I'M HERE...WHERE ARE YOU?
POST-SECONDARY SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD

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High Incidence Disabilities in Higher Education Conference
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Agenda

• Identify ways student service provision is impacted by ASD
• Discuss strategies to address the challenges
• Explore meaningful and effective responses
Why are we here today?

- **Supporting Students with ASD to:**
  - Enhance college environment
  - Overcome issues navigating social environment (including student support services)
  - Benefit from creative support approaches

- **Clearing Pathways for Meaningful Success:**
  - Recognizing unique needs, strengths, possibilities
  - Harnessing the power of collaboration
  - Secondary and Post-Secondary Conversations
What Do We Know?

• Many individuals with ASD have the intellectual capacity for post-secondary content (Stoddart, Burke, & King, 2012; Vanbergeijk, Klin, & Volkmar, 2008) and interested in attending post-secondary education. (Camarena & Sarigiani, 2009)

• More students with ASD are accessing post-secondary options (Dipeolu, Storlie, & Johnson, 2015; McKeon, Alpern, & Zager, 2013; Zager & Alpern, 2010)
What Do We Know?

• Students with ASD enrich PSE environment:
  • Uniqueness, attention to detail, independence, passion, etc. (DeOrnellas, 2015)

What Do We Know?

• Students with ASD may experience lower success rates in PSE and employment (Shattuck et al., 2012)

• There is more work for us to do!
The ASK

- Initiate
- Reach out
- Communicate needs
- Identify issues
- Show up
- Participate
- Navigate services
- Self monitor
- Come see us
- Articulate
- Wait
- Remember
The Challenges

- Executive functions
- Sensory
- Past experiences
- Rigidity
- Sense of urgency
- Processing
- Independence
- Mental health
- Comorbid issues
What it Takes to Show Up to our Services

- When students arrive at the service, they have already done some heavy lifting
What it Takes to Show Up to our Services

• “I’m so glad you reached out. We can see you next Thursday.”
What it Takes to Show Up to our Services

- “Great to see you, just wait here in the waiting room.”
What it Takes to Show Up to our Services

• “That’s awesome you are reaching out - did you bring your documents, your timetable, your passwords, your financials and the contact for your medical professional?”
What it Takes to Show Up to our Services

• “Welcome students! We have got great activities planned for you in this first week!”
What we are learning students need

• Early contact
• Micro-exercises
• Supports that “get them”
• An anchor or go-to
• Spaces

• Individualized supports
• Just-in-time service
• Supports for the long-game
• Sense of connection
• Transition out
• I need it now!!
Different Services, Different Challenges!

- DSO
- Counselling
- Academic Support
- Diversity
- Clubs
- Test Centers
- Health Services
- Security Services
- Library
- Registrar
- Financial Aid
- Employment Center
- Residence
How Do We “Show Up” for Our Students with ASD?

• Priorities for service providers
• Our own obstacles to navigate
• Strategies
• Getting Creative
Priorities and Obstacles

What are some of the competing priorities that support services face?

What are some of the obstacles services have in making changes?
Strategies

- Leveraging
- Collaborations
- Awareness building
- Communications
- Innovating new services
- Accessing and using student feedback
- Professional development
- Reviewing practices and procedures
Examples

Getting creative with adjustments and innovations!
Transition Topic 2: Getting Ready

• Tara says….

Register with the DSO early. Sometime is August is good.

My mom took care of all the logistics while I was working at a Summer Camp. I wish I had been more involved – I would have felt more independent. It would have been ME GOING TO COLLEGE, not MOM SENDING ME TO COLLEGE.

• Alex says..
Leveraging Faculty Perspectives...
Leveraging Spaces

Multipurpose space

LS Drop Ins
Collaborations – The Calm Room

Using physical space to challenge social norms

Creating meaningfully informed spaces that empower

Connecting our students through collaborations
Awareness Building
Communications
Clear Guidelines example used in Faculty Training

Course Procedures
• There are procedures in place that you are expected to follow as a student in the [School of _____]. These procedures can be found __________. As well, you will find a few key items highlighted in the bullet points below:

Explicit instruction on course procedures
• Missing a Test: When you miss a test, please _____ [e.g., present a doctor’s note, contact the professor within 24-hours of the test date]
• Missing an Assignment Deadline: If you miss an assignment submission deadline, you will ________ [e.g., be subject to the penalties laid out in our Course Section Information document]
• Requesting Assignment Extensions: If you require an extension for an assignment, please contact me at least 3 days in advance of the due date. To note: whether or not an extension is granted is up to the professor’s discretion.

Explicit instructions on how to contact teacher
Please note that, as your professor/instructor, I am here to help. You are welcome to ask questions during my office hour [insert date and time] or via e-mail [insert e-mail]. Your e-mails will be answered within [24] hours.

Explicit instructions on when to contact teacher
Create an example like this for a student service. Can you think of any hidden curriculum information that could be also included?
Innovations

- Let’s share some!
Professional Development
Faculty/Staff Perception of Capacity Following Professional Development
From TSC Staff (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Number of Faculty/Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel better able to support students with ASD in the college environment</td>
<td>1 - Not at all true (1), 2 (2), 3 (3), 4 (4), 5 - Very true (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have implemented at least one concrete strategy to support a student on the spectrum</td>
<td>1 - Not at all true (1), 2 (2), 3 (3), 4 (4), 5 - Very true (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can recognize more positive aspects to having a student with ASD in the college than before this professional development</td>
<td>1 - Not at all true (1), 2 (2), 3 (3), 4 (4), 5 - Very true (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Feedback

Feel the love, embrace the cold water

The goal is for student to see themselves reflected in the service. Student feedback is critical for this.
Student Feedback

• Provide multiple opportunities and methods
• Give yourself time to actually review and consider it
• Time impacts it – feedback while in a consistently used service vs feedback when sent a survey after a use of a one time service
A Little Can do a Lot

- Sensory boxes
- Scripts
- Visual process descriptions
- Checklists
- Summary notes
- Alternate waiting areas, choices
- Tools to manage stress
References


References


Questions?

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