

THE ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT



A review of the laws, programs, and issues
affecting the disabled community

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The United Nations has Declared 1981 as the Year of the Disabled

Because of the lack of substantial federal financial resources, the International year of Disabled Persons will depend on the efforts of the private sector and human resources in the community. One of the year's themes is "full participation," including a number of educational and media events which will highlight the rights and abilities of disabled persons. Other themes include "equality" and "prevention." For further information, contact: Wendy Wheat
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Accent on Awareness of Specific Learning Disabilities

I. Brief Overview. The field of learning disabilities has only a short history. Its emergence can be traced to the early 1960's when earlier work in a number of fields came together into two major theories. One, the medical-neuropsychological, holds that learning disabilities have a psychological base and are a reflection of brain dysfunction. The other, the psycho-educational, represents an educationally based approach which de-emphasizes etiology and seeks to provide individualized and behaviorally based instruction on the individual's identified strengths and weaknesses.

II. Who are the learning disabled?
Definitions of learning disabilities are very elusive. It is generally agreed that a learning disability is a disorder in one or more of the communication processes in the presence of normal or above average

intelligence. However, the individual has an academic achievement level which is not commensurate with his/her ability.

The term "specific learning disability" includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include persons who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

The following is a working description from Disabled, USA (Volume 2, Number 5, 1979), a publication of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped: "In addition to dyslexia (inability to read for a medical reason), there are dyscalculia (inability to do arithmetic), dysgraphia (inability to write), and dysphasia (impairment of the ability to speak or sometimes understand language). Also, there are difficulties with figure-ground perception (picking out an object from a background of competing objects), visual discrimination (telling the difference in objects), and the visual-spatial perception (seeing things in the right order). The visual difficulties have analogous hearing problems: Auditory figure-ground perception (hearing one sound against a background noise), auditory discrimination (differentiating between similar sounds like 19 and 90), and auditory sequencing (hearing sounds in the correct order)." Professionals frequently describe a learning disability as a disorder in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.

III. Some examples of the kinds of problems which affect the academic performance of people who are learning disabled. First of

(continued)

all, a learning disability may manifest itself in a variety of ways. Secondly, no two persons who are learning disabled display exactly the same problems. These individuals' difficulties vary in terms of type as well as severity. The common types of errors made by persons who have a specific learning disability include low reading skills, illegible handwriting, poor spelling, confusion of letters like "b" for "d," confusion of words, e.g. reading "was" for "saw" and mixing or omitting parts of long words, frequent confusion or directions of left and right, reversal of numbers, writing 17 instead of 71, trouble learning and remembering printed words, trouble expressing ideas in writing, difficulty following oral or written directions, and often a short attention span. However, the presence of one or several of these difficulties does not necessarily indicate someone is learning disabled.

IV. Collaborative Project for UMD Students Who Are Learning Disabled.

How are specific learning disabilities diagnosed? How are learning disabled students taught? What type of college classroom or course modifications can be made to accommodate a student with a learning disability? What is UMD doing for college students who may have a specific learning disability? Where can more resource information on specific learning disabilities be obtained? Answers to these questions as well as diagnostic, advocacy, and referral services for students who have a diagnosed or documentable specific learning disability are now available through the Handicapped Student Services Program. This project is a collaborative effort between the Supportive Services Program and the Department of Special Education. Anyone wishing further information should contact John Kulick, Library 135, 726-7965, or Vern Simula, BohH 209, 726-7191.

N.A.S.H.

Nash is the abbreviation for a nationwide organization, the National Association for Students with Handicaps. Its goal? "To assure that students with handicaps enjoy full opportunities to pursue and

achieve their educational objectives and to impact upon the field of education as it affects individuals with disabilities." Nash members are concerned with strengthening the rights of disabled students. They will provide information packets and bibliographies on such areas of interest as Section 504, Transbus, a program bank for projects in the areas of campus and community awareness, Washington interest programs, and community advocacy programs.

Nash, which has come into existence from a series of meetings which were part of the Conference on Higher Education and the Handicapped (October 1976), is looking to increase their membership. To obtain more information, write to:

National Association for Students
with Handicaps
Box 2, 800 21st Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20052

Getting Through College With A Disability:
offers a summary of services available on 500 campuses for handicapped students and a directory of organizations interested in helping them at their colleges. The summary of services is for students with all types of disabilities and services for blind, deaf and mobility impaired students. The publication is available free from:

The President's Committee on
Employment
1111 20th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Announcement

The Minnesota State Council for the Handicapped Toll Free Information number is now 1-800-652-9747. The Minneapolis-St. Paul calling area use (612)296-6785 and a TTY and Voice will answer. When calling, you will get an operator, then ask for Minnesota State Council for the Handicapped.

Student Health Service (SHS)--UMD

Does everyone know that UMD offers a service to students called the Student Health Service? Yes, this service offers medical care to all UMD students and it is free, covered by the student service fee (except some tests and medications, which are charged to the student at cost).

Briefly, some of the services the SHS provides for students include physical examina-

tions, treatment of disease, birth control treatment and counseling, weight control, stress management, x-ray treatment, transportation service to SHS from campus, and even an intercom system to use if needed.

The Student Health Service is staffed with two medical doctors, a nurse practitioner, two RN's, and two lab technologists. These people have a goal to provide quality, out-patient health care and patient education that is sensitive to unique needs of college students.

So next time UMD students have a medical need, why not let the SHS meet those demands? The SHS is located on University Circle, next to the Village Apartments and behind Griggs Hall. Their hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Pay them a visit or call 726-8155. They can help!

Pre-Registration of Handicapped Students

The Coordinator of Handicapped Student Services has been granted the authority after consultation with the department involved to pre-enroll into any course, for which prerequisite requirements have been met, any student who, for reasons directly related to his/her disability, is at a competitive disadvantage because of the existing registration system. The Coordinator of Handicapped Student Services will evaluate an individual student's needs and determine whether he/she qualifies for the advance registration processing. Anyone wishing further information should contact John Kulick, Library 135, 726-7965.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is sponsored by both the state and the federal governments. Each year throughout the nation this program provides the opportunity for thousands of persons with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities to become gainfully employed. In Minnesota this service is made available through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Economic Security. Many persons are disabled by disease, accidents, or conditions existing from birth. It is sometimes difficult for these individuals to find suitable employment even though there are many jobs each person could do well.

Through vocational rehabilitation these people are provided the opportunity to put their unique abilities to work in jobs where their disabilities do not interfere.

Vocational rehabilitation is an investment that pays handsome return. Most people who are disabled and return to gainful employment no longer require public assistance. These individuals pay back in state and federal income taxes more than the cost of their rehabilitation. They also provide a valuable source of manpower for business and industry. Most importantly, these individuals are able to enjoy independent lives, participating in work, social activities, and family life.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE? Any person is eligible who has a physical, mental, or emotional condition of a nature which could cause current or potential difficulty in getting or keeping employment. There must be a reasonable expectation that the person will benefit from vocational rehabilitation services so that gainful employment would be possible.

WHAT IS THE GOAL? The goal of vocational rehabilitation is gainful employment. This includes competitive employment in the general labor market or sheltered employment.

WHO PAYS FOR WHAT? Counseling and guidance, medical evaluation, vocational evaluation, job placement assistance, and follow-up are provided by the agency without cost. Within limits necessary, job training can be provided also without cost to the individual.

Generally, DVR pays for short-term training costs; but, if the individual is financially able he/she is expected to pay part of the costs for long-term training such as college or vocational school. In exceptional cases DVR can pay full long-term training costs for needy individuals. The money DVR has for rehabilitation services is dependent upon the availability of state and federal funds. Individuals are expected to participate financially in payment of medical treatments. However, services to persons with handicaps are not refused if they cannot.

DVR also may be able to provide needy individuals with limited amounts of maintenance and transportation aid while they are in a vocational rehabilitation program. Furthermore, the agency, in limited cases, can help individuals in the purchase of work tools and equipment necessary for the training and entering of a specific work field.

TO APPLY: Write, phone or visit the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) office in your area. In Duluth:

(see next page)

Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation
MN Dept. of Economic Security
Suite 437, Arrowhead Place
205 West 2nd Street
Duluth, MN 55802 723-4698

NOTE: DVR programs are directed to all disabilities except blindness and serious vision impairment short of blindness. The blind and other seriously vision impaired are served by State Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Duluth District Office
14 West First Street
Duluth, MN 55802 723-4600

MYTH:

All disabled people are handicapped and/or crippled.

FACT:

The terms "disabled," "handicapped," and "crippled" are often used interchangeably. In fact, the latter two terms carry negative connotations, indicating that a disability prevents someone from being a fully functioning member of society. A disability does not always present a handicap; rather it often only means that a disabled person may do something a little differently from a non-disabled person, but with the same result and with equal participation.

Taken from RRRRI-ALLB's booklet, "The Invisible Battle--Attitudes Toward Disability."

CIVIL RIGHTS

The United States Commission on Civil Rights has published a helpful pamphlet entitled: "Getting Uncle Sam to Enforce Your Civil Rights." This publication describes the process for filing complaints related to alleged discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or other characteristics. It helps you determine the appropriate office in which to file the complaint--state, federal, or local.

Single copies are available at no charge by contacting:

Public Division
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Washington, D.C. 20425

--Taken from Woman's Day May 22, 1979:

For those of you who enjoy traveling by air, a voluntary organization called Rehabilitation International---USA (RIUSA), is working with airline representatives and manufacturers to eliminate obstacles to air travel in future plane design. Obviously such things as narrow aisles, inadequate space for wheelchairs, accommodations for seeing-eye dogs, immovable arm rests, and inaccessible restrooms have been major barriers. Talks have been encouraging, according to RIUSA, but more information is needed to insure adequate modifications in new plane interiors. Please write to RIUSA and let them know the difficulties you experience when you fly; the nature of your disability; accommodations which would make it possible for you to travel by air; where would you fly if airplanes were properly equipped; what fears you have about flying. Send responses to:

RIUSA, Travel Department
20 West 40th Street
New York, NY 10018

NAT G. POLINSKY MEMORIAL REHABILITATION CENTER, INC.

Rehabilitation is the purpose of the Nat G. Polinsky Memorial Rehabilitation Center at 530 East Second Street. Although there are many professional health care agencies in the area which serve disabled people, PRC is the only one which provides comprehensive rehabilitation exclusively for people with physical disabilities. The Center gives both single-service care for short-term problems, and the comprehensive care required of a long-term, complex physical disability.

Services offered in the Center's adult and pediatrics departments include: physician services, physical medicine evaluations, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social services, psychological, speech and language pathology, audiological, and therapeutic recreation.

The Center has a close working relationship with adjacent Miller-Dwan Hospital, providing rehabilitation services for patients throughout the hospital. Special services provided by the Center are a Therapeutic Preschool, Prosthetic-Orthotic Clinic, Perceptual-Motor Training, Laryngectomy-Glossectomy Programs, Lipreading Classes, Family Education and Parenting Program, and groups for Stroke, Arthritis, and Multiple Sclerosis patients and their families.

Patients may be referred to the Center by any person or agency, but actual rehabilita-

tion care is done by prescription from either a personal physician or a psychiatrist.

Further information regarding the Nat. G. Polinsky Memorial Rehabilitation Center services can be obtained by writing the Center or calling (218) 727-5083.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is the role of therapies in a post-secondary institution, such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, etc.?

A. Under Section 504, Section 84.43, the Department of HEW will continue to require that nondiscriminatory health services be provided to handicapped students. Recipients are not required, however, to provide specialized services and aids to handicapped persons in health programs. If, for example, a college infirmary treats only simple disorders such as cuts, bruises, and colds, its obligation to handicapped persons is to treat such disorders for them. According to the National Association of College and Business Officers, "Issues and answers for implementing Section 504-Section 504 does not address the personal needs of handicapped individuals, or any personal issues related to rehabilitation or care. Rehabilitation and personal care are not institutional responsibilities under Section 504; they are the responsibilities of the individual handicapped person. Civil Rights and equal opportunities should be the sole, intent focus of institutions of higher education in their work related to Section 504.

Q. Do diseases or conditions such as Emphysema receive consideration by those who are concerned with the rights of the handicapped?

A. Section 504, 84.3(j) Defines "Handicapped Person": (1) "Handicapped persons" means any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment.

(i) "Physical or mental impairment" means (a) any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic, disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs, respiratory, including

speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive, digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or (b) any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

(ii) "Major life activities: means functions as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

(iii) "Has a record of such an impairment" means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

(iv) "Is regarded as having an impairment" means (a) has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but is treated by a recipient as constituting such a limitation; (b) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or (c) has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (j)(2) of this section but is treated by a recipient as having such an impairment.

_____ I would be interested in being on the mailing list for this newsletter.

_____ I have some information, articles, etc. that I would like to submit to this newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Supportive Services Program
Office of Handicapped Student Services
University of Minnesota-Duluth
Library 134
Duluth, MN 55812

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