Self-Advocacy:
What Students Need to Succeed in College

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Disability Accommodations and Success Strategies

Southern Methodist University

December 2022

Today's Goals

You will leave here knowing:

- what self-advocacy is.

- why this skill is so darn important for <u>ANY</u> college student with <u>ANY</u> disability – with our focus today on students with dyslexia

- how students use self-advocacy to <u>select a college</u> and <u>in college</u> to increase their chances of happiness and success.

- how to develop self-advocacy skills in elementary and high school students.

Traits of Good Self-Advocates

Know their strengths

Know and act within their rights and responsibilities

Know the impacts of their disabilities

Are assertive, not passive or aggressive

Build and use a support network

Take charge
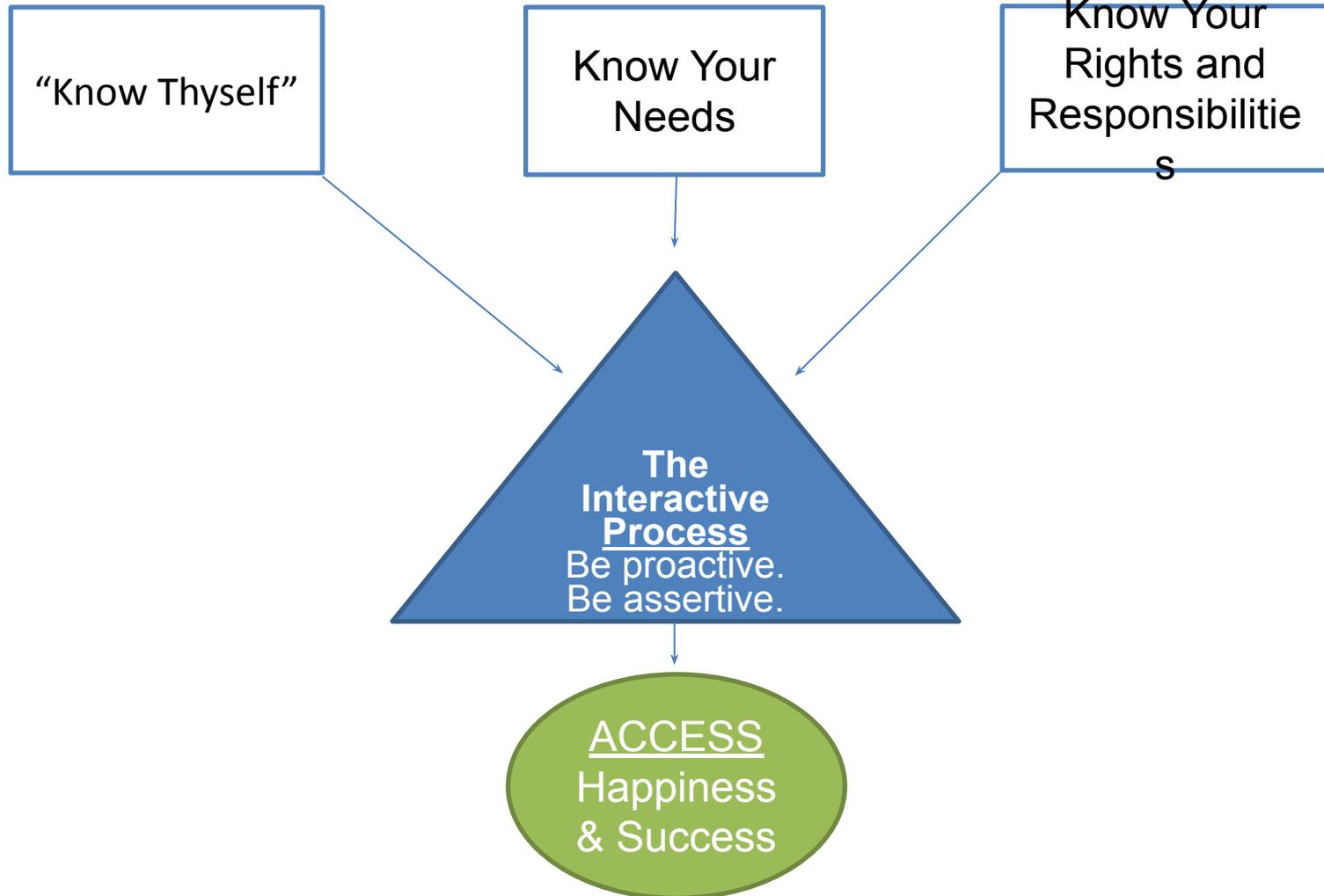
Seeks out resources

Know their needs
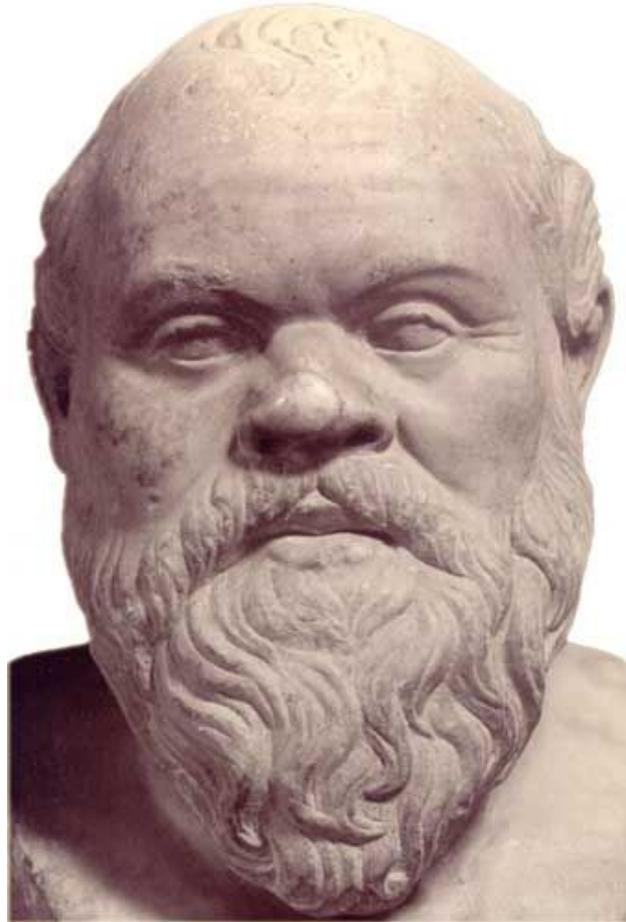
Problem-solvers

Know their limits

Are proactive, not reactive

The Components of Self-Advocacy

"Know Thyself"

Know Your Needs

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

The Interactive Process
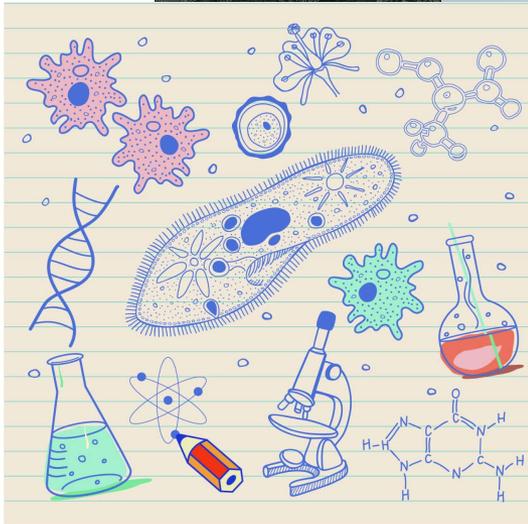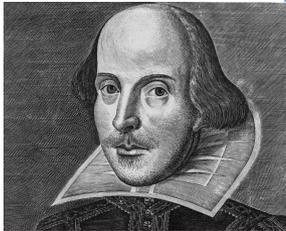Be proactive.
Be assertive.

ACCESS
Happiness & Success

Socrates-- "Know Thyself"

"Know Thyself": Interests

- What interests you?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- What do you want to learn more about?
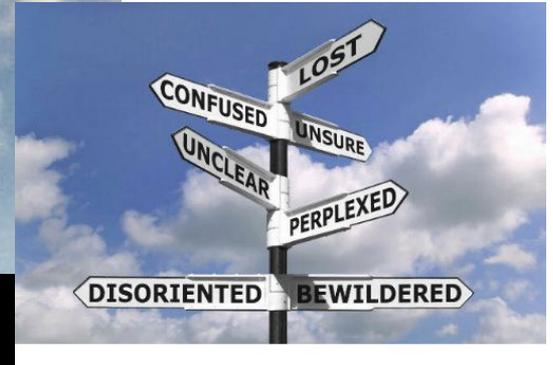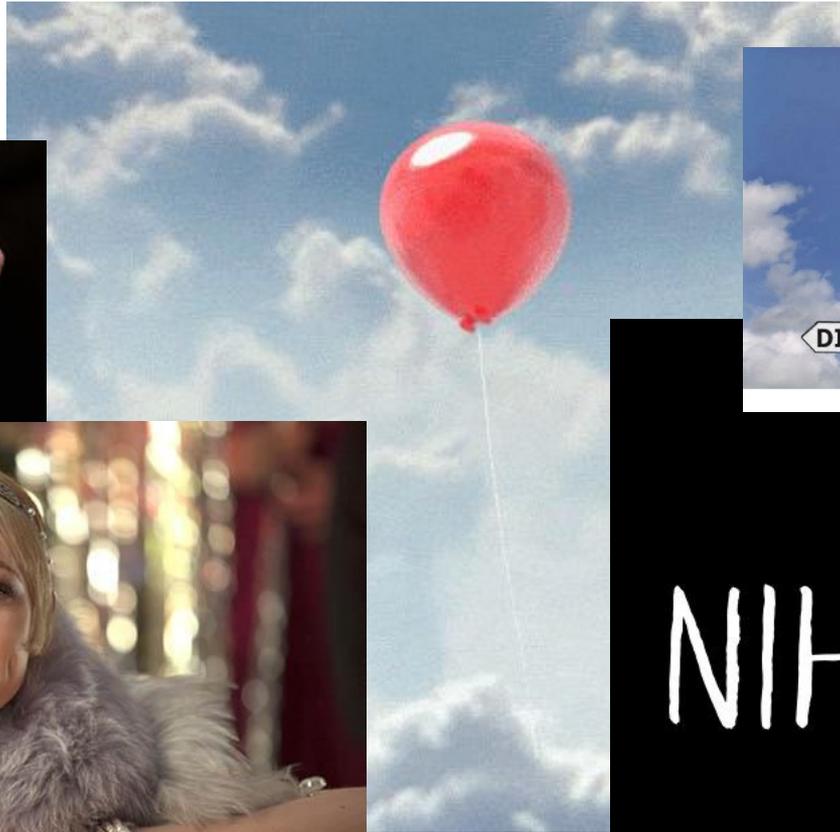
Know Thyself: Motivation

- What motivates you?
- What's important to you?
- What are your goals?
- What are you willing to work hard for?
- Why do you want to go to college?

Know Your Needs to be Happy

What Scares Me:
Poor Attitude & Lack of Motivation

"Know Thyself": Personal & Academic

What are your personal and academic…

strengths?

weaknesses and limitations?

learning preferences and styles?

communication preferences and styles?

What academic supports and accommodations have helped you in the past?

Testing accommodations

Classroom accommodations

Academic coaching

Subject tutoring

Know Your Needs to Succeed

What services and programs do colleges offer to their students?

What services and programs do colleges offer to their students with disabilities?

- Course waivers or substitutions
- Educational and support groups
- A low ratio of coordinators/counselors to students
- Adaptive technology

What are the documentation requirements to register with the college's Disability Services office?

"Know Thyself" & Know Your Needs

THE BIG QUESTION…

What do you **want and need** to be **happy and successful** in college?

The Components of Self-Advocacy

"Know Thyself"

Know Your Needs

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

The Interactive Process
Be proactive.
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ACCESS
Happiness & Success
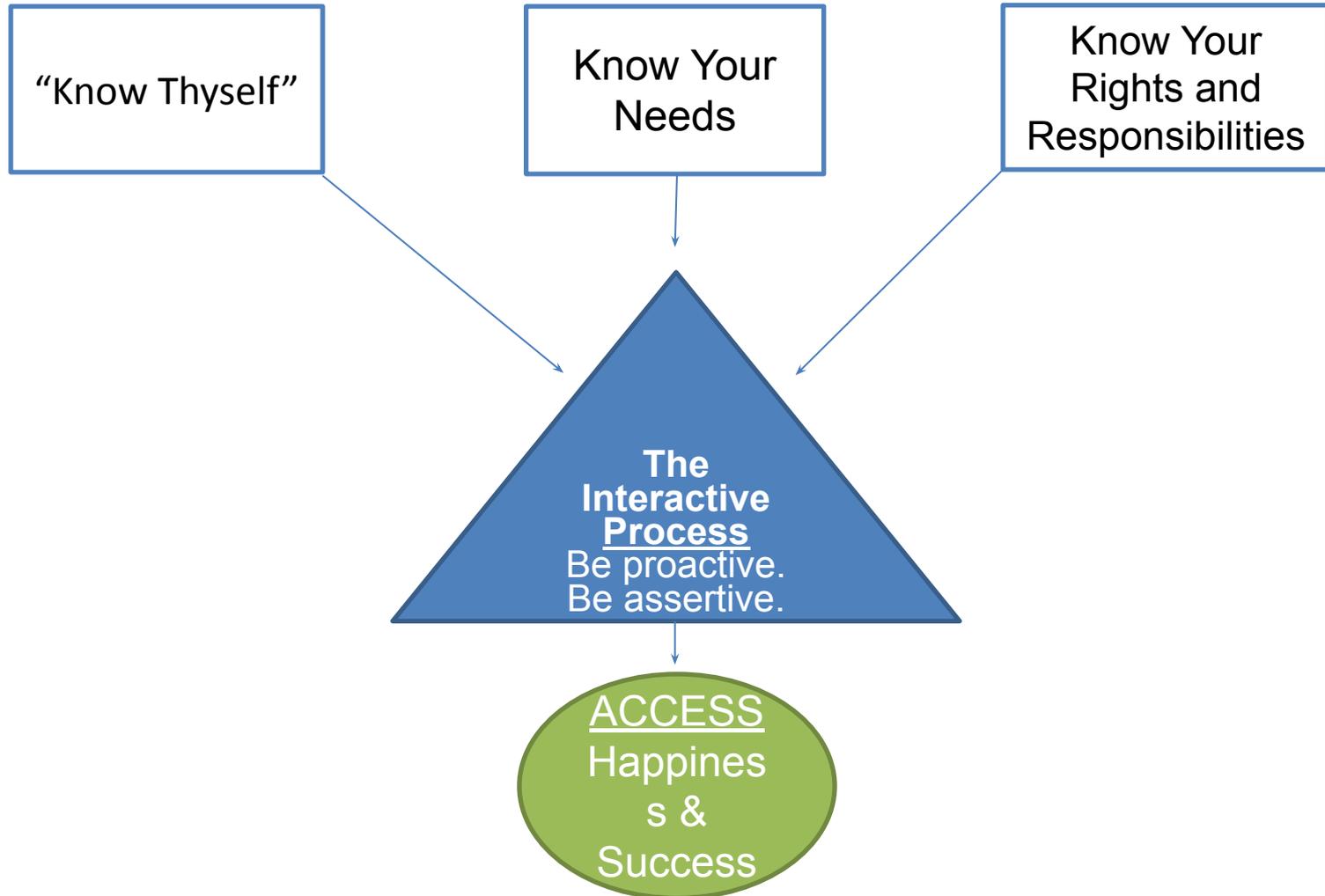
Boring (but important!) Legal Stuff

SPED

IDEA

504 Plans & IEPS

Informal Accommodation

Boring (but important!) Legal Stuff

ADA

(Americans with Disabilities Act)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Students have the Right to:

- Meaningful access to college programs, services, and activities

- Reasonable accommodation based on disability-related need

- Confidentiality

- Privately discuss their needs with instructors and with a disability coordinator

Students are Responsible for:

- Disclosing their need for accommodation to the person or office designated by their college

- Providing documentation to the Disability Services office to support their need for accommodations

- Participating in the Interactive Process between the Disability Services office and instructors throughout each term

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Students have the Right to:

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Key words/terms:

Meaningful

Access (not success!)

Reasonable

Based on disability-related need

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Students have the Right to:

Key words/terms:

Confidentiality

Confidential

Privately discuss their needs with instructors and with a disability coordinator

Private

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Students are Responsible for:

Key words/terms:

Disclosing their need for accommodation to the person or office designated by their college

Disclosing their need

Designated person or office

Providing documentation to the Disability Services office to support their need for accommodations

Documentation

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Students are Responsible for:

Key words/terms:
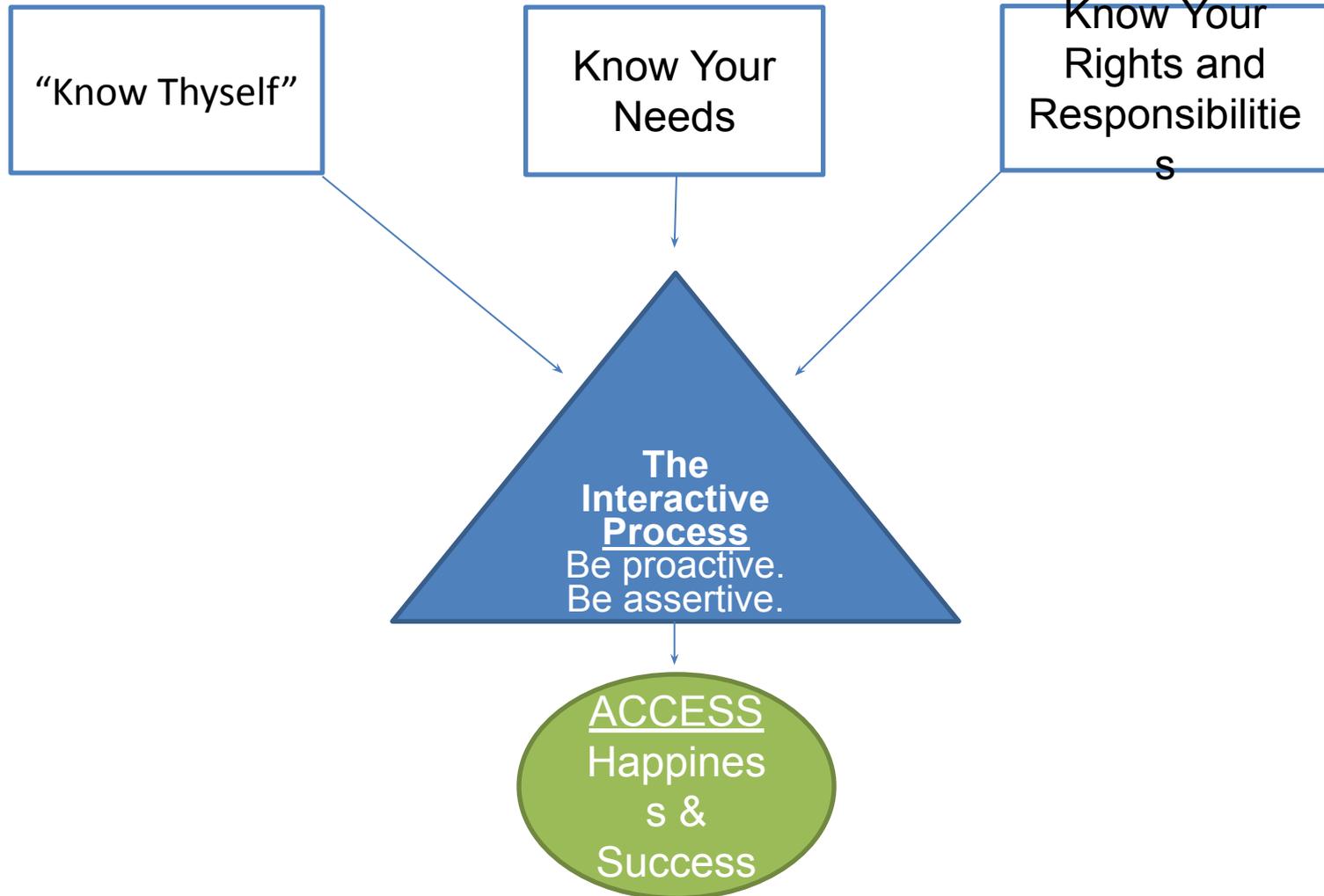
Participating in the Interactive Process between the Disability Services office and instructors throughout each term

Interactive process

The Components of Self-Advocacy

"Know Thyself"

Know Your Needs

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

The Interactive Process
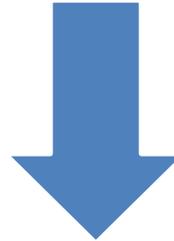Be proactive.
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Happiness & Success

The Interactive Process: Part 1

<u>Student</u>

1. Makes a request

2. Provides supporting documentation

Disability Services Office

DASS @ SMU

Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies

Academic accommodations are available for students with various conditions, such as LD, ADHD, ASD, physical, visual, hearing, medical, or psychiatric disorders.

o To establish accommodation eligibility:
  o Read the instructions and documentation guidelines posted on the DASS website
  o Gather ALL supporting documentation and convert to electronic format
  o Complete and submit the online "Accommodation Request Form" found at https://smu-accommodate.symplicity.com/public_accommodation/
  o Students must request assistance themselves

o Documentation review may take 2-3 weeks, once all information is received by DASS.

o If approved for accommodations, students need to schedule an intake appointment with DASS to finalize the accommodations process.

DASS also provides success strategies support for undergraduate students with LD, ADHD, and/or ASD at no charge:

o Academic coaching and planning can help students set weekly goals, become more efficient, and improve test preparation and time management skills.

o HDEV 1210 is a 2-credit academic success and personal development course. During the fall, one section is reserved for students with LD or ADHD. Please contact DASS for permission to enroll.

o Students for New Learning (SNL) is a chartered student organization that offers support, networking, outreach, and leadership opportunities for students with LD and ADHD.

DASS is located in the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center - Loyd 202
dass@smu.edu • 214-768-1470 •
www.smu.edu/Provost/ProvostOffice/SAES/AcademicSupport/SASP/Services/DASS

Guidelines for Documenting a Learning Disability

1.) **A Qualified Evaluator.** Professionals conducting assessments, diagnosing learning disabilities, and making recommendations for appropriate academic accommodations must be qualified to administer the required comprehensive test battery and be licensed to diagnose learning disorders as defined by *DSM* guidelines. Appropriate training and direct experience with adolescents and/or adults with learning disabilities (LD), as well as those of culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, are essential. The documentation must meet the following criteria:

- include evaluator's name, title, professional credentials, license and/or certification number,
- be presented on the professional's letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and legible,
- the evaluator may not be a family member.

2.) **Current Documentation.** The impact of a learning disability on an individual changes over time. To determine the most appropriate accommodations, it is important for documentation to be current – preferably within the past 3 years.

3.) **A Comprehensive Evaluation.** The LD evaluation **must** contain:

- A discussion of:
  - relevant developmental, psychosocial, employment, family, and medical history,
  - an academic history with a history of LD-related accommodation,
  - cultural and linguistic background and level of English-language fluency,
  - co-morbidity or alternate disorders which may mimic or exacerbate symptoms of LD.
- an individually administered *Aptitude Test* battery (Intelligence or Cognitive tests) with all subtests included. T**he Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – 4th Edition (WAIS-IV)** is preferred.
- an *Achievement Test* battery, also called an academic achievement battery. **The Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery: Tests of Achievement** is preferred. The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) is not comprehensive and is not acceptable as the sole measure of achievement. Achievement tests must show current academic functioning in:
  - reading - decoding and comprehension of long passages typical of college texts,
  - mathematics - applied word problems and calculations, specifically algebra problems,
  - written language skills - spelling and written expression.
- an *Information Processing* battery, such as the Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude (DTLA) or subtests from the WAIS-IV. These assessments must describe strengths, weaknesses, and deficits in:
  - visual-spatial abilities,
  - memory (auditory and visual; short-term and long-term),
  - executive functions including, processing speed, attention, and auditory processing.
- a **clear, unequivocal** diagnosis of a learning disability based on *DSM* criteria with diagnostic code and discussions of ruling out alternate explanations and co-morbid diagnoses
- an interpretation of test scores leading to the diagnosis
- a description of current treatments used to ameliorate the impact of the LD
- a description of the current functional limitations of the individual in an academic environment – the ways that the diagnosed LD currently substantially limits the student's learning
- Appropriate and specific recommendations for an academic environment including:
  - detailed explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended must be provided
  - correlation to functional limitations previously described
- a presentation of all test scores including all raw, broad, standard scores, and percentile ranks.

4.) **Supporting Documentation.** While required, the report of the qualified evaluator is by no means the only documentation we can use to better understand and accommodate the student with a LD. Other helpful documents are: records of accommodation on standardized tests such as SAT or ACT, high school 504 plans or IEP's, previous psycho-educational evaluations, report cards, transcripts, and teacher, tutor, or employer reports. DASS reserves the right to access student transcripts (e.g. classes taken and grades earned at SMU) for evaluation purposes.

DASS @ SMU

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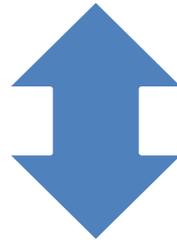**DASS is located in the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center - Loyd 202**
dass@smu.edu • 214-768-1470 •
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The Interactive Process: Part 2

The Interactive Process: Part 3

Student

Faculty (and staff)

Disability Services Office

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Be assertive.
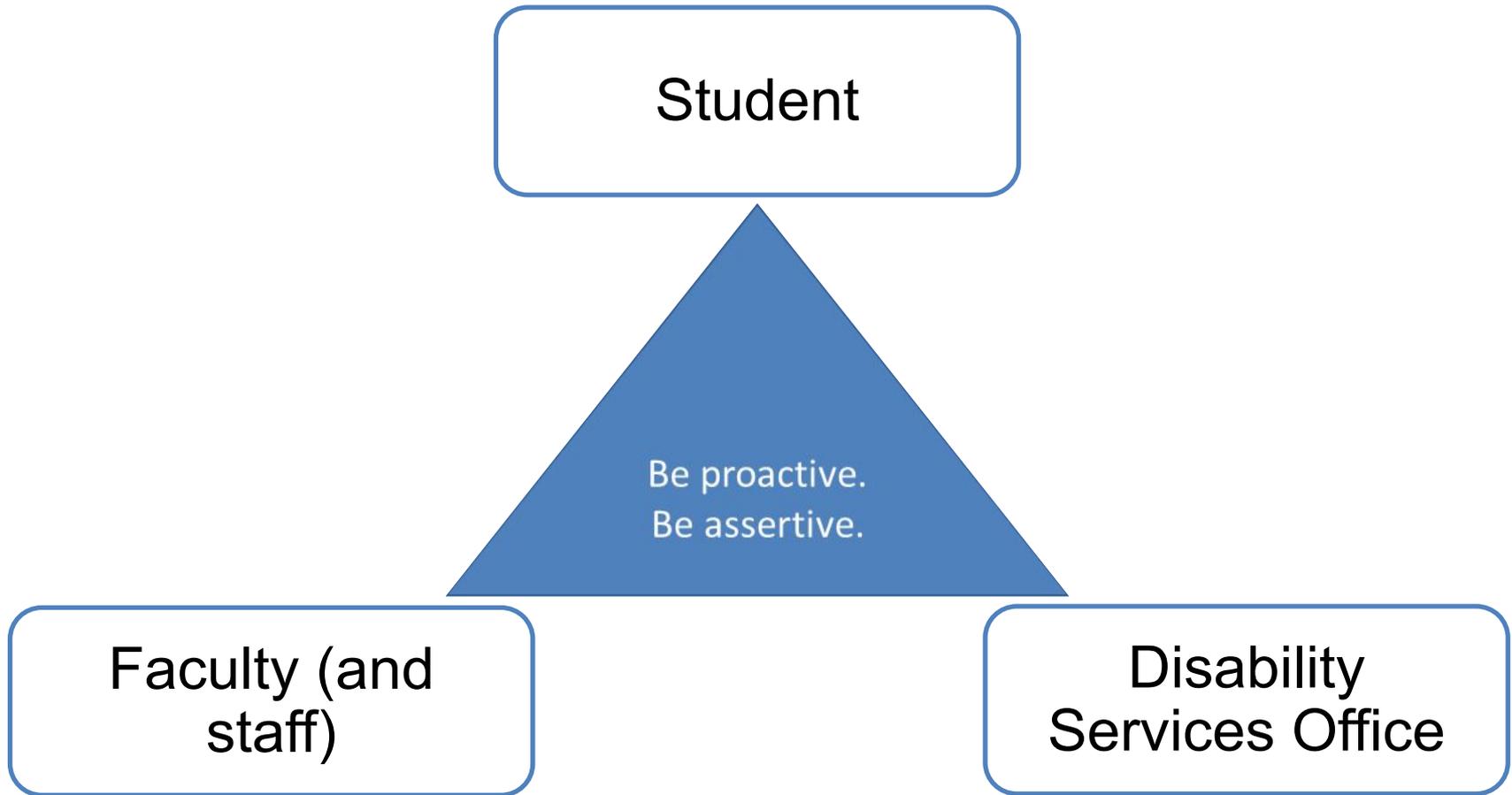
The Interactive Process

The Big Question, Revised:

"What do you want and need to be happy and successful in college, **and** can you explain that effectively to someone else?"

Where will Students use Self-Advocacy in College?
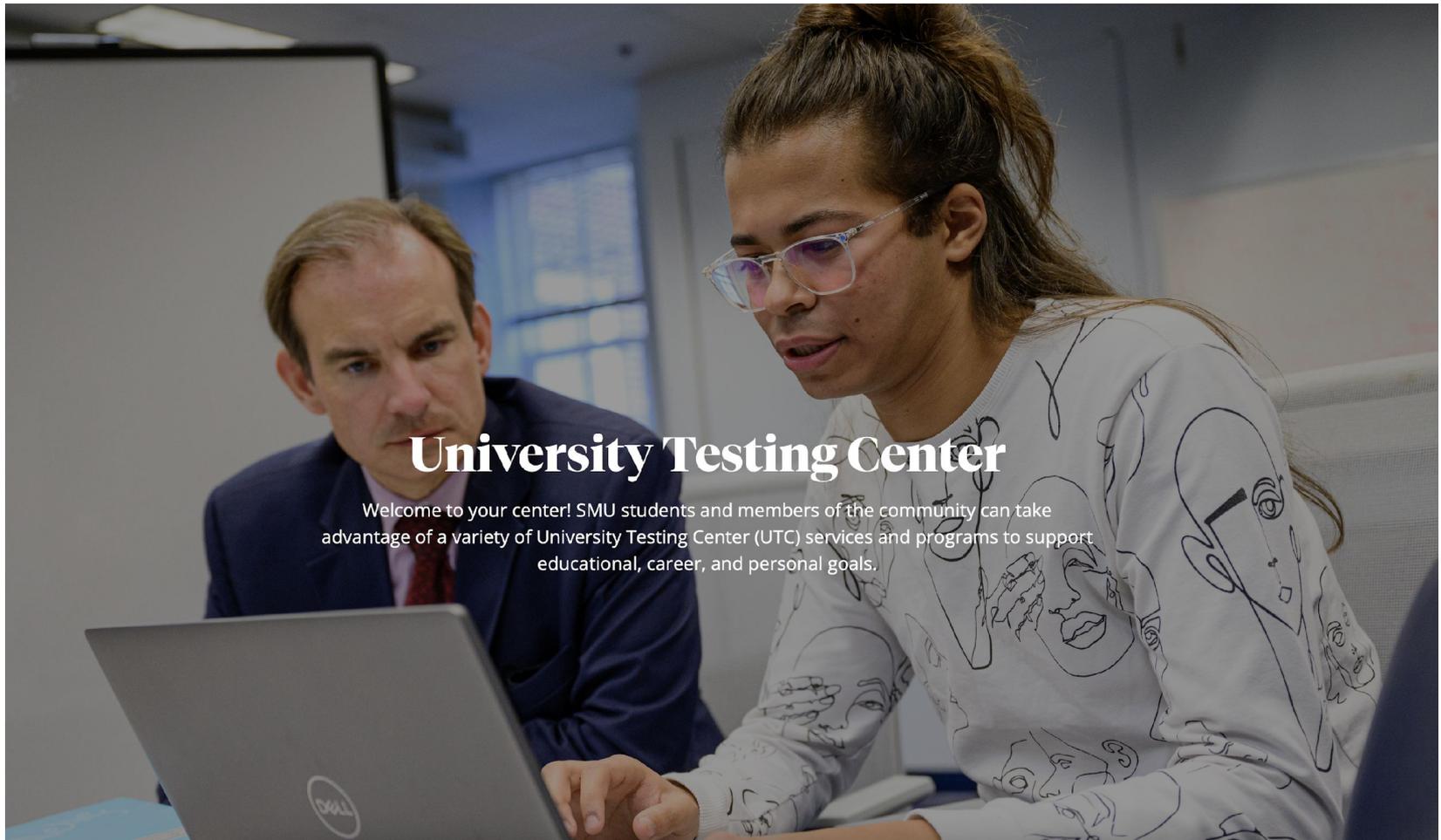

At the college's Disability Services office

Where will Students use Self-Advocacy in College?

With instructors

Where will Students use Self-Advocacy in College?

University Testing Center

Welcome to your center! SMU students and members of the community can take advantage of a variety of University Testing Center (UTC) services and programs to support educational, career, and personal goals.

With staff who are in charge of accommodated testing

Where will Students use Self-Advocacy in College?

With academic and departmental advisors

Where will Students use Self-Advocacy in College?

In the classroom

Where will Students use Self-Advocacy in College?

In their residence hall

Where will Students use Self-Advocacy in College?

In student groups

Using Self-Advocacy to Create a Support Network

- **Learn** the resources: Disability Services, Tutoring Center, TRIO programs (Student Support Services), Counseling Center, College Advisors, Major Advisors, Instructors, Teaching Assistants (TAs), Resident Advisors (RAs).

- **Connect** with them.

- **Build** a support network that works.

- **Use** it!

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