

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.

Students with Anxiety:

What it Looks Like and How to Support

By Jenna Rose

Picture it: you're a college student studying Biology, and today's the day of a big exam in Organic Chemistry. You've been studying for weeks. You can recite flash cards in your sleep, and yet, you woke up with this terrible feeling. You feel exhausted yet restless, and so nauseous you can't even think about eating. No matter how much you remind yourself that you're prepared, this feeling of impending doom follows you into the exam room. You get a copy of your exam, your mind blanks, your pulse quickens, and you begin to sweat. You can't concentrate enough to read through the first question. It feels like the clock on the wall is taunting you.



8 hours ago

At some point, everyone has felt anxious. Anxiety is one of the body's internal systems that prepare people to navigate dangerous (or what we might just perceive to be) situations. Anxiety is a normal reaction to life's stressors and can even be helpful in motivating someone to complete a big assignment at work or school. However, anxiety can be debilitating if it becomes overwhelming, unmanageable, or experienced at unpredictable or unexpected times. Over [40 million people](#) in the U.S. have a diagnosed anxiety disorder. These diagnoses include Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, PTSD, OCD, and panic disorder, to name a few. Since the start of the pandemic, the number of people with anxiety disorders is increasing.

"We have seen an increase in service-seeking through the Anxiety Disorders Clinic (ADC). This seems at least partially related to the challenges that people have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic," reported Dr. Andrea Quinn, Director of the Anxiety Disorders Clinic at the Graduate School for Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers (GSAPP), "It has been common for people to report during our initial phone screening that they have always struggled with some symptoms of anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorder but were 'managing' prior to the pandemic....We can think about all mental health disorders on a spectrum, with most people experiencing or being able to relate to some features or symptoms of various disorders.

However, when our coping skills become overwhelmed, these symptoms can increase to the point that it becomes more difficult to manage and interferes with our day-to-day lives. This is likely when someone might be considered to have a clinically diagnosable disorder and oftentimes, the point at which people reach out for mental health services.

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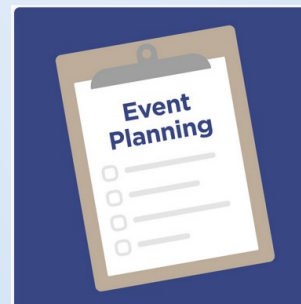
Disability Related Student Organization

According to the CDC, one in four people in the United States are disabled. RBHS students might work, take classes, and socialize with disabled individuals, or are disabled themselves. ODS is working toward creating a student organization focused on issues that impact disabled people. The organization will focus on promoting disability education, advocacy, and awareness on campus and beyond. This will be the first RBHS student organization that is not school or program specific. If you are an RBHS student and you have an interest in issues that impact disabled people, please contact Jenna Rose at jer298@rbhs.rutgers.edu.

Planning an Event?

Keep Accessibility and Inclusion in Mind

Written by Cait Charniga



Planning can be complicated, and who wants to add one more item to the process? You do, or you should, if you want to get your message out to all in our Beloved Community and beyond. When planning your event, consider utilizing the principles of [Universal Design](#). Universal Design is "The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their

age, size, ability or disability." <https://www.cio.gov/2017/12/20/universal-design.html>

Important accessibility items to include when planning an event:

Choosing your venue:

1. **Has the venue participated in an ADA audit in the past 5 years?**
2. **Does your venue provide elevator or ramp access?**

Some venues will cover accessibility on their website, usually somewhere in the FAQs. However, for those that don't, just send a quick email to the venue asking about accessibility.

3. **Is there accessible parking available?**

Is there parking nearby the event that's accessible to wheelchairs, canes, and walkers? Can a person with mobility challenges or fatigue get from the parking section to the event venue easily?

4. **Is there enough seating and personal space?**

Is there enough personal space to accommodate those with wheelchairs, canes, walkers, and service animals?

5. **Confirm access days before your event.**

Even if you've done all of your research, it's important to call your chosen venue a few days before the event to check that all accommodations are up and running. This way, if an elevator is broken or a nearby accessible parking lot is closed, you have time to figure out alternatives or communicate these changes to attendees.

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Tips for Accessible and Inclusive planning for Virtual Events:

<https://www.forumone.com/insights/blog/an-accessibility-inclusion-checklist-for-virtual-events/>



Happy Anniversary

The Olmstead Decision

June marked the 23rd anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, a landmark case interpreting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In *Olmstead*, the Court ruled that the ADA prohibits the unnecessary segregation of people with disabilities, who have a right to live and receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate.



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

45 years after the passage of Section 504, the Department of Education announced plans to update their implementation guidance:

"While the world has undergone enormous changes since 1977, the Department's Section 504 regulations have remained, with few exceptions, unaltered," said Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine E. Lhamon. "... it is time to start the process of updating them. Just as in 1977, the voices of people with disabilities must be heard and incorporated as we engage in that work."

**Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

A Note From Your Colleagues With Hearing Loss:

Just Use a Microphone Already

By Jessie B. Ramey (Chronicle of Higher Education)

Dear colleague: Today at the faculty meeting, I really wanted to tell you something: "It's not about you." When you were offered the microphone to make your comments, you said, "No thanks, I'm good." **But it's not about how you feel using a microphone. It's about how others can best hear.**

Refusing to use a microphone is like scheduling a meeting in a room accessible only by stairs. And then when your colleague in a wheelchair shows up and asks for a ramp so she can attend, you stand at the top of the steps and say, "No thanks, I'm good."

If our colleagues and students can't hear in meetings or in classrooms, they can't participate. Those of us with low hearing, a hearing impairment, or a hearing-assistive device need you to **speak into the microphone** so we can fully understand your words. In a crowded or large space, amplification makes it possible for everyone to engage and learn.

Simply talking loudly isn't enough. It's not about the fact that you took a high-school theater class and learned to project from the stage. Or that you can use your "teacher voice" to be heard in the back of the room. It's not about your belief that you are a good speaker.

The quality of sound coming from a microphone is different: It's more distinct and easier to hear.

When you said, "No thanks, I'm good," I wanted to yell, "But I'm not!" When you say you don't need a microphone, what you're really saying is that you don't care that I need you to use one. You are making the assumption that everyone is like you and can hear just fine. And that those with hearing loss will speak up for themselves — whether it's comfortable to do so or not, and no matter how many times we have already had to do that in these same meetings.

This is what ableism looks like — the assumption, both explicit and implicit, that able bodies are the desired norm. When you refuse to use a microphone, you are saying that people like me are worth less and don't need to be accommodated. It's an act of exclusion. When you groan and ask, "Oh no, do we really need to use the mike?" you are saying that your discomfort with hearing your own amplified voice outweighs someone else's right to be included in the meeting. When you ignore the microphone and ask, "Can everyone hear me in the back?," you are saying I don't exist. I know you don't mean this. *(continued on page 3)*

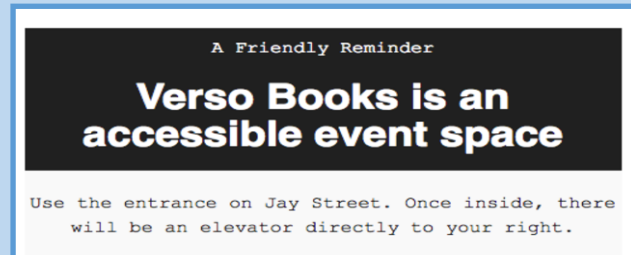


Accessible event planning continued from page 1

Communications checklist

The other part of accessibility is making sure your attendees know about all the details so they can prepare ahead of time. Consider doing the following:

1. **Put accessibility information in your event page footer. See example below:**



2. **Use your RSVP form to gather attendee needs ahead of time.**

Questions you can include in your forms:

- Dietary restrictions
- Requests for interpreting services or assistive listening devices
- Requests for accessible parking or seating
- An open text area asking about other accommodations that will help ensure full guest participation
- Preferred pronouns so you can display them on badges

Should you ever receive a request that you're unfamiliar with, you can simply collaborate with the requesting attendee. There is no shame in asking questions. If anything, it shows you take accessibility seriously and want your event to be as enjoyable as possible for all.

3. **Disclose any specifics in your pre-event communications.**

In terms of accessibility, it's better to over-communicate. It's extremely important to note the following in your pre-event communications to your attendees as these items can impact certain disabilities:

- Any sort of strobe lights or flashing images that may cause seizures.
- Distinctly amplified sounds/music
- The use of fog machines/any other chemicals or smells that may make your space inaccessible to individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) or Idiopathic Environmental Intolerances (IEI).
- Whether or not interpreting services will be provided for various speakers, panels, talks, etc.
- Whether or not you will be providing assistive listening devices for hard of hearing attendees. (Fact: These are fairly inexpensive!)
- All optional parts of your event, including off-site social activities, that may not be fully accessible.

4. **Let your speakers know about accommodations beforehand.**

The speakers at your event should know about accommodations so they can be prepared. Some accessibility notes to provide speakers may include:

- Speak clearly (ideally facing forward without covering your mouth).
- Avoid acronyms and colloquialisms as much as possible.
- When addressing someone specifically, ask for his/her/their name and pronouns to confirm.
- Specify when you're finished speaking.
- If there are interpreters, always look at and address the participating attendee rather than the interpreter.

Become an Advocate

Making your event more accessible and inclusive opens up a space to begin a much-needed conversation around accessible event marketing and becoming an advocate. This may require some thought and work, as it will force you to rethink how you typically host events.

Part of this rethinking might also include reaching out to your attendees both during and after the event to see how things went and if they were comfortable, informed, and able to fully participate. Always get event feedback and continue to improve your planning practices around accessibility.

You will find a detailed accessibility event planning tool-kit at:

<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/commission-disability-rights/accessible-meetings-toolkit.pdf>



Students with Anxiety, continued from page 1

It of course makes sense that people have had more difficulty coping in recent years, with the increased stress, uncertainty, and isolation related to COVID. In particular, child and adolescent referrals is one place where I have seen an obvious increase..."

Anxiety can manifest itself in many ways: both physical and psychological. People may feel nervous, restless, tense, and have a sense of impending danger, panic, or doom. This can lead to difficulty concentrating. Heart rates may rise, palms begin to sweat, and a person may feel weak, and begin to tremble. Outside of a specific event, anxiety can impact sleep schedule, appetite, general mood, and many other aspects of a person's life.

For students living with an anxiety disorder, navigating academics may come with its own set of challenges. "A student struggling [with social anxiety] this way may have difficulty attending classes because of worries about others noticing them in a negative way. They may have difficulty participating in group work or even handing in assignments because of fears about the harsh judgements of their professor. Another example might be a student who is struggling with Panic Disorder, where they have been experiencing panic attacks that seem to come out of nowhere and feel uncontrollable. Panic attacks are so uncomfortable that the student might stop doing things that have triggered panic attacks in the past, like going to class or going to crowded campus events, hoping to avoid future panic attacks," Dr. Quinn shared.



Dr. Quinn provided some ideas on how to support students with anxiety:

1. "be willing to listen. It may be extremely difficult for someone struggling with anxiety to ask for help. They may be judging themselves harshly or assuming that others will. If a student does manage to ask, it helps to reinforce this behavior by expressing compassion and understanding ... It may encourage the student to continue to reach out for help in the future, rather than shutting down and struggling alone."
2. If you notice that a student is exhibiting concerning behaviors like missing class, not turning in assignments, or overall, slipping in performance, it's important not to jump to the conclusion that a student is irresponsible or doesn't care about their education. "It is a helpful starting point to assume that the student is doing their best and that, even the less acceptable behavior the faculty or staff member is seeing, may be requiring a great deal of effort. Pulling the student aside privately to describe what you've noticed and ask if the student is doing ok and/or in need of support can sometimes make a major difference to a student who is struggling and feeling hopeless," said Dr. Quinn.
3. Beyond privately checking in with a student and listening without judgement, faculty and staff can also familiarize themselves with campus resources available to students who are struggling with mental health or other challenges. Some examples of these supports may be [University Behavioral Health Care](#) or [GSAPP](#). If a student discloses that they have a diagnosis, refer them to the [Office of Disability Services](#) to explore reasonable accommodations.

Finally, members of the Rutgers community can work to reduce stigma around anxiety and seeking professional support. "I have noticed a movement in the country in recent years, particularly among young people, to normalize talking about mental health challenges and seeking support and treatment. I hope that the Rutgers community can continue to be part of this conversation," Dr. Quinn said, "I'm hopeful that Rutgers community members can advance the work of normalizing, both for themselves and others, seeking help from a **mental health specialist**... Anxiety is so common that something like 1 in 10 Americans will suffer with a diagnosable anxiety disorder at some point in their lives. An even greater number can relate to experiencing some symptoms of anxiety. Yet, people often feel alone in their struggles and hide them from the people in their lives, assuming no one will understand. I'm hoping as the conversation around anxiety and mental health in general continues to grow, we will all feel less alone and more aware of the help that is out there for us."

Hearing Loss, continued from page 2

But you are using the culturally accepted default belief that no one in the room needs amplified sound — because if they do, they would tell you, right? And then (and only then) you will use the microphone.

What if we flip the script, and start with the assumption that people like me do exist and are in the room? Then there is no need to ask if everyone can hear, and force people to continually out themselves.

For people with disabilities, constantly being excluded, made to feel invisible, and having to self-advocate for even basic accommodations is a daily frustration. Dealing with hearing loss is also exhausting. When there is no microphone, we are spending a huge cognitive load concentrating on hearing your words. With amplification, I can turn my attention to thinking about what you are saying and being present in the meeting or the classroom. It literally frees up brain cycles to attend to the reason we are gathered together.

Because hearing loss is an invisible disability, perhaps you are unaware of how many of your colleagues and students struggle with this issue every day. **About 15 percent of American adults over the age of 18 have some hearing loss.** That means there are probably several students in your classroom trying to hear you clearly. Because hearing loss is extremely common as we age, **about a quarter of people between 55 and 64 are not hearing well, and fully half of those over 65 are hard of hearing.**

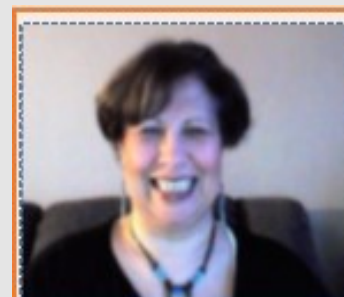
So what can academics do? Here are some best practices we should all use in our meetings, at our conferences, and in our classrooms to fully include those with hearing loss:

- If a microphone is available, use it. Make it a personal habit, and make sure your guest speakers are using it, too. *Bonus points: As an ally to those with disabilities, you can model inclusion by explaining to your audiences and to students why you are using the microphone, and why they should, too.*
- If you are running an event or organizing a conference, be sure there is amplification in the space you are using, or arrange to have it brought in. Build this technology into your budget.
- If you have a Q&A with an audience, pass a microphone around for listeners to ask questions. In a large room, passing around a mike might require a lot of patience. You can let people know why this is so important. If there is no way to amplify audience questions, make sure the moderator with a mike repeats the question clearly. If you are moderating a panel, be sure all the panelists are speaking into their mikes.
- Learn to use a microphone correctly. For most mikes, you must hold them very near your mouth. If it's on a stand, make sure you keep your mouth very close (usually one to two inches away) and don't wander away or turn your head from side to side. With hand-held microphones, be aware that it's easy to forget and let your arm drop; remember, your belly button is not doing the talking. With clip-on lapel mikes, make sure they are secured high enough on your clothing, away from clacking jewelry, and facing your mouth.
- When you show a film, be sure to turn on the subtitles if they are available. Make this standard practice, not just when you know a person with hearing loss is in the room.



Remember, dear colleague, it's not about you. It's about how you can help establish new norms for academic spaces so that they are fully inclusive, and everyone can participate and learn.

Jessie B. Ramey is director of the Women's Institute at Chatham University and an associate professor of women's and gender studies. She is also chair of the Gender Equity Commission for the City of Pittsburgh.



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