Teaching Students with a Mental Health Disability

The Challenges

Students with mental health issues may be limited in the amount or kinds of activities they can perform due to the presence of an emotional, psychological or psychiatric condition.

Mental health issues can include but are not limited to
- heightened anxieties, fears, suspicions, blaming others
- marked personality change over time
- confused or disorganized thinking; strange or grandiose ideas
- difficulty concentrating, making decisions, remembering things
- extreme highs and/or lows in mood

Consider the Following…

Teenagers and young adults aged 15-24 experience the highest incidence of mental or psychological disorders of any age group in Canada.

University environments can present distinct challenges for people with mental health issues but research and experience has shown that with some accommodations a person's education does not have to be derailed by their problems.

Encourage open communication and comfortable exchange of information between people. Respond to student needs. Be patient and calm.

If conversation is lengthy and disorganized or makes no sense, ask them what you can do for them. Ask questions that require “yes” or “no” answers.

Adaptive Technologies

Optical Character Recognition allows scanned text to be read aloud by the computer’s sound card; speech recognition software allows the spoken word to be converted to printed word on the computer screen.
“Mental health problems do not affect three or four out of every five persons but one out of one.”

Dr. William Menninger