



RICHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Teaching and Learning Support Services

Learning Accommodation Services

PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

What Are Psychiatric Disabilities?

Psychiatric disabilities include schizophrenia, depressive disorders (major depression, manic-depressive illness or bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder), and anxiety disorder (panic disorder, phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder). In the last few years there has been a sharp increase in the number of college students with psychiatric disabilities.

How Do Psychiatric Disabilities affect my learning?

Possible problem areas may include the following:

- Heightened anxieties, fears, suspicions, or blaming others
- Marked personality change over time
- Confused or disorganized thinking
- Strange or grandiose ideas
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions or remembering things
- Denial of obvious problems
- A strong resistance to offers of help
- Inability to screen out sounds, sights or odors
- Difficulty coping the change
- Difficulty handling time pressure or multiple tasks
- Difficulty getting along with others and fitting in
- Severe test anxiety
- Fear of authority figures
- Not in touch with reality
- Side effects of medications such as drowsiness, confusion, headaches
- Absences and /or tardiness
- Low morale

What Can I Do To Help Myself?

- Make sure you understand your particular disability and how it affects your learning.
- Identify your best learning style
- Work closely with your doctor
- Work closely with the LAS Coordinator.
- Choose instructors carefully.
- Form a support system.
- Find someone to talk with to check your perceptions or understanding of what's going on.
- Set reasonable goals.

Break work into manageable units.
Identify and use appropriate resources at the college.
Carry a reduced load.

What Are the Usual Accommodations?

Preferential seating, probably near the door
Tape Lectures
Note taker
Prearranged or frequent breaks
Longer test time
Quiet testing
Adaptive computer software
Alternate testing format
Extended time to complete assignments
More lenient attendance requirements
Exams divided into segments
Referral to the LAS Coordinator for help with time management and study skills

Resources Available

Video: Making a Difference

www.bu.edu/cpr/jobschool/main.html

www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/Academics/psych.html

www.jan.wvu.edu/media/Psychiatric.html