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Going to College: A Guide to Transition Planning for Those with Disabilities

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Numbers 2010-48869-20685, 2012-48755-20306, and 2014-48770-22587.



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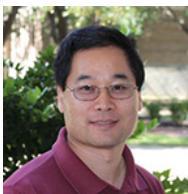
Who's joining us today? *Type your response in chat pod.

- Civilian
- Military Branch & Program
- Community-based
- University/Extension



Going to College: A Guide to Transition Planning

Dr. Dan Zhang, Presenter



- Professor, Special Education, Texas A&M University
- Director, Center on Disability and Development
- Area of Expertise: Transition education and services for individuals with disabilities.



Objectives

Upon completion of this webinar, you will be able to:

- Define the needs and benefits of attending postsecondary education
- Identify the challenges that students with disabilities and wounded warriors face in their transition to postsecondary education
- Apply effective strategies to plan the transition to postsecondary education
- Identify and effectively request reasonable accommodations and supports



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Why Is PSE Necessary?

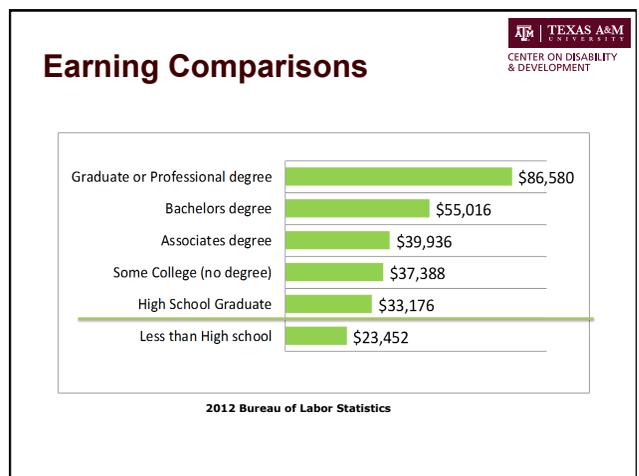
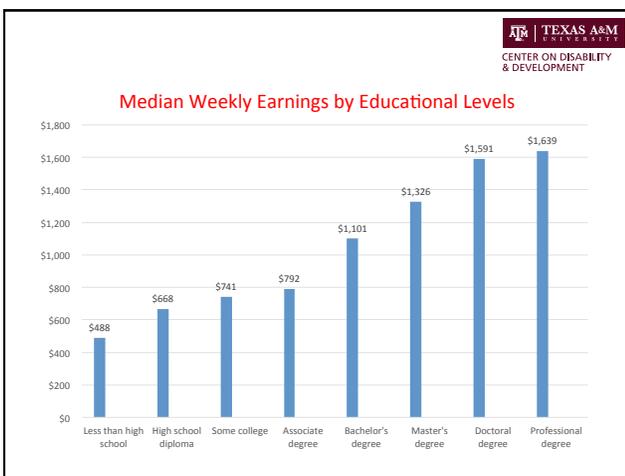
- The 21st century is known as an era of globalization. Worldwide competitions among businesses and among job seekers have made postsecondary education (PSE) *the most important education* for individuals with and without disabilities.
- Participation in and graduation from PSE become *necessary for young adults to find employment and to enjoy well-being*, including personal satisfaction, sense of purpose, and financial independence. (Carnevale, Rose & Cheah, 2011; Stodden & Whelley, 2004; Thoma, Lakin, Carlson, Domzal, Austin, & Boyd, 2011)

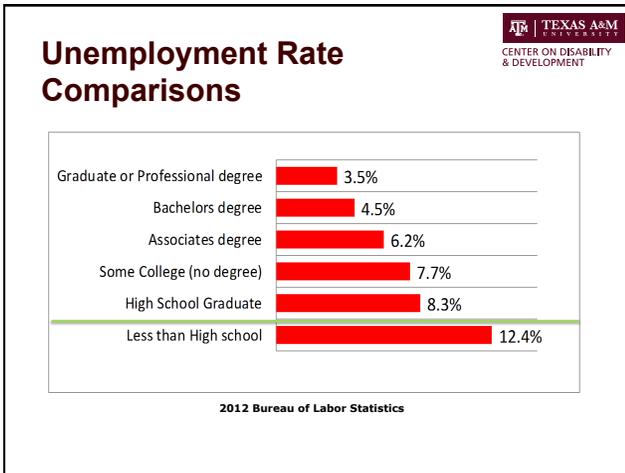


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Earnings

- In general, people who earn a college degree will accrue much better lifelong earnings.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics published Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment illustrating the median weekly earnings in 2014 for education levels from less than a high school diploma to a doctoral degree.

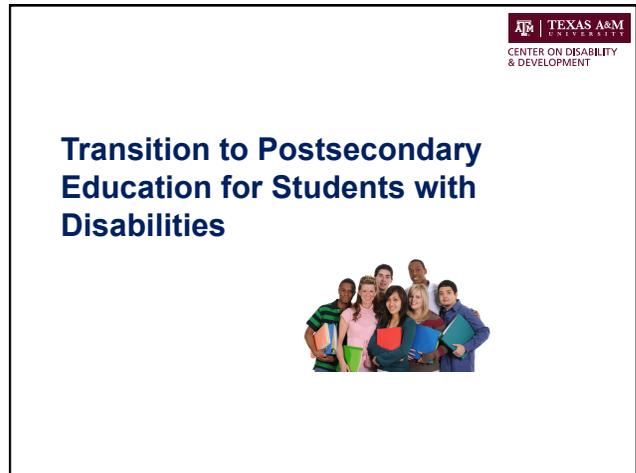
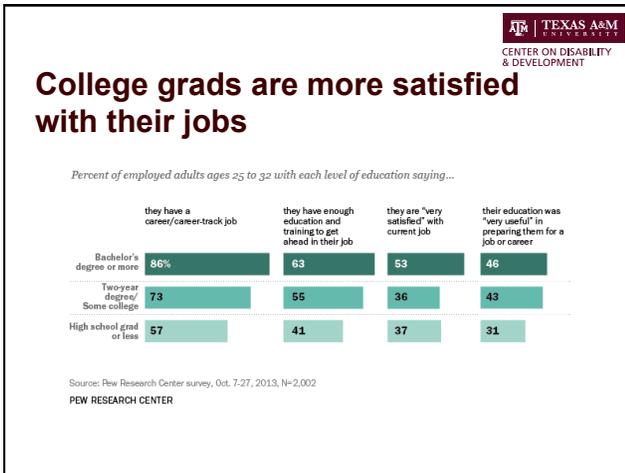





- ### BENEFITS
- A second reason for going to PSE is to increase the likelihood of receiving good and stable benefits
 - Health care
 - Vacation
 - Personal & sick leaves
 - Retirement
 - Additional coursework
 - Local clubs and organizations
 - Discount on products
 - Stocks
 -
- Wheman & Yasuda, 2005

- ### Career Advancement
- Opportunities for career advancement is one of the most compelling reasons for going to PSE.
 - Many people who are capable of supervisory or managerial positions do not get the opportunity because they do not have a college degree.
- Wehman & Yasuda
-

- ### Marketability
-
- The ability to move from job to job or career to career
 - This is especially important in the 21st century because many jobs or careers become obsolete and disappear; as a result, average people need to change job or career at a much frequent rate than before
 - A college degree helps pave the way for job or career changes.





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Challenges

Research and Government data have shown:

- Youth with disabilities are significantly less likely to start postsecondary education than are their peers without disabilities (27% vs. 68%).
- Students with disabilities are significantly more likely to be enrolled in sub-baccalaureate programs such as two-year colleges or "other" institutions such as for-profit vocational institutions. (NCES, 1999).
- On average, students with disabilities who finish postsecondary education take twice as long to complete their degree than do their non-disabled peers, yet special provisions for financial aid are not in place.
- More than 80% of youth with disabilities who attempt postsecondary education require some assistance to manage/coordinate their educational and related services.



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Challenges Cont.

- Many high school students with disabilities who have the potential to be a successful college student do not set this goal for themselves because of their own low expectations as well as low expectations of others
- Students with disabilities often do not have direct access to successful role models and mentors that can guide or help them with personal experience.
- Although there has been an increase in enrollment in postsecondary education by those with disabilities, the increase is more at 2-year colleges where there is an open enrollment policy; the increase was also for those with sensory impairments or learning disabilities, not those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Challenges Cont.



- Difficulties with standard-based curricula and standardized testing.
- Lack of self-advocacy skills
- After entering college, students with disabilities have a lower rate of returning/staying in college and graduating with a degree.
- College-bound students who have disabilities must go through the same process as their nondisabled peers, but, because of their disabilities, they have to face additional challenges in making smooth transitions from high school to college

Additional Challenges Faced by Students with Disabilities



- Many do not understand their individual disability, how it affects their learning, or how to effectively describe it to others
- They have to be aware of the change in legal status as they make the transition to postsecondary education: from relying on the IDEA to relying on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This change of legal status requires them to exercise their self-determination skills to ensure that their rights and needs are met. But, many students with disabilities do not have these skills.
- College-bound students with disabilities have difficulties in nonacademic areas that are necessary for success in postsecondary education

Why?



- Are students with disabilities less likely to attend postsecondary schools of any kind?
- What are the barriers they encounter as they make transitions for high school to postsecondary education?



Lack of Appropriate Coursework during High School



- Need a foundation of reading, writing, and mathematics to do well on entrance exams (Getzel & Wehman, 2006).
- Must complete courses in general education curricula because they will be taught by content specialists (Kochhar-Bryant, Bassett, & Webb, 2009).
- Need collaboration between special ed and general ed + universal design (Hong, Ivy, Gonzalez, & Ehrensberger, 2007).

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Limited Knowledge about Finances & Adult Services

- Only 8.3% of college students with disabilities participate in supplemental security income, or SSDI
- Receive less financial aid & don't participate in assistance programs because of lack of awareness about SSI or SSDI and work incentive programs (Berry & Jones, 2000).
- Need education about benefits and resources while in high school.

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Inadequate Documentation

- Submit old documentation
- Submit IEPs
- "Disability documentation for the purpose of providing accommodations must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified" (AHEAD, 2004, p. 2).
- High schools are not required to supply the type of disability documentation that many colleges and universities require, thus causing a significant disconnect (NJCLD, 2007)

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Lack of Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination Skills

- Self-determination = most important skills students bring to college (Hitchings, Retish, & Horvath, 2005; Sitlington, 2003; Thoma & Wehmeyer, 2005) .
- Girls showed promise of making self-determined decisions but had no practice positive and constructive aspects of self-determination (Trainor, 2007).

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Lack of Awareness of Their Own Accommodations & How They Assist in Learning

- Students could not describe their accommodations and had little experience using them.
- Students could not explain if accommodations were working well for them in a variety of environments.
- Little knowledge about assistive technology (Kochhar-Bryant, Bassett, & Webb, 2009).

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A Shift...

- **From entitlement**
 - to self-determined application in the adult service world
 - To increased self-advocacy for postsecondary participation
- **From parental and professional-driven decision making to**
 - students deciding what services they will use
 - To “reasonable accommodations” that are guided by the ADA

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Differences between High School and College

• Responsibility	• Homework
• Class Time	• Grading
• Classroom Size	• Access to Teachers/ Professors
• Tests	• Life and Time Demands
• Study Time	• Parent Role
• Knowledge Acquisition	• Freedom
• Assignments	

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Students with disabilities can succeed in PSE with adequate support and reasonable accommodations

Effective Transition Planning is Key



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A Timetable for Transition Planning

Transition planning before high school

- The transition from middle school to high school appears to be a challenge for many students with disabilities
- High dropout rates seem to be a persistent problem
- Transition plan should begin earlier before students drop out
- Encourage students with the potential to take the most academically challenging program possible.

A Timetable for Transition Planning



Transition planning before high school cont.

- Middle school should develop an understanding of the way students learn and then teach students how to learn better and more efficiently
- During eighth grade, students should be taught a variety of skills that promote better study habits, time management, test preparation, and test taking.
- Students should be encouraged to actively participate in their IEP meetings and to suggest goals for inclusion in the document

Freshman Year



- Develop an understanding of disabilities
- Develop an understanding of their own disabilities
- Learn about their rights under the law
- Select courses that will prepare students for college
- Explore career options
- Develop greater independence

Sophomore Year



- College prep courses
- Planning
- Learning-strategies instruction
- Fostering self-determination
- Career exploration

Junior Year



- Exploring postsecondary options
- Evaluating disability support services
- SAT and ACT preparation
- The personal transition file
- Narrowing postsecondary options

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Senior Year

- Filling out applications (use Common Application that is accepted by more than 120 colleges)
- Assist with filling out the application form
- Narrowing down and choosing college
- Narrowing career exploration process to a preferred area of study at the postsecondary level
- Filing financial aid forms early
- Ranking and picking college

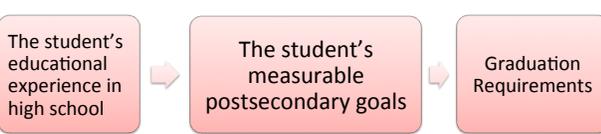
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Transition Plans Should...

- Identify appropriate postsecondary education goals
- Identify courses of study

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Courses of Study should show a direct relationship between . . .



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    graph LR
      A[The student's educational experience in high school] --> B[The student's measurable postsecondary goals]
      B --> C[Graduation Requirements]
  
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Example: Courses of Study

Mike will enroll in Hennepin Technical College in Broadcasting

School Year	Grade Level	Courses
2008-2009	9	Business Basics, Math Basics, Reading Essentials, Adapted Physical Education, Environmental Science, Current Events
2009-2010	10	Business Basics, Consumer Math, Readings and Literature Citizenship, Speech and Drama, Social Skills, Specially Designed Employability Skills, Family Living
2010-2011	11	English for Work, Math for the World of Work, Specially Designed Communications, Specially Designed Daily Living Skills, Graphic Design.
2011-2012	12	Specially Designed Communication and Writing Skills, Essentials of Business Operations, Computer Applications, Work Based Learning.

Anticipated month and year of graduation: **January 2012**

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Goal: Enter a four-year university

Instructional focus and outcomes

- Participate in fully integrated high school college preparatory curriculum
- Pass district proficiency exams
- Meet graduation requirements
- Complete college entrance requirements
- Access the general curriculum: steps and accommodations
 - King-Sears (2001) three steps for gaining access to the general curriculum (p. 205)

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Goal: Enter a Community College or a Professional Vocational School

Instructional focus and outcomes

- Participate in semi-integrated high school curriculum
- Pass district proficiency exams, with differential standards if necessary
- Meet graduation requirements
- Complete requirements for entering a community college or professional vocational school
- Outcomes: (1) high school diploma, (2) development of a personal academic and career occupational portfolio (containing the best work in school) subjects and job-related skills), (3) successful completion of prevocational training course and occupational training program, (4) develop computer literacy skills

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Student Voices

About Preparing for College

- It's important to learn how to type.
- You need to know how to wash clothes, iron, sew, and clean a bathroom.
- You will have to learn to sleep with noise and lights.
- Take rigorous classes during high school
- Read, read, read!

Getzel and Thoma, VCU



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Student Voices

About Studying

- There is no one to remind you to do homework.
- You need to learn how to allocate your time.
- The best place to study is an empty academic building.



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Student Voices

About Learning

- The most efficient way to learn is to attend every class.
- It is important to learn how to think and solve problems.
- Make sure to contact Disability Services no later than 2 weeks into the semester to arrange accommodations.
- Immediately establish open communication with professors.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.

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Student Voices

Things you learn about yourself

- There is no brother, sister, mother, father to get mad at when things go wrong.
- You must learn how to be on your own and make your own decisions.
- Getting used to a roommate is like getting married without ever being engaged.

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College Accommodations...

- Are based on what is **reasonable**
- Not what is least restrictive (IDEA)
- Are aimed at giving access to content and reduction of learning barriers (ADA), rather than promoting achievement (IDEA)

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Support Services and Accommodations in College

Academic Adjustments:

- Changes in length of time permitted for completion of degree program
- Substitution of specific courses required for completion of degree requirements
- Adaptation of the manner specific courses are conducted

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Support Services Cont.

Auxiliary Aids and Services:

- Tape recording class lectures
- Note takers or copy of instructors' notes
- Taped text or other readings
- Enlarged tests
- Extended time on tests or assignments

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Support Services Cont.

Auxiliary Aids and Services (cont.):

- Oral exams, tests read to student and record responses, or hands-on demonstration
- Lecture outline provided
- Calculator permitted
- Alternative assignments allowed (oral presentations or demonstration of skills)

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Several Issues

- Students need to be engaged in learning—passive learning is a problem—study found students with LD do not have academic autonomy
- Students need to understand their accommodations or services and need to adjust them or use them (self-assess what is working or not working).
- Students need to practice using accommodations and services during high school

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Disability Support Services in Postsecondary Settings

- Legally, colleges and universities must provide access and reasonable accommodations
- Actual services vary (from nonexistence to extensive/comprehensive)



'Melina'— college student with a disability

"Coming to the Disability Service Office gives me confidence that because your office helps others make accommodations for individual needs, it makes it so that I'm not worried about my shortcomings getting in the way of the work I know I can do."



'Charles'— college student with a disability

"College made me feel more mature and more focused on what to do. Certainly my family was happy and knew that I would do a good job in college. As a deaf individual going to a hearing college, you have to be at the same level as hearing students, and you're dealing with a hearing professor."



'Axel' – college student with a disability

"Then I came to college and everything was profoundly different compared to my high school experience. I had to learn really fast how to get around. I had just gotten my dog a month before so everything was different. I was very dependent on my parents. I was used to being told where to go, and what to do. I didn't make any of my own decisions."



'Jordyn'—college student with a disability

"... I had to learn that just because a professor is nice and laid back doesn't mean that he is going to give you a break. That was a huge shock to me in college! It's not like in high school where some teachers let you get by with doing less than everybody else. You have to do the very same work as the other students in class and compete against them. It's OK now, but at first I really didn't understand that."

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Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

- It is not feasible for most students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to go through the regular competitive admissions process and take on a typical major.
- Students with I/DD were excluded from postsecondary education.
- Recently, colleges have developed special programs for those with I/DD.
- Students with I/DD are participating in some specially designed PSE programs.

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TIPSID Programs

- Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education Program
- Funded by U.S. Department of Education
- 28 universities/colleges have a TIPSID program
 - The funding cycle ends this year (2015)
 - New 5-year grants will be awarded to universities/colleges on a competitive basis.

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The PATHS Program at Texas A&M

- A career-focused and inclusive program for individuals with I/DD and those without disabilities
- Students take coursework for a semester and participate in paid practicum for another semester
- Graduates from the PATHS program receive a certificate from the Center on Disability and Development and are assisted to find a job as direct support professionals

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- The PATHS began in 2011. A total of 38 individuals graduated from the first 3 cohorts (2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14).
- Of these graduates, 32 (84%) were employed upon graduation.
- Of these who found a job at graduation, 88% were employed one year after graduation.
- Their wages ranged from \$7.25/hour to \$20.00/hour, with an average of \$9.00/hour; the majority of them make between \$8.00-\$9.25/hour.

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Transition to Postsecondary Education for Wounded Warriors



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Participation in PSE by Wounded Warriors

- Grossman (2009) estimated that 40% of returning veterans heading to college may be individuals with disabilities (PTSD, TBI, depression, hearing and vision related injuries, mobility limitations, etc.)
- National Center for Education Statistics reports:
 - In 2007-08, 4.6% of students with disabilities in PSE was veterans
 - In 2011-12, this percentage increased to 6.9%
 - For PSE students without disabilities, the percentage of veterans remained similar (3.2% vs. 3.3%)

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Challenges for Wounded Warriors in PSE

Someone different from the others...

- Military experiences have set them apart from other students (both traditional and non-traditional)
- Unlike students with disabilities directly from high school, most returning veterans with disabilities have never been in such situation and do not have an IEP or experiences in getting reasonable accommodations or support.

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Perceptions about College and Disability Services

- Many arrive on campus in denial of their disability and with a perception that accommodations are “unfair” and only for the weak (Grossman, 2009).
- Not getting needed reasonable accommodations and support became an obstacle for some wounded warriors to successfully pass courses.

The Issue of Self-Disclose

- Many wounded warriors choose not to self-disclose
- But, in order to received disability related support services, all college students with disabilities have to **self-disclose** their disabilities.

A Quote from A Disability Service Office Staff

“Veterans are typically less willing to ask for or use academic accommodations, as there is still a significant stigma with having a disability in the military community. Most students do not come in to meet with me until they are struggling academically. Generally, once they have their accommodations and if they use them consistently, they do fine.”

A Case Study

A wounded warrior student had PTSD and extreme hypervigilance. The student could not pay attention in lecture if there were doors or people behind him. Even in the perfect spot, he still lost information because he was having to monitor the movements and noise of everyone in the large lecture halls. The Disability Service Office (DSO) set up preferential seating, so that the student could sit at the back of the room in an aisle seat. This way, he could get up and leave if he needed to. The DSO also set up accommodations for taking breaks and leaving the classroom when necessary, so that if he became too anxious, he could leave that room. The DSO also set up note taking accommodations so that he could review class information outside of the classroom environment when there were not as many people around him.

A Case Study

This student also went to his professors' office hours on a weekly basis to ask any questions he might have about course materials. The DSO also set up testing accommodations for the student. Due to his anxiety and hypervigilance, taking exams in the classroom was not a good testing environment. He was running out of time on the exams. Extended time and a private testing environment (where the student's back was not to the door) allowed him to concentrate so that he would not have to monitor the environment the same way that he would have to in the classroom. These accommodations worked well and the student graduated about a year ago.

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Planning the Transition

- Use person centered approach to determine career & PSE goals; build a support team
- Study the job market outlook and determine a major based on career goals
- Search and choose the right college
- Navigate the application & admissions process
- Get financial aid
- Use self-advocacy skills to make decisions about self-disclose and requesting reasonable accommodations

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Identify college characteristics that match personal preferences

- Size
- Location
- Extracurricular opportunities
- Physicality
- Course of study
- Reality check
 - Affordability
 - Selectivity
- Disability Services

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Look for a university/college that has partnered with the VA that provides benefits to veterans, is supportive of veterans and especially veterans with disabilities.

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Box 9.1. Ten questionable reasons for selecting a college

1. The baseball/basketball/football team is great.
2. I heard that the classes are easy.
3. All of the girls/boys/professors are hot.
4. My mom/dad/aunt/uncle/brother/sister went there.
5. It is cheap and the only place my parents will pay for.
6. My girlfriend/boyfriend/friends is/are going there.
7. I heard that you party all the time and can miss class.
8. Everybody says it is a good school.
9. Due to the location, I can surf/ski/hang out any time.
10. I want to find myself.

-- Elksnin & Elksnin, 2009

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Box 9.2. Ten better reasons for selecting a college

1. My proposed major area of study is offered.
2. The school has a good reputation in my area of study.
3. I can live at home and commute as classes are offered at flexible times and there is public transportation.
4. The campus is away from home, but not too far away.
5. The small classes allow for opportunities to interact with instructors.
6. The quality of the library (e.g., computer labs, student center) is top notch.
7. Costs are reasonable and student aid is available.
8. It will be easy to transfer to another institution.
9. I can get a good job with my degree and major.
10. I have no idea of my major, but I can easily explore different areas to help me choose one.

-- Elksnin & Elksnin, 2009

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Navigate the Application & Admissions Process

- Apply early
- Pay attention to deadlines
- Submit ALL required and *optional* documents
- Personalize your essays
- Experiences and extracurricular activities count
- Take advantage of common applications

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Finance Your PSE

- PSE tuition, fees, & book benefits as a veteran
- Federal financial aids (complete FAFSA on time)
- Scholarships – APPLY!

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Self-Advocacy in PSE

- Know your rights (ADA, Section 504, the New GI Bill, etc.)
- Understand your disabilities and their impact on your learning
- Weighing the pros and cons of self-disclose
- Know how to talk to professors about your disability, your rights, and your accommodation needs
- Work with Disability Service Office to acquire reasonable accommodations and assistive technologies



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Succeed in College

- Attend an orientation
- Understand college demands
- Learn to schedule classes, study times, exams, and other activities
- Study!
- Track your progress
- Obtain disability services
- Use assistive technologies
- Think about other activities



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Key Takeaways

- Postsecondary education has become the most important education for employment and well-being in the 21st century.
- Planning for the transition to PSE for youth with disabilities needs to start early and follow a timetable.
- Self-advocacy skills are very important for students with disabilities and wounded warriors to obtain necessary reasonable accommodations and support to succeed in college.
- Understanding the differences between college and high school, knowing and responding to the demands of college, and self-management skills are essential for college students to succeed.

Evaluation and CE Credit

The Military Caregiving Concentration Area will offer a Certificate of Completion to those interested in receiving training hours.

To receive a Certificate of Completion please complete the evaluation found at:
https://vte.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cPbVerY8EphcpTf

Military Caregiving Upcoming Event



Reimagine Your Skills as a Helping Professional
 Working with Military Family Caregivers

Building Trust & Credibility | Cultural Competencies | Compassion Fatigue
 October 28, 2015 | November 4, 2015 | November 18, 2015

.COMING FALL 2015
 An integrated approach to professional development for military service providers.

For more information on MFLN- Military Caregiving go to:
<http://blogs.extension.org/militaryfamilies/military-caregiving/>



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Military Caregiving Upcoming Event
VLE #1: Rethinking! Creating New Strategies to Build Trust & Credibility

- Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2015
- Time: 11:00 a.m. Eastern
- Location: <https://learn.extension.org/events/2187>

For more information on MFLN- Military Caregiving go to:
<http://blogs.extension.org/militaryfamilies/military-caregiving/>



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- Community Capacity Building

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This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Numbers 2010-48869-20685, 2012-48755-20306, and 2014-48770-22587.