

Faculty Guide for Communication with Disabled Students **

Event	Do	Don't
Student self-discloses a disability	Thank the student for sharing the information, and inform the student that BCC has an Office of Disability Services (ODS), L109, ext. 2470 Attleboro ext. 2996; New Bedford, ext. 4011	NEVER solicit information from a student or ask if s/he has a disability. It is the student's responsibility (and right) to self-disclose. For example, do NOT ask "Do you suffer from PTSD?"
Student self-discloses a disability, and has subsequently been informed that BCC has an Office of Disability Services (ODS)	Instructor initiates a referral to the ODS by completing an Academic Needs Assessment Form (found in public folders/forms/ODS) The ODS will reach out to students after receiving the referral from the Instructor.	*Do Not* discuss potential accommodations with a student—each student is different. Some may not qualify for accommodations. Specific accommodations cannot be predicted or guaranteed.
Student initiates a discussion about his/her disability and becomes emotional when discussing the disability.	Validate the student's concerns/feelings, and always thank them for sharing the information. Explain to the student that, although you are not able to assist him/her personally with disability services, you would like to support him/her by referring him/her to the ODS. Attempt to refocus the conversation. Get coaching help from ODS and/or Division Dean and/or Counseling Services if you are uncertain about how to handle this situation.	Do not ignore the student's issue or exacerbate the situation. Do not dwell on the student's issue or disability. For example, do not say "Oh, how terrible! I'm not sure what I would do in your place!" Do not ask about specifics of the disability. For example, do not ask "What are your symptoms? What meds are you taking?"
Student becomes upset when the ODS is mentioned or does not want to identify themselves as "disabled," despite self-disclosing a disability.	Reassure the student that you would like to support him/her and that the ODS referral is strictly voluntary. For example, say "I certainly don't want to upset you. It's my role to support you however I can, with all the resources we have, and to ensure that you are successful. I want to see you get that degree! I am required to mention the ODS if a student tells me that he/she has PTSD (or other disability). Contacting the ODS is strictly voluntary, and you are in no way required to do so. I appreciate you telling me about your circumstances—we're in this together! How best can I support you moving forward?"	Do not allow the conversation to escalate. If the student is severely upset, please consult ODS and/or Counseling and/or Division Dean. Do not offer any accommodation to the student unless it is the recommendation of ODS.
Student mistakenly submits documentation regarding a disability to the Instructor.	Ask the student whether or not s/he has registered with the ODS. If yes, have the student relay any documentation of a disability to the ODS at the student's respective campus. If not, refer student to ODS and explain that all disability information is kept and processed through the Office of Disability Services.	Do not request/accept documentation verifying a disability directly from a student.
Student's concerns about a disability/ODS have been addressed during a conversation.	Continue with the "business at hand" after the disclosure of a disability.	Do not discuss the subject of a student's disability during future correspondence or conversations.
Please include a disability statement on your syllabi	Do add a statement to your syllabi similar to the following: <i>I encourage any student in need of accommodations for a specific documented disability to meet with the Office of Disability Services at your earliest convenience to ensure timely and appropriate accommodations</i>	Do not tell students they should tell you directly about their disability.

** (adapted from Kaplan University's Disability Services office)