“Documentation Update: New Guidance & Expectations”

Oklahoma Transition Institute
November 8, 2012
1. Identify the purpose of documentation as it relates to postsecondary ed accommodations.
   → Establish a “disability” for the purpose of protection against discrimination.
   → Establish a “disability” for the purposes of accommodation(s) allowed only for pwd.
   → Identify the current functional impact(s) of the disability.
   → Gather information on previous assistance, services, resources, accommodations.
2. Understand the significance of what information is necessary.

• Need enough information to answer questions posed about “disability”, “current functional impact”, and “effective accommodations.”

• Seven Essential Elements (AHEAD 2006)

• AHEAD’s Documentation Guidance (2012)
Seven Essential Elements (AHEAD 2006)

1. The credentials of the evaluator(s)
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability
3. A description of the diagnostic methodology used
4. A description of the current functional limitations
5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability
6. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications
7. Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services
AHEAD’s Documentation Guidance (2012)

• Primary Documentation: Student’s Self-report

• Secondary Documentation: Observation and Interaction

• Tertiary documentation: Information From External or Third Parties
Individual Review

(T)he salient question is not whether a given condition is a “disability,” but how the condition impacts the student.

Commonsense Standard

No third party information may be necessary to confirm disability or evaluate requests for accommodations when the condition and its impact are readily apparent or comprehensively described.

Non-burdensome Process

Postsecondary institutions cannot create documentation processes that are burdensome or have the effect of discouraging students from seeking protections and accommodations to which they are entitled.

Current and Relevant Information

Disability documentation should be current and relevant but not necessarily “recent.”
3. Gain awareness of the subjectivity and potential inconsistency between DS professionals and judgment.

- Sources of documentation may include:
  * IEP, 504 Plan, SOP
  * Psychoeducational evaluation
  * Medical records
  * Self-report
  * DS professional judgment
Suggestions, recommendations, approved accommodations:

--make no comment on the actual impact (presumed)
--make no consideration for postsecondary environment and requirements/expectations
--often reflect or mimic what the individual (student and/or parent) wants or requests
Effective accommodations utilized, evaluated, and reported:
+ identify the need
+ explain the purpose/intent of what was provided
+ acknowledge the actual impact (+/-) and potential impacting variables
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