Effective Services & Supports for Young Adults in College

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Today’s Agenda

• Explain the differences between high school and college with regard to mandates and services.

• Discuss the resources & services on college campuses.

• Describe current efforts to enhance services and outcomes for this student population.

• Discuss research opportunities for NAMI member involvement.
Introductions

Is there anything in particular that you would like to learn from today’s discussion regarding resources for college students?
Important Differences

• Reductions in assurances for students and parents.

• IDEA transitions to FERPA.

• School driven moves to student initiated.

• Approach to accommodations shifts from overly inclusive to minimally required for access.
General Campus Resources

- Health services
- Counseling services
- Academic Advisement
- Tutoring
- Topic-specific Labs
  - Writing
  - Computer
  - Math
- Library
- Social/Support Groups
- Extracurricular activities
We know that students with psychiatric conditions are similar to students without diagnosed conditions in many ways, but how are they different?

What services do they need?
Campus Resources for Students with Disabilities

• Varies from campus to campus
  – Quality
  – Number of services
  – Provision

• Office of Disability Services
  – Required if federal funds are used
  – Private schools may not provide such services

• Counseling Services
  – Number and type of services vary…greatly
Disability Services

- Mandated to provide equal access to the college campus.
  - Services, academics, and events
- Developed to assist people with physical conditions.
  - Trained in the 1990s to accommodate the influx of students with learning disabilities.
  - As a whole, staff have not received specialized training in psychiatric conditions.
- Not recognized by students with psychiatric conditions as a resource.
- Staff may not be knowledgeable in how best to support students with psychiatric conditions.
  - If your child has a 504 plan, consider disability services as a selection criterion.
Accommodations & Assistive Technology

• Student initiated.

• Accommodations are approved by Disability Services.

• Qualified Mental Health Practitioner (QMHP) provides the suggestions to ODS.

• Student (and parent?) discuss the implications of his/her disability and brainstorm about potential accommodations.

• Student must be self-educated about accommodations & AT.
  – QMHPs are not often trained on accommodations.
Accommodation & Assistive Technology Resources

• Systems that are relied upon are uninformed/ uneducated.
• Students must be knowledgeable about potential options.

UMASS Transitions RTC Tip Sheets:
http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/Publications.html

Boston University’s Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation:
http://cpr.bu.edu/resources/reasonable-accommodations
Getting Accommodations at College: Tools for School

Tip Sheet 2

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
Counseling Services

• Amazing to dismal.
• Provides services ranging from adjustment issues & exam stress to drug abuse & suicide prevention.
• Individual and group services.
• Courses of services/interventions differ.
• Varying policies on long-term and short-term services.
  – Students who require long-term services for an existing mental health condition may be referred out.
• Referrals for acute, critical services.
  – university hospitals: special considerations for advanced students who have medical/psych rotations.
• Psychiatry and pharmacological treatment differ.
Need for more research for this student group.

• We do not yet have many answers, but there is a need for highly skilled services on campus and the community.

• For students with psychiatric conditions, we do not know:
  – what are the critical skills and deficits among this student population.
  – what interventions are most effective at assisting students develop the skills or compensate for the barriers.
  – who succeeds and why.
  – who is unsuccessful and why.
Research in our Department

• Multi-site, randomized controlled trial of Supported Education
  – Intervention focused on bridging counseling & disability services with
    community mental health.

• Cognitive Remediation

• Development of Career Intervention for transition age youth
  and young adults (TAYYA)

• Survey of Innovative Practices

• Qualitative Interviews with TAYYA
Cognitive Remediation

- Research has shown that as a group, individuals with schizophrenia can experience difficulties with cognitive processes such as attention, certain types of memory, and executive functioning.

- Such cognitive difficulties are associated with detrimental functional outcomes, including in the areas of employment, social relationships, and independent living skills (Green et al., 2004).

- With the growing awareness of the relation between cognitive difficulties and functional outcome in schizophrenia, efforts to develop effective behavioral interventions that improve cognitive functioning have increased notably over the last ~15 years.
What is Cognitive Remediation?

• Cognitive remediation refers to an intervention that “targets cognitive deficit using scientific principles of learning with the ultimate goal of improving functional outcomes” (McGurk et al., 2013).

• Approaches vary in length, methods, and format.

• Skill or strategy coaching focuses on teaching skills that can be used to improve cognitive performance with the aim of reducing the impact of impairment and enhancing performance on real-world cognitive tasks.

• Some CR programs have been designed to be combined with specific psychiatric rehabilitation interventions (e.g., supported employment).
Developing Executive Functioning through Cognitive Remediation for College Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

- A randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of a CR intervention among college students with psychiatric conditions.

- **OVERALL GOAL OF THIS LINE OF RESEARCH**: To evaluate interventions with the aim of developing treatments and services that are effective at helping college students with psychiatric conditions succeed in the academic setting.

- **SAMPLE**:
  - 80 college students are being recruited from the New Jersey-NY metro area.
  - Participants are college or graduate students who:
    - are 18 years of age or older;
    - have a psychiatric condition;
    - are experiencing cognitive difficulties.

- **DESIGN**:
  - Each participant is randomized into either the treatment group or control group and followed for one year; outcomes will be compared between the groups.
Developing Executive Functioning through Cognitive Remediation for College Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

• All participants receive one session to review scores of the baseline assessments; this session includes:
  – Discussion of resources based on academic needs;
  – Identification of potential accommodations and/or assistive technology that may help address disability-related academic impairments.

• The treatment-condition participants then undergo the cognitive-remediation intervention for 12 weeks.
  – 1 hour/week; individualized sessions.
  – Targets executive functioning domains.
  – Combination of in-person skill development and homework.
Developing a Career-Focused Intervention for TAYYA with Psychiatric Conditions

• HYPE: Helping Youth on the Path to Employment

• A manualized intervention designed to be implemented by community providers.

• Recipients: Transition-age youth and young adults (TAYYA) with psychiatric conditions.

• Focuses on both education & employment.
Importance of HYPE

• Currently-available supported-employment services often do not tailor their services to the unique developmental needs of TAYYA.

• Supported-education practitioners that target their services to young adults may not be aware of the specific support needs of students with psychiatric conditions.

• Thus there is a need for career-development interventions that effectively address the unique needs of TAYYA with psychiatric conditions.

• Specifically, we believe that early and targeted interventions for TAYYA that emphasize long-term human capital development can be a powerful strategy for moving young adults towards successful career development and increased self-sufficiency.
Development of HYPE

• Looking to the literature: Scoping Review

• Looking to service providers: Survey of Innovative Practices

• Looking to TAYYA: Qualitative Interviews
  – to learn from the experiences of individuals with psychiatric conditions;
  – for example: What was helpful? What got in your way? What services and supports would have been helpful?

• Synthesis & Manual Development
Opportunities for Involvement

• Cognitive Remediation Study
  – Currently recruiting participants

• HYPE: Participatory Action Council membership
  – Currently seeking members

• HYPE: Qualitative Interviews
  – Not currently recruiting; pending IRB review
Questions & Comments

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