

SOUTHWESTERN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Office of Civil Rights
Disability Services
Information for Staff and Faculty

On January 22 and 23, 2014 the College met with staff from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) conducting a voluntary review. This type of review is common for institutions that receive federal money to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to safeguard against discrimination, allowing all an opportunity for employment and an education.

Southwestern continues to make efforts to reduce barriers on campus for students, staff and community members with disabilities. This document contains two parts, the first is a list of accommodations that the College has in place for students with disabilities and the second is information about disabilities etiquette.

PART ONE - Accommodations at SWOCC

Below is a list of definitions.

- **Accommodation** - to make adjustments to ensure access to the curricular and co-curricular activities of the College. The key word is access.
- **ADA Americans with Disabilities Act** - a civil rights law that focuses on the non-discrimination of people with disabilities.
- **Disability** is a physical, emotional or cognitive disorder that creates a significant impairment to a basic life activity (e.g., standing, walking, breathing, thinking, seeing, hearing, etc.).
- **Handicap** - barriers in the environment, both physical and social, that reduce access for the person with a disability. For example, stairs leading up to a door is creating a handicap for a person who uses a wheelchair. An accommodation would be to build a ramp to the door thus eliminating the handicap, but the person still remains disabled.

Common Accommodations at the College

Accommodations are determined by documentation provided by the student that lists the specific disability and what reasonable accommodations would be appropriate. The key word here is reasonable, which typically is determined between what the documentation says and the specific situation or standards of the situation. There is no accommodation that fits all situations. Although there are typical accommodations, each accommodation is unique to that student's particular situation. Below are some typical accommodations at the College.

- **Facilities**
 - Door openers
 - Ramps
 - Campus maps that list accessible routes
 - Parking spaces for disabled drivers
 - Braille tabs to mark elevator floor numbering
 - Wheelchair accessible stalls in restrooms

- Accessible showers in Rec Center and Prosper Hall
- Accessible exercise equipment in Rec Center
- **Housing**
 - Accessible bathrooms in apartments
 - Wheelchair accessible counter tops and cabinets
 - Accessible closets
 - Bed shakers to wake the student who is deaf/hard of hearing in case of fire
 - Apartments located on the ground level
 - Pricing adjustments, if appropriate
- **Classroom**
 - Adjustable table and chairs
- **Academic Accommodations**
 - Preferred seating
 - Note takers
 - Digital recorders
 - Frequent breaks
 - Printed materials in alternative formats (i.e., text books and other relevant class materials)
 - Extra time on exams for both face-to-face and online classes
 - Remote interpreters
 - Video captioning
 - Class substitutions
 - Alternative assignments substitutions
 - Moving classrooms to an accessible area
 - Memory aids
 - Flexible attendance policy
 - Readers for exams and other materials
 - Tutors, if appropriate
 - Assistive technology (e.g., software, large print monitors. Live Scribe pens, spell checkers, talking calculators, etc.)

(Please note, that any accommodation that is provided to a student must be reasonable and appropriate. There is no one accommodation that is right for all students or in all situations).

PART TWO - Disability Etiquette

Some people feel unsure or anxious when they come in contact with a person with a disability. The following information may help reduce the uncertainties of being around people with disabilities.

How do I treat someone with a disability?

... Like a person. Like a person. Like a person!

People with disabilities are people who have a condition that affects the way they do things. Like snowflakes or fingerprints, no two people with a disability are exactly alike; even if they both have the same type of disability.

People with disabilities ask that you see them as **people first and their disability second** ... or third ... or last. People with disabilities come to the College for the same reason that people without disabilities come -- they want to pursue their education in order to find a career. Because they have a disability, people with disabilities may do things differently than people without disabilities.

They may use a power wheelchair instead of walking. They may use a white cane or a guide dog to help them avoid obstacles and find their way around.

They may use a word board or a computer to help them communicate verbally. Or they may need a sign language interpreter.

They may need assistance in reading and filling out forms. Or they may need to have materials given to them in different formats, such as Braille, large print, or on cassette tape.

Regardless of how an individual with a disability accomplishes specific tasks, people with disabilities have the same right as any other person to use the services the College provides.

Refusing to serve someone with a disability or insisting that they go to Vocational Rehabilitation is a violation of both the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

How do I interact with people who have disabilities?

First and foremost ... Do not let fear and uncertainty keep you from getting to know people with disabilities!

Fear of the unknown and lack of knowledge about how to act can lead to uneasiness when meeting a person who has a disability. Remember, a person with a disability is a **person with feelings**. Treat him or her as you would want to be treated.

You cannot always see someone's disability. If a person acts unusual or seems different, **just be yourself**. Let common sense and good manners break down any barriers you may encounter.

Basic points of etiquette:

1. Avoid asking personal questions about someone's disability. If you must ask, be sensitive and show respect. Do not probe, if the person declines to discuss it.
2. Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person with a disability to do or say something.

3. Be polite and patient when offering assistance, and **wait** until your offer is accepted. Listen or ask for specific instructions.
4. When planning a meeting or other event, try to anticipate specific accommodations a person with a disability might need. If a barrier cannot be avoided, let the person know ahead of time.
5. Be respectful of the rights of people with disabilities to use accessible parking spaces.

When speaking or writing about disability:

1. Refer to a person's disability only when necessary and appropriate.
2. Use **people first** language --refer to the individual first, then to his or her disability. (It is better to say "**person with a disability**," rather than "disabled person.")
3. The following terms should be avoided in a disability context, because they disempower people or have negative meanings:
 - o invalid
 - o able-bodied
 - o wheelchair-bound
 - o victim
 - o crippled
 - o defect
 - o suffers from
 - o handicapped
 - o a patient
4. Avoid terms that imply that people with disabilities are overly courageous, brave, special, or superhuman. (Except when talking about Tim)

Guidelines to help prevent uncomfortable situations when meeting or interacting with individuals with disabilities:

- Person who has a disability
- Person who has a disability that affects learning, intelligence or brain function
- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Person who is deaf or uses a hearing aid
- Person with a disability that affects speech
- Person who is blind or has a disability that affects sight or vision

When meeting and talking with a person who has a disability:

1. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.) A smile along with a spoken greeting is also always appropriate.
2. Speak directly to the person with a disability, not just to the ones accompanying him or her.
3. Do not mention the person's disability, unless he or she talks about it or it is relevant to the conversation.
4. Treat adults as adults. **Do not patronize or talk down** to people with disabilities.
5. Be patient and give your undivided attention, especially with someone who speaks slowly or with great effort.

6. Never pretend to understand what a person is saying. Ask the person to repeat or rephrase, or offer him or her pen and paper.
7. It is okay to use common expressions like **see you soon** or **I had better be running along**.
8. Relax. Anyone can make mistakes. Offer an apology if you forget some courtesy. Keep a sense of humor and a willingness to communicate.

When meeting someone with a disability that affects learning, intelligence, or brain function:

1. Keep your communication simple. Rephrase comments or questions for better clarity.
2. Stay focused on the person as he or she responds to you.
3. Allow the person time to tell or show you what he or she wants.

When you are with a person who uses a wheelchair:

1. Do not push, lean on, or hold onto a person's wheelchair unless the person asks you to. The wheelchair is part of his or her personal space.
2. Try to put yourself at eye level when talking with someone in a wheelchair. Sit or kneel in front of the person.
3. Rearrange furniture or objects to accommodate a wheelchair before the person arrives.
4. Offer to tell where accessible restrooms, telephones, and water fountains are located.
5. When giving directions to a person in a wheelchair, consider distance, weather conditions, and physical obstacles (e.g., curbs, stairs, steep hills, etc.)

Talking with a person who is deaf or uses a hearing aid:

1. Let the person take the lead in establishing the communication mode, such as lip-reading, sign language, or writing notes.
2. Talk directly to the person, even when a sign language interpreter is present.
3. If the person lip-reads, face him or her directly, speak clearly and with a moderate pace.
4. With some people, it may help to simplify your sentences and use more facial expressions and body language.

When meeting a person with a disability that affects speech:

1. Pay attention, be patient, and wait for the person to complete a word or thought. Do not finish it for the person.
2. Ask the person to repeat what is said, if you do not understand. Tell the person what you heard and see if it is close to what he or she is saying.
3. Be prepared for various devices or techniques used to enhance or augment speech. Do not be afraid to communicate with someone who uses an alphabet board or a computer with synthesized speech.

Interacting with a person who is blind or has a disability that affects sight or vision:

1. When greeting the person, identify yourself and introduce others who may be present.
2. Do not leave the person without excusing yourself first.
3. When asked to guide someone with a sight disability, never push or pull the person. Allow him or her to take your arm, then walk slightly ahead. Point out doors, stairs, or curbs, as you approach them.

4. As you enter a room with the person, describe the layout and location of furniture, etc.
5. Be specific when describing the location of objects.(Example: "There is a chair three feet from you at eleven o'clock.")
6. Do not pet or distract a guide dog. The dog is responsible for its owner's safety and is always working. It is not a pet.

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