Getting Accommodations at College: Tools for School [English and Spanish versions]

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Getting Accommodations at College:
Tools for School

If you are having trouble with school due to mental health, your school is obligated to provide extra supports and services to help you succeed. These supports and services are called accommodations and they can make a difference! Your school may also make some modifications to the courses at your request.

What Accommodations or Modifications Can I Ask For?

What Do I Need In the Classroom?

- Preferred seating
- Breaks allowed during class
- Voice recorded lectures
- Classmate acts as a note-taker
- Text and syllabus available in advance
- Class materials available on computer
- Frequent feedback on ongoing class work
- Alternate formats for assignments

What Do I need During Exams?

- Exams in alternate formats such as written, oral, or electronic
- Extended time for test taking
- Exams given one-on-one
- Breaks allowed throughout test
- Testing in a room with limited distractions
- Allow exam to be taken in 2-3 sessions throughout the span of a few days

What Do I Need Completing Assignments?

- Extended time to complete assignments without lateness affecting grade
- Advance notice of assignments
- Textbook available on tape
- Assistive technology available for assignments
- Working in pairs on in-class assignments
- Help with assignments during hospitalization

In General?

- Reduced course load (being a full time student without having to be signed up for the normally required 12 credits)
- First choice for signing up for classes to make a less stressful schedule
- Textbook given in different format (on computer/on tape)
- Incomplete given instead of failure if relapse occurs
- Assistance with filling out financial aid/registration forms
- And more!

How Do I Get Accommodations?

1. **Find the disability services center** on your campus (typically called "disability services"). If there is no disability services center on your campus you can find out through your school's student support services whom to contact. Set up a meeting with someone there to find out about services.

2. **Get a signed note** from your psychiatrist or doctor that says what mental health condition you have (some schools may require different types of documentation). Only provide the minimum medical information that the school requires in order for you to qualify. Bring the note to disability services.

3. **Tell the person at disability services** what accommodations you feel you need. You can go to your doctor or others to get suggestions on what accommodations would work for you.

4. **Decide.** Someone at disability services will use the accommodations suggested to approve the services and modifications.

5. **Notify teachers.** Depending on the school, you or the disability services staff will provide your professors with your accommodation letter. The accommodation letter will not disclose your specific diagnosis, but will state that you have a disability that entitles you to receive modifications.

6. **Revise.** You can go back and make changes to your accommodations at any time. You may need different ones depending on the classes you take.

What About Confidentiality?

You will have to tell disability services about your mental health. Check with them about their privacy policy as this varies by school, but most will assure confidentiality at your request. Your teachers will know you have a documented disability, but that's all.

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