Disability Access in Health Science Education

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Agenda

- Review four areas of focus in creating disability access in health science education:
  1. growing your knowledge of the health sciences
  2. understanding discipline-specific accommodations
  3. developing effective relationships and processes
  4. identifying areas for collaboration

- Q&A
Growing Your Knowledge of the Health Sciences

FOCUS AREA #1
Equal Access for Student with Disabilities: The Guide for Health Science and Professional Education

Lisa M. Meeks, Neera R. Jain, and Elisa P. Laird
2nd Edition, 2020
Accessibility, Inclusion, and Action in Medical Education: Lived Experiences of Learners and Physicians with Disabilities

Association of American Medical Colleges 2018
Other Resources

- **Discipline-specific organizations**
  - National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities

- **DS professional associations**
  - Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
  - Coalition for Disability Access in Health Science Education

- College’s website, student handbook, staff

- Google like you’re a prospective student
Key Terminology

- **Didactic (adj.)** = traditional, lecture-based curriculum

- **Clinical/Clerkship/Rotation (n. or adj.)** = on-site supervised experiential learning and practice, similar to an internship

- **Preceptor (n.)** = professional supervisor for a student’s clinical hours

- **Precept (v.)** = the act of being a student’s preceptor

- **Intermediaries (n.)** = staff member paired with a disabled student to assist with physical tasks which are not required clinical skills
Key Terminology (cont.)

- **Technical Standards** (*n.*) = The essential abilities and characteristics required for program entry, continuation, and graduation; not clinical skills

- **OSCE** (*n.*) = Objective Structured Clinical Exam; an experiential assessment of clinical skills with a standardized patient (actor); typically includes reviewing door notes (initial written information), patient interaction, and writing a case note.

- **Licensing/Certification/Board Exams** (*n.*) = Required for licensure or certification; discipline specific (NCLEX, USMLE, etc.)
Understanding Discipline-Specific Accommodations

FOCUS AREA #2
Clinical Accommodations

- Clinical site **commute limit**
- Clinical rotation **schedule adjustments** (e.g. time of day, breaks)
- **Tardiness/absences/makeup hours**
- **Communication access** (e.g. interpreters, CART, specialized stethoscope)
- **Intermediaries**
- **Lifting/movement restrictions**
- **Feedback modality** (e.g. 1:1, distraction-reduced, taking notes)
Other Accommodations

- Leave of absence and program progress/cohorts

- Extended time on OSCEs

- Chemical sensitivities in labs (e.g. formaldehyde)

- Remote participation or advanced PPE (e.g. COVID high-risk conditions)

- Assistive tech solutions in lab
Developing Effective Relationships & Processes

FOCUS AREA #3
Strategies

- **Identify key players** in college

- **Designate an office liaison** (college model)

- **Approach as a partnership**; ask about their concerns and suggestions

- **Make sure you’re on the same page** about the basics (e.g. scope of disability, definition of a “reasonable accommodation”, language)

- **Do your homework**: terminology, examples, resources

- **Honor patient safety**
Identifying Areas for Collaboration

FOCUS AREA #4
Collaboration Ideas

**Faculty Development**
- Accommodations and inclusive course design
- Attitudinal barriers and professional culture
- Intersection with disability studies

**Diversity and Inclusion Efforts**
- Rhetoric/Values
- Education
- Assessment/Data

**Policies and Procedures**
- Accommodation statements
- Technical standards: organic vs. functional
- HR details for intermediaries
Q&A

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