

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

STRATEGIES PAGE

EMOTIONAL / PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

Students with Emotional/ Psychiatric disabilities can complete academic requirements the same as any other student, however some **strategies** may be required. The following are a few of those strategies that you, as an instructor, might consider when presenting subject matter:

Provide a detailed course syllabus (including papers and projects).

Provide seating in a quiet area, away from windows, doors, noisy air conditioners, etc.

Break projects into small manageable tasks.

Allow frequent breaks to stretch, walk around, get a drink of water, or use the bathroom.

Write out instructions on the board or overhead projection.

Break exams up into smaller segments so that the student can take one in the morning and one in the afternoon (Disability Services will assist in administration).

Make personal contact to develop a working alliance with student. When you don't know what to say, say nothing—listen.

Seek opportunities to ask the student about his own perspective of performance, including both strengths and weaknesses; suggest specific ways in which he might improve.

Avoid advice and premature problem solving.

Do not assume you know the student's feelings, thoughts, or reasons for behaviors.

Avoid relying on questions; attend, listen, and try to summarize thoughts and feelings instead.

Be as clear and concrete as possible; use concrete examples.

Separate the person from the problem.

Deal with differences by balancing reason and emotion and by being consistent and reliable.

If necessary, arrange a three-way meeting with the student and the disability services advisor to facilitate feedback.

Give the student a chance to read *written* feedback privately, then discuss.

Make alternative assignments or "extra credit" options available to all students, thus giving them the opportunity to make up for a poor grade.

Explain any new course requirements well in advance.