UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITES

Accommodations for students with psychiatric disabilities can vary greatly depending on the type and severity of each disability. In some cases accommodations are not warranted.

Students may feel a stigma associated with their psychiatric disability and believe that you and their classmates would not understand their need for accommodations.

DSPS has noticed an increase in the number of students with a psychiatric disability that are being served at CMC. This increase has been attributed in the literature to several factors.

- Side effects from medications are not as limiting as they once were, allowing people to function in a college setting.
- There is more awareness in our society that people with psychiatric disabilities can be productive and attend school full time.
- Students with psychiatric disabilities are starting to feel more comfortable as they fit in more on campus.

While colleges are becoming more comfortable with the learning disability accommodations, the same cannot be said for psychiatric disabilities. Mary professors and students are fearful that these students may be dangerous. While this is not so in the vast majority of cases, the perception can further isolate those who tell others of their psychiatric disability. You need o understand how psychiatric disabilities can interfere with learning. While no two individuals with psychiatric disabilities are the same, the possible characteristics below can give you some insights into their learning challenges.

POSSIBLE STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Test-taking anxiety
- Easily distractible
- Problems with concentration
- Drowsiness from meds
- Problems with attendance
- Trouble meeting due dates
- Trouble keeping appointments
- Difficulty dealing with social situations (agraphophia)
- Trouble maintaining stamina
- Difficulty dealing with stress
- Difficulty dealing with new situations
- Panic attacks