

Hello from the RBHS Office of Disability Services!

Would you like additional information or a presentation in your course? Let us know: odsrbhs@ca.rutgers.edu

We invite your feedback <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2RH3NWV>

The RBHS Office of Disability Services (RBHSODS) provides the necessary tools, resources and support for disabled students to become responsible decision-makers and self-advocates in charge of their own future. We are also here to support faculty and staff.

Our Mission

The Office of Disability Services is dedicated to the philosophy that all Rutgers University students are assured equal opportunity, access and participation in the University's courses, programs, activities, services and facilities. We recognize that diverse abilities are a source of strength, empowerment, and enrichment for the entire university community and we are committed to the elimination of physical, instructional, and attitudinal barriers by promoting awareness and understanding throughout the university community

It has been a very productive year. We'd like to highlight our services and how our energy was allocated throughout the year.

By the numbers

- ⇒ 264 Students disclosed disabilities
- ⇒ 1026 Letters of Accommodations processed

2166 Student meetings:

Discuss Accommodations	22 %
Review Documentation	5 %
Provide Letters of Accommodation	48 %
Other	25 %

2200 Contacts/Communications

Students	85 %
RBHS School liaison	7 %
Faculty/clinical/clerkship director	6 %
Health care provider	0.4 %
Other	1.6 %

Students by School

RWJMS	12.88%
NJMS	12.50%
RSDM	2.65%
SHP	31.82%
SPH	12.12%
SGS	17.80%
SN	10.23%

Can Faculty be TOO ACCOMMODATING?

From Jane Jarrow, PhD.

What happens when a student says "I don't want to go through the disability services office. I want to advocate for myself and work directly with faculty and negotiate my own accommodations" ? Regardless of why students choose to go this independent route (and there are both good and bad reasons for taking such a stance), *the faculty member who agrees to disregard institutional policy and honor accommodation requests directly from the student may not be doing anyone a favor . Why? You might ask. Keep reading. . .*

Personal Jeopardy: Faculty members who work directly with students, discuss the disability, (possibly) look over the documentation, and agree to accommodation may be establishing themselves as the "gatekeepers" without meaning to do so. If the faculty member agrees to provide accommodation "x" and not accommodation "y" and later the student maintains that they were not appropriately accommodated, it is the faculty member's decision that is subject to question and the faculty member who could conceivably be held responsible for violating this student's civil rights. The faculty member who agrees to provide accommodations without institutional authorization for a student with one disability (for example, Learning Disability) but is less familiar and comfortable with another disability (for example, Attention deficit) and sends that student back through channels for official documentation could be opening himself/herself up for charges of discrimination, intimidation, or harassment. Faculty members who conscientiously try to make life easier for the student by allowing the student to bring the documentation directly to them may gain access to confidential information to which they should not be privy. *For all these reasons, it would be best for faculty not to be drawn into the collection of disability documentation or the decision-making regarding accommodation.*

Institutional Jeopardy: The student who provides documentation to a single faculty member (who accepts and acts on that documentation) may be able to make a legitimate case for saying they informed the institution of the disability and the need for accommodation. The faculty member should not discuss the information that has been shared (because of issues of privacy and confidentiality), and yet the student may be expecting to receive similar consideration and accommodation from other faculty on the basis of having provided the documentation to someone in authority at the institution. If it is not made clear that the institution has not been "notified" until the documentation is provided and requests are made from the Disability Services Office, the institution may not be in a position to defend itself from charges of discrimination by neglect for a student who does not receive accommodation by others within the institution.

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Can Faculty be TOO ACCOMMODATING? (continued)

Or consider this scenario - Professor A accepts the documentation and provides accommodation without going through channels, as do Professors B and C, and then Professor D says, "I will provide accommodations when I receive proper notification from the disability services office that this is appropriate." Professor D looks like the villain for following the rules! More distressing, however, is the possibility that the institution may be facing some very real difficulties if the disability services office determines that some of the accommodations that Professors A, B, and C provided were not warranted by the documentation and does not prescribe those same accommodations for Professor D to provide.

Student Jeopardy: Students with disabilities will still have those disabilities after they leave the postsecondary environment. Whether they choose to go on to graduate or professional /medical/dental school or seek a place in the world of work, chances are that if they needed accommodations to successfully function in higher education, they may need accommodations in their future endeavors as well. More and more often, those settings beyond the postsecondary experience are ready and willing to provide accommodations on the basis of verification from the higher education institution that those same accommodations have been provided during the student's postsecondary career. If the student has no record of having been served by the institution - if the student was never on file in the disability services office and received all of their accommodations through individual discussion with faculty - that student will have no official history of being regarded or served as a person with a disability and may have a much more difficult time establishing the claim to accommodations in the future.

So, what are faculty members to do? Refer all students requesting accommodations to your RBHS Office of Disability Services.

What are students to do? Contact the RBHS Office of Disability Services

RBHS ODS
65 Bergen Street, Suite 1441,
Newark, NJ 07107
odsrbhs@ca.rutgers.edu go.rutgers.edu/ODSRBHS



Cindy Poore-Pariseau, Ph.D.
Director, Disability Services
(V) 973-972-5396
(C) 973-640-0058



Jenna Rose, MA
Coordinator, Disability Services
(V) 973-972-5338
(C) 973-634-4823

What does Non-Disabled Privilege mean?

(from the Southwest ADA Center)

1. When I go out to eat, I do not think about whether I will be able to use the restroom or not.
2. I can access all of the online videos shared by friends on social media.
3. When I am out in public people speak directly to me rather than speaking about me to the person who is with me.
4. Most people I meet talk to me freely without worry about saying the "wrong thing".
5. I can get out of my car and enter a building without having people assume I need help doing so.
6. When I attend a workshop, I can assume the handouts and materials will be accessible to me.
7. I can easily buy postcards, greeting cards, dolls, and magazines featuring people of my disability status.
8. I never had the experience of feeling awkward while someone told a joke about people with my disability status.
9. I can go to a doctor without concern about whether the equipment they use will be accessible to me.
10. A service provider has never told me that they do not serve people like me.
11. I was never told that I might want to reconsider a career choice I was thinking of pursuing because people like me are not likely to succeed in that area.
12. When I apply for a job, I do not have to worry about whether or not to disclose my disability status.
13. I can vote without being concerned about access.
14. When I am asked to be on a committee, I can assume it is because of my strengths and potential contributions rather than because they needed a disabled person on the committee.
15. I can excel at something without someone telling me that I am an inspiration.
16. I have never had anyone question whether I can/should be a parent.
17. I have never been told how expensive I am to include.
18. If I choose to worship, I have several choices in my community.

Quote from recent student survey: initially, I had hesitancy seeking accommodations but the wonderful staff at ODS office addressed my concerns and assisted me with obtaining accommodations with empathy and without judgement.

