

WORKING AS ONE: SETTING BOUNDARIES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

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TODAY WE WILL DISCUSS

What we mean by “boundaries”

How to set a boundary

Ramifications of crossing boundaries

Oops – I didn’t set a boundary initially, what can I do now?

Making appropriate referrals

How Disability Services on campus can support students with mental health

Strategies for maintaining healthy boundaries

BOUNDARIES

“You are not required to set yourself on fire to keep others warm.”

— Penny Reid

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “BOUNDARIES”

A boundary can be described as a frame around a professional relationship that creates safety by ensuring that **everyone understands the expectations.**

- Boundaries are helpful and can be positive
- Providing the best service possible
- Working within your expertise/competence and collaborating appropriately
- Identifying college roles and resources

KEEP IN MIND

Your role
and
relationship
to the
student

Who else is
around to
help or who
could cause
harm

They are
sharing
because
they trust
you

We want to
avoid
stigmatizing

You are
human and
have limits
as well

Is what you
are about to
do
sustainable?

Are you
having the
conversation
in an
appropriate
setting?

WHEN SETTING A BOUNDARY

Share your appreciation

- “I appreciate that you feel comfortable sharing that with me”
- “I recognize how difficult it can be to talk about these kinds of things”

State your boundary

- “I can help you with (your area of expertise) but I cannot help with _____”
- “I am not able to give this issue the attention it deserves”
- “This is not the appropriate time/place for this discussion”

Explain why

- “It is really something that I am not comfortable talking about”
- “I don’t have the skill or expertise for this”
- “I want to ensure that you get the help you need without it interfering with (my ability to teach you, our working relationship, etc.)”
- “Our focus needs to be on _____ right now”

Share what you can do

- “I can help connect you with other resources, on or off campus, that are more equipped to help you”
- “I can give you ten minutes of my time right now and we can schedule for a later date”

Give them the power back

- “How would you like to move forward”
- “Can I help you connect with one of these resources?”

Follow up

- Provide **a summary in writing** of the conversation including the boundary and any/all **resources** that were discussed/are relevant

COMMON BOUNDARY CROSSINGS

Going beyond your current role (dual relationship)

Healthcare instructor giving health advice or assessment to student

Results in confusion for everyone and overextending yourself. Could compromise your ability to do your job

The slippery slope

Starting off as a simple, seemingly one time assistance that is not sustainable (giving accommodations without approval, etc.)

Results in burn out, compassion fatigue, and other responsibilities/students suffering

Making promises you can't keep

Overextending yourself, making promises on other's behalf

Reduces trust, may impact the student's willingness to ask for help in the future

Oversharing

A person shares more than appropriate for the setting (could be the student or a faculty/staff)

May lead to confusion regarding the nature of the relationship and/or set up the student for other issues

HOW TO RECOVER WHEN A BOUNDARY IS CROSSED (OR NOT SET)

Have a conversation in a safe space

- Not in front of others, avoid “we need to talk”

Accept responsibility

- “**I allowed** a boundary to be crossed” or “I did not clearly state my boundary” or “I crossed a boundary”

Explain the action that crossed a boundary

- “Last Tuesday when **I allowed** you to share _____, that was not the correct time and place for that kind of discussion”

Explain the importance of that boundary

- “**My role** is as your _____, this conversation is better suited for _____” or “Class time is to be used for _____”

Share what you can do

- “**I can** help connect you with _____”

Give them the power back

- “How would **you** like to proceed?”

Follow up

- Provide a written summary including the boundary. *You do not need to summarize the way it was crossed in the past.*

BONUS!

**This is an excellent way to
model boundary setting and
navigating difficult
conversations**

WHEN DOES IT RISE TO THE LEVEL OF CONDUCT/INCIDENT REPORTING

- Excessively disruptive, aggressive, threatening, repetitive (after discussion)
- Please note:
 - THIS CAN BE VERY HELPFUL FOR THE STUDENT – **creating a plan**, addressing behavior so student can grow
 - Preparing for after college
 - Ensures that proper documentation takes place
 - Provides support
 - Determining if this is an isolated incident

APPROPRIATE REFERRALS HELP SET AND MAINTAIN BOUNDARIES

“It takes a village...”
— African Proverb

WHAT EVERYONE WHO WORKS AT A COLLEGE SHOULD KNOW

What services are available within the college for students

Who key contacts are

How to make a referral

Where to refer students if you are unsure what service will meet their needs (central person)

IF A STUDENT IS STRUGGLING OR COMES TO YOU FOR SUPPORT, OFFER A "BOUQUET REFERRAL" OR MULTIPLE REFERRALS TO SEVERAL SERVICES

Allows for:

- Choice (*Don't assume you know the best resource for that student.*)
- Multiple referrals
- A tangible next step

"Here at (insert college name), **we have a lot of resources available to help support students.** We have Tutors, Counseling, Disability Resources, Diversity Relations, Trio SSS, your Academic Advisor, Financial Aid, and the Student Success Center. **If you would like, I can get you more information or help you connect to one or more of these resources.**"



HOW DISABILITY SERVICES SUPPORTS STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH

“Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things needed to lead one’s daily life”

- Judith Heumann

YOUR COLLEGE MAY CALL IT

Disability
Resources

Disability
Services

Diversity
Resources –
Disability
Services

Accommodation
Support Services

Access Services

Access, Equity,
and Inclusion

Disability
Resource Services

Student
Accommodation
Services

DISABILITY SERVICES — HOW WE WORK

Reasonable accommodation

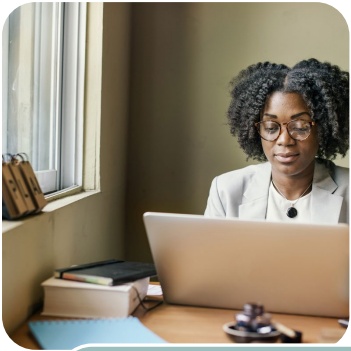
Modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or to the way things are usually done that enable individuals with disabilities to have an **equal opportunity** to participate in an academic program or a job

(U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Eligibility for accommodation

- Significant limitation
- Barrier in the learning environment
- “Rising to the level of disability”
- The interactive process
- Documentation

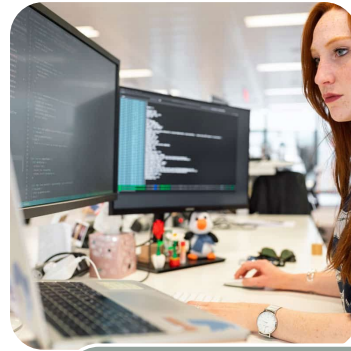
EXAMPLES/SCENARIOS



Business
Management
student with
TBI,
Depression,
and Anxiety



Nursing
student(s) with
Anxiety



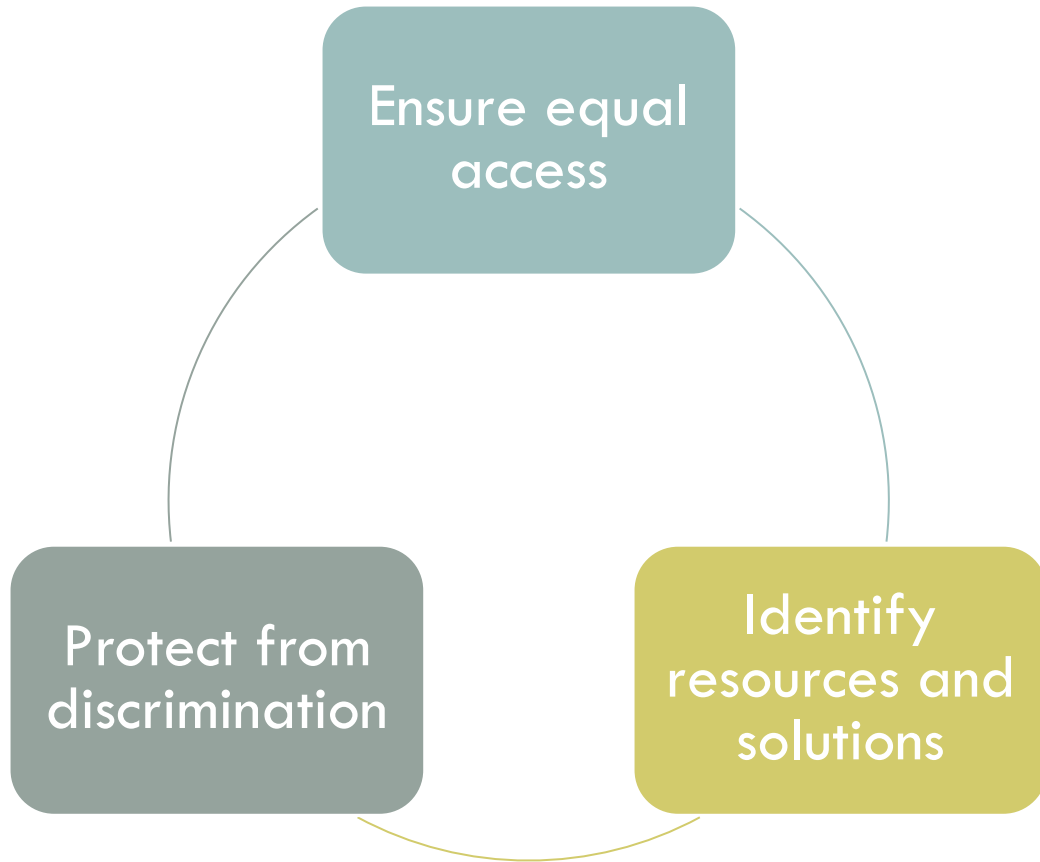
IT student with
Schizophrenia



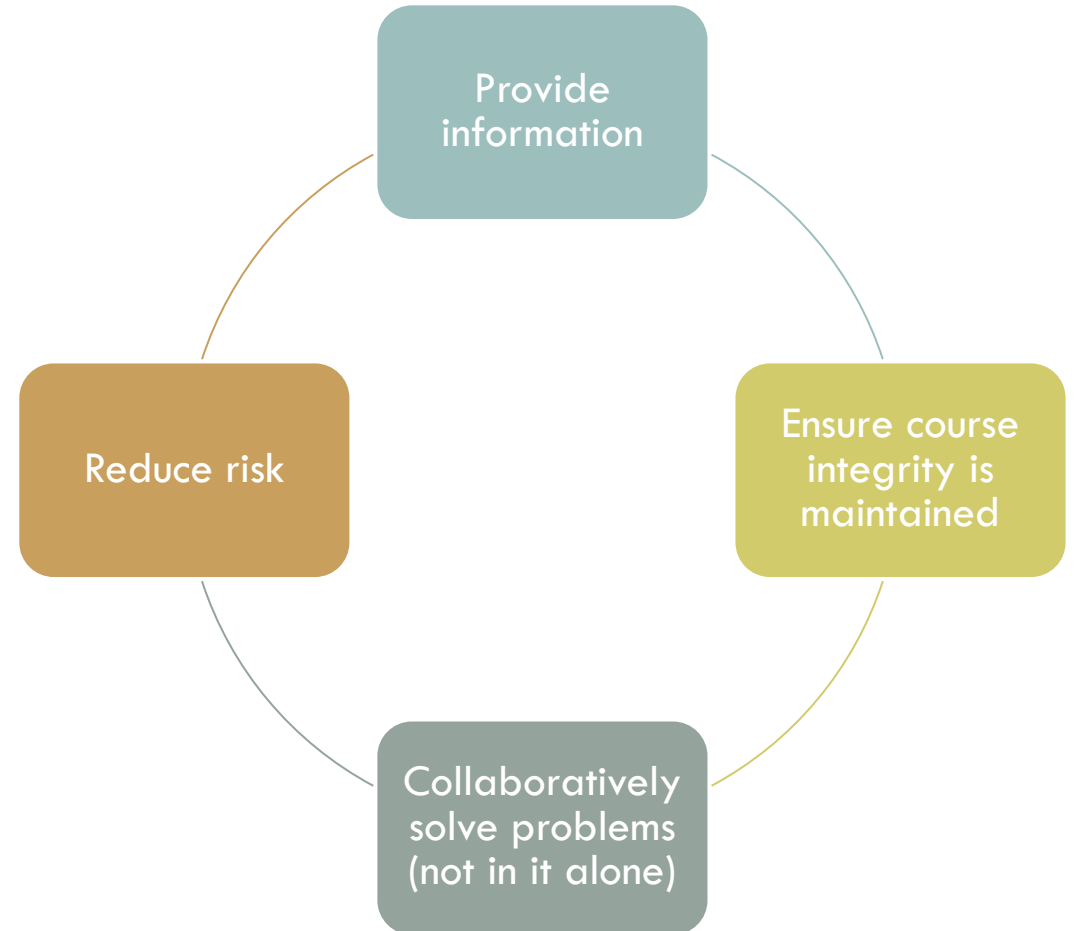
Electricity
student with
PTSD and
history of
Substance Use
Disorder

HOW WE WORK TO SUPPORT EVERYONE

Students



Faculty/Staff



CONFIDENTIALITY

- Disability related information is shared with faculty/staff on a need-to-know basis. FERPA guidelines are followed.
- The discussion is to be centered around course competencies, Technical Standards, and Functional Abilities and how the person with a disability will complete those, with or without a reasonable accommodation.
- By not having diagnostic information, faculty and staff are able to focus on function and the objectives of the course. This reduces the likelihood of bias and stigma impacting decision making.
- Be aware of where you are having discussions, with whom, and who may be able to access information (shared printers, etc.)
- Share minimal information in emails unless it is encrypted.
- Do not accept documentation that is not appropriate for your area

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

“Individually we are one drop;
but together we are an ocean.”

-Ryunosuke Satoro

STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Collaboration

- Interdisciplinary within the college
- Counterparts at other colleges
- Outside resources

Communication

- Students
- Peers
- Trusted supports

Education

- Mental health
- Communication strategies
- College Resources
- Community Resources

Self-care

- Whatever that looks like for you

Seeking feedback

- On your own boundaries
- Communication style
- Areas for growth

TWO EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION MODELS

Midstate – Circle of Success Meetings

- Key program faculty, advisor, Disability Resources, counselor, and deans/associate deans meet on a regular basis
- Discuss analytics (Civitas Inspire) which predict perseverance on individual students
- Brainstorming, problem solving, etc.
- PROS:
 - Proactive
 - Maintain open communication through regular contact
 - Saves time
- CONS:
 - More people involved than may be needed for individual concern
 - Consider confidentiality and “need to know”
 - Time consuming – meetings.

Moraine Park – more informal

- Collaborate on an as-needed basis with all we know are involved
- Academic Alerts through Canvas
- 1:1 and small group calls, meetings, etc. to address situations
- PROS:
 - Flexible
 - Culture of collaboration
- CONS:
 - Reactive rather than proactive
 - We may not know who all has contact with the student

Ensure that the conversation is constructive – when venting starts to occur, bring the conversation back.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

“He who asks a question remains a fool for five minutes. He who does not ask remains a fool forever.”

-Chinese Proverb