Services provides services and support to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensure that students are able to access and participate in the opportunities available at Boston University.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Financial Assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bu.edu/finaid/">http://www.bu.edu/finaid/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This office offers comprehensive financial aid services to undergraduate students and their families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Housing Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bu.edu/housing/">http://www.bu.edu/housing/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Office of Housing Resources provides information on a range of housing options, FAQS, summer housing, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Residence Life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bu.edu/reslife/">http://www.bu.edu/reslife/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This office is designed to support student life in and out of the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ERC provides academic support programs to the Boston University community. 
http://www.bu.edu/erc/index.html

- Peer Tutoring to complement classroom experience
  - Yes
  - No

- Writing Center to assist with all aspects of the writing process
  - Yes
  - No

- Contingent Aid Program to design and implement educational goals to become more successful academically
  - Yes
  - No

- Office of the Dean of Students: This office provides orientation, mentoring and counseling programs to effectively engage students in academic and community service, and other activities that will enrich their time at the university.
  - Yes
  - No

- Not at this time, but revisit in October/November

Campus Resources Assessment Example
Campus Resources Assessment Example

Student Name: Jane Doe
Date: 8/26/08

On-campus Information
Student Health Services
http://www.bu.edu/shs/
Student Health Services includes medical services, behavioral medicine services by appointment or on an emergency basis, a crisis intervention counselor and chiropractic care. To set up initial appointment, call 617-353-6555.

Career Services
Office of Career Services
http://www.bu.edu/careers/
This office assists in all aspects of your career search, from the time you enter the University and choose a major to the time you leave the University and accept your first position. This office assists with concerns which are of a more complex or unique nature, or which may require the cooperation of several administrative offices to resolve.

University Service Center
http://www.bu.edu/usc/
This office assists with concerns which are of a more complex or unique nature, or which may require the cooperation of several administrative offices to resolve.

Student Health Services
http://www.bu.edu/shs/
Student Health Services includes medical services, behavioral medicine services by appointment or on an emergency basis, a crisis intervention counselor and chiropractic care. To set up initial appointment, call 617-353-6555.

Set up initial appointment for week of 09/22/08
Would like to have a contact person for counseling services

Notes and Preferences
Assistant Needed?

Student Name: Jane Doe
Date: 8/26/08
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Resource/Service</th>
<th>Assistance Needed?</th>
<th>Notes and Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Services and Support</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2009, Trustees of Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Resource Assessment Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Resource/Service</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Yes][1] ![No][2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Yes][1] ![No][2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Yes][1] ![No][2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Yes][1] ![No][2]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Campus Resource/Service**
  - **Other**
  - **Career Services**
  - **Student Health Services**
  - **Residence Life**

- **Assistance Needed?**
- **Notes and Preferences**

---

© 2009, Trustees of Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
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

**Form for Part 3: Actions and Accommodations in the Classroom**

*Guide to Psychiatric Disorders, Related Difficulties, and Possible Actions*

Using the “*Guide to Psychiatric Disorders, Related Difficulties, and Possible Actions*”

Review and familiarize yourself with the “*Guide to Psychiatric Disorders, Related Difficulties, and Possible Actions*” (pages 26–33). The guide lists prevalent psychiatric disorders and the common difficulties that are often associated with particular disorders. The guide also includes possible actions a student can take on his or her own that may help to improve a difficult situation in class. If reasonable accommodations are needed, a list of potential accommodations that the student could request is provided.

Use this guide to:

- Help staff understand the range of common difficulties for an individual living with one or more particular mental illnesses
- Help staff and student to determine appropriate strategies to help student in the classroom
- Explore options to request and use accommodations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Difficulties/Limitations</th>
<th>Possible Strategies for Students</th>
<th>Possible Accommodations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty sitting still, restlessness</td>
<td>Go to classroom before classes start to determine the best place to sit</td>
<td>Difficult sitting still, restlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to filter out distractions (internal or external)</td>
<td>Arrieve at class early to be able to choose a comfortable place to sit</td>
<td>Disability to filter out distractions (internal or external)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Request a note taker; request to tape recorded class and/or get fresh notes</td>
<td>Arrange to photocopy a classmate’s notes; request a note taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased stamina</td>
<td>Exercise before class</td>
<td>Decreased stamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced environment</td>
<td>Ensure rest time between courses</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep disturbance</td>
<td>Days with rest time between courses</td>
<td>Losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to change environment to decrease distractions</td>
<td>Request to take rests in a separate room</td>
<td>Request prearranged breaks to get fresh air and to move around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to tape recorded class and/or get fresh notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind going blank</td>
<td>Relaxation exercises/deep breathing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle tension</td>
<td>Small hand/foot exercises that can be done discreetly at desk in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2009 Trustees of Boston University. Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Difficulties/Limitations</th>
<th>Possible Strategies for Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Schedule courses at preferred time of day and/or schedule courses on different days with rest time between courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Stamina</td>
<td>Ask a classmate to verify that you understood the assignment correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty concentrating; decreased attention span and difficulty with doing homework and test-taking</td>
<td>Write things down, keep a journal and schedule breaks to get fresh air and to move around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty remembering verbal commands</td>
<td>Request pre-arranged breaks to get fresh air and to move around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mouth from medication</td>
<td>Request assignments in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty remembering verbal commands</td>
<td>Request pre-arranged breaks to get fresh air and to move around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced environment</td>
<td>Request a note taker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise before class</td>
<td>Request a note taker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure rest time between courses</td>
<td>Request a note taker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Sleep</td>
<td>Request a tape recorder to class and/or request assignments in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
<td>Request a decreased course load without losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance</td>
<td>Request a decreased course load without losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Sleep</td>
<td>Request a tape recorder to class and/or request assignments in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
<td>Request a decreased course load without losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance</td>
<td>Request a decreased course load without losing full-time status for financial aid and health insurance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sullivan Soydan, A.P. (1997). Frequently asked questions by educators about students with psychiatric disabilities: Tips and resources on the Rehabilitation Act, ADA, Academic Adjustments, and Support Boston University, Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Boston: Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. © 2009, Trustees of Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Difficulties/Limitations</th>
<th>Possible Strategies for Student</th>
<th>Possible Accommodations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easily overwhelmed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalating symptoms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing thoughts, over-stimulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to arrange homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent from class due to hospitalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break tasks into small manageable pieces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use relaxation and meditation practices on different days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule classes with breaks between or on different days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to tape record class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to arrange in „incomplete“ assignments from hospital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to complete homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use monitoring log of symptoms so you can intervene early enough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric Disorder: Major Depression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Caught up in perfectionism
Spends an inordinate amount of time organizing tasks, but unable to successfully complete tasks
Negative thinking
Catch up in perfectionism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychiatric Disorder: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible Accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Strategies for Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Difficulties/Limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to get advanced notice of exams, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty dealing with unexpected change, assignements, tests, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to work with tutor on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and organizing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use positive self-talk to counterbalance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


© 2009 Trustees of Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

Guide to Psychiatric Disorders, Related Difficulties, and Possible Actions
### Psychiatric Disorder: Panic Disorder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Difficulties/Limitations</th>
<th>Possible Strategies for Student</th>
<th>Possible Accommodations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Experiencing panic attacks**  | Go to class ahead of time to get feel of classroom and pick a location to sit  
Use cold water on face or hands  
Arrive at class early to be able to sit where you want and/or need to sit | Request to have prearranged breaks during class |
| **Unable to get to classes/exams due to panic attacks** | Let professor know why you’re not coming—don’t just let it go  
Request to arrange an “incomplete” rather than fail a course | Request to arrange an “incomplete” rather than fail a course |
| **Difficulty concentrating in class due to anxiety** | Deep breathing exercises;  
Touch something (books, desk)-note temperature, texture, etc.—really focusing on object (Grounding techniques) | Request to tape record class  
Request a note taker |
| **Miss final exam due to panic attack** | Request to arrange an “incomplete” rather than fail a course | Request to arrange an “incomplete” rather than fail a course |

### Common Difficulties/Limitations

- **Flashbacks, intrusive memories, or feeling generally “out of touch” with reality**
- **Concentrate on notetaking, feel something, and concentrate on texture, etc. (grounding skills)**
- **Go to restroom and put cold water on your face or wrists**

### Possible Accommodations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Strategies for Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request prearranged breaks during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request a note taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to tape record class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to arrange an “incomplete” from hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrive early to get a seat that feels safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request prearranged breaks during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get告知 professor rather than just letting it go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangements for homework assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to classroom early to get a seat that feels safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use self-talk, “I am in a classroom. I am safe.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a letter from the hospital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Possible Accommodations

- **Anxiety/panic attacks**
  - Go to the door so you can easily leave the room
  - Rearrange breaks during class

### Possible Accommodations

- **Hypervigilance and/or increased startle responses**
  - Go to restroom and put cold water on your face or wrists
  - Generally “out of touch” with reality

### Possible Accommodations

- **Psychiatric Disorder: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**
  - Request prearranged breaks during class
  - Arrive early to get a seat that feels safe
  - Use self-talk, “I am in a classroom. I am safe.”

### Possible Accommodations

- **Absence from class due to hospitalization**
  - Inform professor rather than just letting it go
  - Arrange to do homework assignments from hospital

### Possible Accommodations

- **Hypervigilance and/or increased startle response**
  - Use self-talk, “I am in a classroom. I am safe.”

### Possible Accommodations

- **Psychiatric Disorder: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**
  - Request prearranged breaks during class
  - Arrange to do homework assignments from hospital

### Possible Accommodations

- **Anxiety/panic attacks**
  - Go to the door so you can easily leave the room
  - Rearrange breaks during class

### Possible Accommodations

- **Psychiatric Disorder: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**
  - Request prearranged breaks during class
  - Arrange to do homework assignments from hospital
### Psychiatric Disorder: Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Difficulties/Limitations</th>
<th>Possible Strategies for Student</th>
<th>Possible Accommodations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distracted by internal/external stimuli</td>
<td>Arrive at class early enough to be able to sit where you want/need to</td>
<td>Request to tape record class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Request a note taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressured by voices or other stimuli</td>
<td>Learn to use relaxation and self-soothing exercises</td>
<td>Request to take breaks to get a breath of fresh air and refocus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schedule courses during your best time of day</td>
<td>Request to decrease course load without losing full time status for financial aid and health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling self-conscious and paranoid</td>
<td>Learn to use positive self-talk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn to use relaxation and self-soothing exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling agitated, restless or unable to sit still</td>
<td>Put cold water on face or hands</td>
<td>Request breaks during classes and exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Difficulties/Limitations</th>
<th>Possible Strategies for Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inability to pace self</td>
<td>Work with tutor on time-management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with memory</td>
<td>Inability to pace self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalating symptoms</td>
<td>Schedule breaks during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing thoughts/over-stimulation</td>
<td>Use monitoring log of symptoms so you can intervene early enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Write things down; keep journal; keep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possible Accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Disorders: Manic/Hypomanic Episodes</td>
<td>Possible Accommodations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Toolkit includes websites, fact sheets and relevant publication references. This information can be used and shared by students, campus providers and the community-at-large to learn more about psychiatric disability.

Organizations and Websites

**Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)**

http://www.ahead.org/index.htm

AHEAD is a professional association committed to full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. AHEAD addresses current and emerging issues with respect to disability, education and accessibility to achieve universal access.

**AHEAD Special Interest Group on Psychiatric Disability**

http://www.ahead.org/about/SIGs/psych/psychology.htm

The Psychiatric Disabilities Special Interest Group strives to improve services and the campus climate for students with psychiatric disabilities. Working with a network of disability service providers, this group explores issues and shares useful resources to develop and promote the use of best practices for students with psychiatric disabilities.

**Revolution Online Mental Health Fair**

http://www.revolutionhealth.com/healthfair

The Revolution Online Mental Health Fair provides the latest in mental health information and support via “Information Booths” that are actual web links to organizational websites. The websites included in the Online Mental Health Fair focus on enhancing student mental health.

**Active Minds on Campus**

http://www.activemindsincampus.org/

Active Minds is the only national organization dedicated to utilizing the student voice to raise mental health awareness on the college campus. Student and staff members’ work to promote a better understanding of mental health issues and promote a dialogue that is supportive and stigma-free.
Information and Resources

**Healthy Minds.org**
http://www.healthyminds.org/collegementalhealth.cfm

Healthy Minds is a web-based resource produced by the American Psychiatric Association as a resource for students and parents. A wide range of topics are included on this site with links to facts, statistics and personal accounts of students managing college life while coping with a mental illness.

**Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law**
http://www.bazelon.org

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law produced “Campus Mental Health: Know Your Rights,” a 27-page guide for college and university students who want to seek help for mental illness or emotional distress. The guide explains legal rights and treatment options and is available as a free download at the Bazelon Center’s website.

---

**Fact Sheets**

**Recovery from Serious Mental Illness Fact Sheet**
http://www.bu.edu/cpr/resources/factsheets/index.html

As a way to spread awareness of the reality of recovery from mental illnesses, the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation has produced a one-page fact sheet designed for distribution to the general public. The fact sheet “Recovery from Serious Mental Illnesses” is a free download. Reproduction and distribution is highly encouraged.

**What a Difference a Friend Makes – SAMHSA Fact Sheet**
http://whatadifference.samhsa.gov/

This site and related fact sheet are designed for people living with mental illnesses—and their friends. Information and tools are available to help in the recovery process, and you can also learn about the different kinds of mental illnesses, read real-life stories about support and recovery, and interact with the video to see how friends can make all the difference.

**National Mental Health Anti Stigma Campaign Fact Sheet**

This fact sheet highlights a national awareness public service advertising (PSA) campaign launched by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in partnership with the Ad Council. This fact sheet is
designed to decrease the negative attitudes that surround mental illnesses and encourage young adults to support their friends who are living with mental health problems.

**Issue Brief—The Emergence of Psychiatric Disabilities in Postsecondary Education**


An unprecedented and growing number of postsecondary students report psychiatric disabilities. This Issue Brief describes key issues faced by students and explores how postsecondary personnel can support the success of these students.

**Articles**


Students with psychiatric disabilities are an increasing presence on college and university campuses. However, there is little factual information about the services available to these students in campus disability services offices or the extent to which they use these services. This article reports the results of a survey of disability services offices at colleges and universities in 10 states. Data from 275 schools revealed the number of students with psychiatric disabilities seeking assistance from disability services offices, characteristics of these offices, and the types of services they provide. Survey data also identified barriers to full participation of these students in academic settings. Implications of the study are discussed to inform policy and postsecondary institutional practices with the goal of better serving psychiatrically disabled students to maximize their talents and potential.


The Needs Assessment Project: Exploring Barriers and Opportunities for College Students with Psychiatric Disabilities was sponsored by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education/U.S. Department of Education in October 2001 for a period of 18 months. The purpose of the project was to gather comprehensive data on the needs of college students with psychiatric disabilities, to identify the real and perceived barriers facing these students on college campuses, and to identify strategies for removing these barriers.

In this qualitative study, four participants diagnosed with a mental illness were interviewed to explore their experiences while attending a post-secondary school. Each participant described how education helped them to find a sense of purpose in their lives. Education is also described as a means of transition from the patient role to other roles such as student or worker. However, the symptoms and stigma associated with their mental illness has created additional challenges for them while in a school setting. Supportive professors and counselors were viewed as helpful in overcoming these barriers.