DISABLING MYTHS ABOUT THE DISABLED

a look into invisible disabilities
Are you ever angry with people who park in a handicapped parking spot and just walk normally when they get out of the car?
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Meet Kristen

Kristen is 19 years old
She drives to and from school
She parks in the handicapped spot
Kristen has no difficulty walking to class

So why does she need handicapped parking?
Kristen has a chronic illness known as Trigeminal Neuralgia, or TN for short. On windy or cold days, a walk from her dorm to Dooling Hall could trigger an attack. An exasperation could put her back in the hospital for brain surgery.
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
About TN

Kristen’s TN causes her to:

- Feel intense pain in her face
- Fatigue easily due to side effects of medication
- Experience blurry vision for close focus (reading)
- Feel weakness in right hand
- Have a constant headache
Anna has a rare form of cancer.

Her body is weak from recent radiation treatments. She drives from her dorm at “The Heights” to the Payne Hurd Science Center so as not to fatigue when walking.
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES: Students with Invisible disabilities

Anna and Kristen are part of an increasing population of post secondary students with “invisible disabilities.” You cannot see their disability.

Their disabilities are chronic and may wax and wane in severity.
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Types of Invisible disabilities

ADD/ADHD

Learning Disabilities (LD)

Seizure Disorder

Panic Disorder

Bipolar Disorder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Other Common Invisible disabilities

- Cancer
- Fibromyalgia
- Executive Functioning Disorder
- Depression
- Chronic Illness
- Traumatic Brain Injury
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES: University Students

Are often invisible and frequently disbelieved

Need accommodations that differ from what is commonly offered by disability offices

Must not be discriminated against!
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Why Accommodate Students with Invisible Disabilities?

It's the law!


A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual

- Major Life Activities
  - caring for oneself
  - performing manual tasks
  - seeing, hearing, eating
  - sleeping, walking, standing
  - lifting, bending
  - speaking, breathing
  - learning, reading, concentrating
  - thinking, communicating, and working

- Operation of a Major Bodily Functions
  - functions of the immune system,
  - normal cell growth
  - digestive, bowel, bladder
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES: Housing Needs

- Single room
- Own bathroom
- Chemical-free cleaning supplies
- Specific type of dorm arrangement (Suite, Hall Dorm)
- Cooking facilities for meal preparation
Extra time due to slow processing or exhaustion

Opportunity to regroup after relapse and/or hospitalization

Validation due to disbelief from others

Access of a different kind, such as a place to rest, avoidance of overstimulation, permission to leave classroom suddenly

Reduced course load
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Needs Common to Other Students with Disability

- Financial assistance
- Note takers
- Physical access
- Special evacuation procedures
- Extra time on exams
- Distraction-free testing environment
“Wounded Warriors”
go back to school
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
The New GI Bill

Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008

Became effective August 1, 2009

Known as the New GI Bill, the Post 9/11 GI Bill or the WEBB GI Bill

Eligibility requirement Based on active duty service after September 10, 2001
Benefits meet one of the following:

- Direct payment to schools
- Tuition benefits up to the highest cost in-state tuition for undergraduate programs
- Housing allowance
- Book stipend may be transferred to Military Family members
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Male Wounded Warriors

- 34% Psychological/Emotional
- 16% Health/Medical
- 10% Learning Disability
- 1% Mobility
- <1% Hard-of-Hearing
- <1% Burned
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Female Wounded Warriors

- 11% Psychological/Emotional
- 1% Learning Disability
- <1% Health-Medical
- <1% Sexual Assault/Trauma
- <1% Mobility
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Wounded Warrior’s Invisible Disabilities

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Trauma to Head or Brain
- Concussion
- Skull Fracture
- Contusion
- Hematoma
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Stroke
- Lack of Oxygen due to Drowning
- Heart Attack
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Traumatic Brain Injury

Symptoms of Mild TBI Include

- Headache
- Confusion
- Lightheadedness
- Dizziness
- Blurred Vision or Tired Eyes
- Ringing in the Ears
- Bad Taste in the Mouth
- Fatigue
- Change in Sleep Patterns
- Mood Changes
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Traumatic Brain Injury

derate or Severe TBI:

Headache that gets worse or does not go away

Repeated Vomiting or Nausea

Convulsions or Seizures

Inability to Awaken from Sleep

Dilation of one or both pupils of the eyes

Slurred Speech,

Weakness or Numbness in the Arms or Legs

Loss of Coordination, Increased Confusion, Restlessness, or Agitation
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Post Traumatic Stress

Anxiety Disorder

Exposure to traumatic event

Flashbacks

Dissociations

Is not unique to just Wounded Warriors
More than 400,000 students enrolled in US post secondary institutions report having a mental illness or emotional disturbance. (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999)
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Symptoms of Mental Health Issues

Chronically missing class

Assignments consistently late

Extreme highs or lows in mood, anxieties

Problem concentrating, remembering

Marked personality change

Confused or disorganized thinking

Thinking or talking about suicide

Denial of obvious problems
In the 2006 National College Health Assessment reported that 43.8% of the 94,806 students surveyed reported they “felt so depressed that it was difficult to function” during the past year, and 9.3% said that they had “seriously considered suicide” during the year.

Mood Disorder
Depressed mood over a long period
Lack of pleasure in activities
Thoughts of suicide
Sleep and appetite changes
Low self esteem
Feeling guilty and/or worthless
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Bipolar Affective Disorder

Previously called Manic Depressive Disorder

Mood Disorder

Revolving periods of mania and depression

Either grandiose, euphoric, highly productive/creative, or depressed, withdrawn, hopeless
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
 Schizophrenia

Thought Disorder
Delusions, hallucinations, paranoia
Difficulty with daily functional tasks
Poor interpersonal relationships
Concrete thought processing
Need for structured routine
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Anxiety disorder

Generalized Anxiety Disorder - Excessive worry in general

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder - Consuming fixation and ritualistic behavior

Panic Disorder - Overwhelming Event

Social Phobias - Incapacitating fear of social interactions

Specific Phobias - Intense fear of specific object, event
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Medication Side Effects

- Drowsiness
- Fatigue
- Excessive thirst
- Blurred vision
- Hand tremors
- Initiating interpersonal contact
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Functional Limitations

Screening out environmental stimuli
Sustaining concentration
Maintaining stamina
Handling time pressures and multi-tasks
Interacting with others
Fear of authority figures
Responding to negative feedback
Responding to change
Severe test anxiety
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Strategies for Inclusion in College

Teach to various learning styles - visual, auditory, kinesthetic.

Increase experiential learning activities.

Increase knowledge and acceptance of mental illness.

Be prepared to set behavioral limits.

Know campus mental health resources and Early Alert system.

Work cooperatively with students.

Assist students with time.
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES: 
Accommodations for the classroom

Preferential Seating, near the door
Permit beverages
Prearranged or frequent breaks
Use a note taker or tape record lectures
Early availability of syllabus, text
Preferential scheduling (avoid classes at certain times of the day)
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Possible Exam Accommodations

- Change in test format - written to oral and vice versa, dictation, scripted, typed
- Permit use of computer software
- Exams in alternate format (portfolio, demo)
- Extended test taking time in testing center
- Increased test frequency
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
Possible Assignment Accommodations

- Substitute assignments in specific circumstances
- Advance notice of assignments
- Allow assignments to be handwritten (or typed)
- Written rather than oral, or vice versa
- Extensions on assignments
INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:
College Graduation Rate

- Asian/Pacific Islander: 77%
- White: 75%
- Black: 50%
- Hispanic: 53%
- Native American/Alaskan: 51%
- Students with Disabilities: 56%

The End in Mind

Employment Statistics Show:

Valuable Alumni

Valued Employee

Successful & Active Community Members