

MOVING ON: Transitioning to College

disABILITY Services Newsletter for High Schools

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Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn't mean he lacks vision.

- Stevie Wonder

Pros of Disclosure

Take a look at the application you are filling in to come to CNA. Upon first glance, you will see a small section which asks, "Are you an applicant with a documented disability?" and "Do you wish to be contacted by Disability Services?". If you had supports/accommodations in high school, chances are you have an exceptionality/disability and will need similar supports in post-secondary; it is in your best interest to let the college know this information. The definition of disability includes learning disabilities, language disorders, anxiety, and many other areas. Check out our web page to find out more: <http://www.cna.nl.ca/student-support/Disability-Services.aspx>.

When you respond "yes" to both questions, you will get a letter from CNA's Admissions Office indicating that your application has been forwarded to the Coordinator of Disability Services (CDS). You should be in contact with a CDS who will work with you to review your documentation and determine the supports you will need to enhance your chances of success.

Please note: Students are not penalized for disclosing their learning issues; in fact, opening up a dialogue about your specific learning needs can give you access to professionals who understand and can assist! You are not obligated to use the support offered—it just gives you the option. Disclosing that you have a disability will not change your place on any waitlist with CNA.

Information about your disability can only be passed on to someone else with your written consent. The CDS will get you to sign a consent form when contact is first made and you will determine with whom the information gets shared. You will also be made aware of grants and services available to you through Advanced Education and Skills (AES) and Student Aid that can pay for the cost of expenses, such as extra

equipment and tutoring. Most of the grants are only available to you if you have made contact with a CDS and have shared disability information with that person.

The earlier you contact the CDS, the better! If we know you have a disability, we can ensure the supports that have been approved for you are in place when you need them. Contacting us early provides opportunities to help you prepare more effectively for the transition to College.



Spotlight on Assistive Technology: Kurzweil 3000

Students with disabilities sometimes avail of assistive technology (AT). One program used extensively at College of the North Atlantic is Kurzweil 3000.

Kurzweil 3000 is software designed to provide support to individuals with learning disabilities, including dyslexia and dysgraphia. Built-in features for reading, writing, and study skills help students to become independent learners.

As exams are read to students via this technology, they are encouraged to become familiar with it before beginning their programs. A free trial of Kurzweil 3000 is available at <https://www.kurzweilededu.com/products/k3000-standalone.html>.

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Preparing to Transition from High School to College

Follow these tips for a smooth shift into post-secondary education

- Understand the academic impact of your disability (e.g., attend IEP and transition meetings, read your assessment reports and documentation, research your disability).
- Learn how to use recommended assistive technology.
- Investigate post-secondary options.
 - o Familiarize yourself with post-secondary disability services available at your campus(es) of choice. College of the North Atlantic's Disability Services webpage is <http://www.cna.nl.ca/student-support/Disability-Services.aspx>.
- Develop a personal file. Include the most recent copy of a(n):
 - o Comprehensive Assessment Report
 - o Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
 - o Record of Accommodations
 - o Transcripts
 - o Pertinent Medical Information
 - o Record of assistive technology that has been used successfully
 - o List of successes, strengths, and accomplishments
- Actions for College of the North Atlantic
 - o Understand the entrance requirements for your program of choice.
 - o Apply to the program and identify as a student with a disability on the application.
 - o Meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services prior to the start date to participate in a pre-entry interview.
 - o Bring your personal file.
 - Submit the required disability documentation.
 - Request the accommodations that you need.
 - Sign consent.
 - o Arrange for other supports not provided by the College (e.g., personal care, transportation, medication management, psychiatry, community support).
 - o Schedule an appointment with the Coordinator of Disability Services for the first week of the semester.

How We Can Help Students Become More Resilient

David Cutler presents an interesting perspective on character education in his blog post, "When Helping Hurts". The following is a summary of the article:

Too Much Tutoring: It is important to balance the need for tutors to help reinforce student learning with the need to develop good independent study and work habits. Providing so much support that students cannot work independently may lead them to "constantly rely on support in college and in the workplace, where a lack of confidence and self-reliance might hinder success." (Cutler, 2016)

Eliminating Stress and Anxiety: You can't eliminate all stress and anxiety. Young people need to develop coping skills so as not to be reinforced with the unhealthy notion that they cannot handle any of their own challenges and must always seek support to make life less stressful. In healthy amounts and with the appropriate management skills, stress and anxiety can assist with productivity and with learning in general.

Too Much to Juggle: Don't expect young people to balance too much by over-emphasizing extra-curricular activities, after-school sports and clubs, community work, part-time jobs, etc. They should not have too much on their plates. Not being able to do everything equally well should not be seen as a sign of weakness but rather as the reality of being human.

Students need to learn they cannot do everything and life is all about making choices; learning about sacrificing to pursue one interest or prioritizing it over another are examples. We shouldn't deprive students of the opportunities to learn that lesson.

Cutler, D. (2016, January 12). When Helping Hurts [Blog post]. Retrieved February 22, 2016, from <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/when-helping-hurts-david-cutler>

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Free money!! Scholarship Information for Students with Disabilities at CNA

CNA, as well as several partner and outside organizations such as the Canadian Hard of Hearing association, Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, has scholarship money available to students with identified disabilities.

Advertisements for scholarship information are publicized on each campus. Posters, classroom visits, and general presentations are often offered prior to the deadline. All scholarships are posted on the college website at this link: <http://www.cna.nl.ca/student-support/Scholarships-And-Awards.aspx>. Students can search by campus and program to get a list of scholarships and/or they can download and review the handbook for additional information.

In addition to the information that is provided through the above link, it would be beneficial for students with disabilities to check out DisabilityAwards.ca: <http://disabilityawards.ca/>. On that website, students can search for awards based on their diagnosed disabilities and the locations in which they live.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting your campus counsellor or your Coordinator of Disability Services (CDS). It is important that you start the application process early as you may need to obtain proof of your disability or have verification forms filled out.

I Have a Mental Health Issue. How Can the College Help?

Stigma surrounding mental health issues and illness is lessening, while understanding and overall awareness is increasing in society. Through an ongoing educational initiative, over 200 CNA faculty and staff have been trained in Mental Health First Aid. For students with mental health issues, transitioning to College is one of the essential keys to their future successes. Many of those students, hundreds of those who have identified in fact, are meeting with success.

Mental health issues are common—anxiety and depression being the most identified amongst College students. If you have a mental health issue/illness and you're planning on attending the College, what can you do?



The following is suggested:

- Contact a Coordinator of Disability Services (CDS) at your campus of choice. With appropriate documentation, you may be eligible for accommodations, such as extra time and quiet location/small group settings to complete tests and exams.
- Meet with a College counsellor. Counsellors on campus can provide some support for students managing their mental health throughout the semester and academic year(s). Management of health is key, whether it be physical or mental health.

In order to assist students prior to entering CNA, the high school guidance counsellor, parent, guardian, supporter, and/or the incoming student can:

1. Contact the campus of choice and speak to a counsellor or CDS.
2. Meet and discuss a transitioning plan. By doing this, the student now has a 'go-to' person on campus for any future enquiries and support. A readily available College contact can be of incredible benefit for the student when s/he has questions and/or needs some assistance with problem solving.

Dates and Deadlines: Apply Now!!

Our programs fill up fast. Please encourage your students to apply now to ensure they have the best chance to get into their program of choice. Some programs have long wait lists and if students wait until the last minute to apply, they may not get in.

High school students can send in their applications once they have started Grade 12. Students with disabilities should take particular care to apply early as some academic accommodations may take time to arrange, there are deadlines to apply for disability-related funding, and students may be offered the opportunity to shadow the programs they are interested in to ensure a good fit.

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Spotlight on External Resources: The IRIS Center

The IRIS Center, based in the United States, provides a valuable example of an initiative that has been undertaken to improve the educational lives of all children and, in particular, children with disabilities. In its own words:

The IRIS Center is a national center dedicated to improving education outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities, birth through age twenty-one, through the use of effective evidence-based practices and interventions.

IRIS resources and materials are primarily designed for use by college and university faculty, professional development providers, and practicing educators.

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>

Please visit the website and avail of the resources it has to offer.



Know me by my name, strengths, abilities, hopes and dreams, not my diagnosis.
www.disabilityisnatural.com

For copies of previous issues or to view further information, please visit our website at www.cna.nl.ca/Student-Support/Disability-Services.aspx.

Contact Information—Coordinators of Disability Services (CDS):

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