

Supporting Accessible Communities

An overview with Access Services



Agenda

- Introduction
- Approaches & Language
- In Your Work
- Key Takeaways & Questions



Introduction & Guidelines



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Who is Access Services?

- Director: Joanna Timmerman
 - Assistant Director: Robyn Suchy
 - Assistive Technology Specialist: Grace Cipressi
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Our Mission

Access Services embraces disability as one aspect of a person's multiple identities that enriches Bryn Mawr College's vibrant community. Guided by the Social Model of Disability, Access Services' mission is to identify and dismantle structural and attitudinal barriers to accessibility on our campus in collaborative partnership with our students, faculty, and staff. To ensure equitable access for individuals who self-identify with a disability, Access Services engages in an interactive process to determine individual accommodations, addressing barriers that cannot be proactively eliminated.



Approaches & Language



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Models of Disability

The Medical Model of Disability



This is a diagram of the traditional Medical Model of Disability, which the Social Model was developed to challenge.

The Social Model of Disability



The Social Model of Disability states that the oppression and exclusion people with impairments face is caused by the way society is run and organised.



How do we use the Social Model?

- Working to address barriers:
 - Attitudinal (e.g., Disabled students are less qualified)
 - Physical (e.g., stairs to Taylor Hall)
 - Informational/Communication (e.g., presentation of material)



Big Picture on Language

- Impairment versus disability
 - Impairment = physical, sensory or cognitive difference
 - Disability = social consequences of having an impairment
- Disabled versus “with a disability”
- Use the language that the individual prefers!



What are “impacts?”

- Focus on how it shows up, not what it is
- Impacts: Symptoms or ways a disability shows up in someone's life
 - Mobility, dexterity, chronic pain
 - Panic, fear / paranoia, emotional regulation
 - Sleep disturbance, fatigue
 - Impulsivity, compulsions
 - Social interaction, communication
 - Memory, processing speed
 - Visual, auditory



Some things to practice

- Avoid euphemisms
 - Disabled vs. “differently abled”
- Avoid general categorizations
 - Talking about specific impacts instead of broad labels like “high functioning”
- Avoid implying deficits
 - “person is confined to a wheelchair so they can’t do this thing” → “this person has mobility impairments and in order to participate will need x, y, z”
- Asking/Listening to how people would like to be referred to
 - Person first vs. identity first



Words to practice replacing

Think about what you're really trying to say:

- Crazy — confusing, unpredictable, impulsive, reckless
- Stupid — uninformed, ignorant, risky
- Dumb — dense, silly, foolish
- Psychopath — selfish, toxic, manipulative, scary
- Lame — boring, monotonous, uncool
- Lazy* – unmotivated, burnt out

Why these words? ([NYC Mayor's Office](#))



Phrases to practice replacing

- Obviously — (say what's clear to YOU!)
- As you can see — “on this slide, I've included a chart...”
- You can read this yourself — “the first bullet point says...”
- Turn a blind eye to — willfully ignorant, deliberately ignoring
- Fell on deaf ears — talking with the mic off
- Blind leading the blind — needing support or information
- Dumb down — make more accessible / easier to understand
- Leave without a leg to stand on — abandon, leave ill equipped



In Your Work



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Setting the Scene

- Make sure the space you're using is accessible (& share ahead of time!)
 - Furniture, lighting, bathrooms, etc.
 - Proximity to each other (gum)
- Materials need to be accessible (using headings, captioning, text-to-speech compatibility)



If a student discloses

Thank them for sharing!

Is there anything you want me to know about your disability or your accommodations as we discuss how to best meet your needs academically?

- E.g., calculators, recordings, etc.

Have you had a professor or class that worked really well for you?



The Principles of Universal Design for Learning

Principle 1: Provide Multiple Means of Representation

Principle II: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

Principle III: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

Principles were developed in 1990s by David H. Rose, Ed.D. of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)



Some accessible practices

- Expectations for your time together
 - Agenda setting
- Engagement – how much talking are they comfortable with?
 - Note: rejection sensitivity (list times they persevered, strengths, etc.)
- Ways information is conveyed
 - Captioning
 - Meeting summary
 - Checks for understanding ("am I explaining this in a way that's clear to you?")
- Checking our own biases around punctuality, body language, and more!



Some key takeaways

- Model using accessible language
- Provide as many options as possible
- Continue to learn and adapt!



Questions

What questions do you have?



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Don't be a stranger!

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