Accommodations and Resources

for Supporting Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities

Table of Contents

# Accommodating Emotional and Behavioral Functional Limitations

Students with mental health disabilities and/or students with disabilities who have emotional and/or behavioral functional limitations are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations necessary to participate in the Job Corps Program – even in Distance Learning (DL) activities. This will require that each center be mindful of which accommodations will be needed in an online learning platform *as well as* what other supporting accommodations may be needed to enable the student to engage, maintain participation and attention, and demonstrate skill attainment.

Current Students with Accommodation Plans

In the **"How to Get Started – Supporting Students with Disabilities in Distance Learning"** guide, center Disability Coordinators (DCs) are encouraged to review the student's current accommodation plan to determine which accommodations are needed for access and participation in DL and other support activities. Subsequently, the Reasonable Accommodation Committee (RAC) should convene (including the student) to discuss any additional accommodations specific to DL that are needed.

New Accommodation Plans

The interactive reasonable accommodation process is still a requirement regardless of whether the student is on center or participating in a DL format (see **Form 2-03, Definitions and Documentation Requirements Related to Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants and Students with Disabilities**). When developing accommodation plans for students in a DL environment, consider all the relevant access and participation needs of the individual student. Do they need reading or math support, anxiety support, memory support or organization support, etc.? Review the documentation of disability to identify functional limitations that may need supporting and discuss specific accommodation needs with the student.
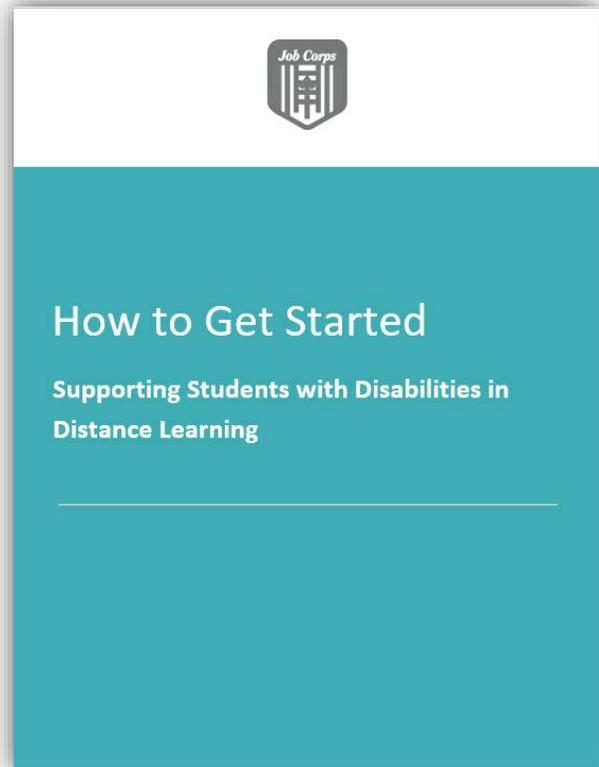
Implementing Distance Learning Accommodations

Accommodations to aid the individual student in the DL environment may not be particularly helpful if they are unclear how and when to use them. This may require that a DC connect with the student via a shared screen (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, etc.) to demonstrate how to use a specific accommodation in the online learning environment. For example, if a student needs Read Aloud support, then they may need the DC to demonstrate how to use Microsoft's Immersive Reader. In turn, it is encouraged that the student demonstrates their ability to use the necessary accommodation successfully. If they are unable to do so, more instruction may be needed, perhaps to include multisensory opportunities such as videotaped demonstrations or picture supported and simplified written instructions. If these supports are not sufficient, then the RAC may need to convene and consider alternative accommodations, if any are available.

Maintaining Interactivity with Students in Distance Learning

Interaction with teachers/instructors and support staff is as important when using DL platforms as it is when students are physically on center. Suggestions for maintaining interactivity include:

- Ensure that students are proficient at using the online learning platform and other resources that they are expected to use during DL. This is especially important for students with disabilities who may need to use assistive technology, mobile or PC applications as accommodations, etc.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLHbvbQz0Hs

- Set up video meetings with students on a regular basis. This will provide a multisensory learning experience which can be essential for some students with disabilities.
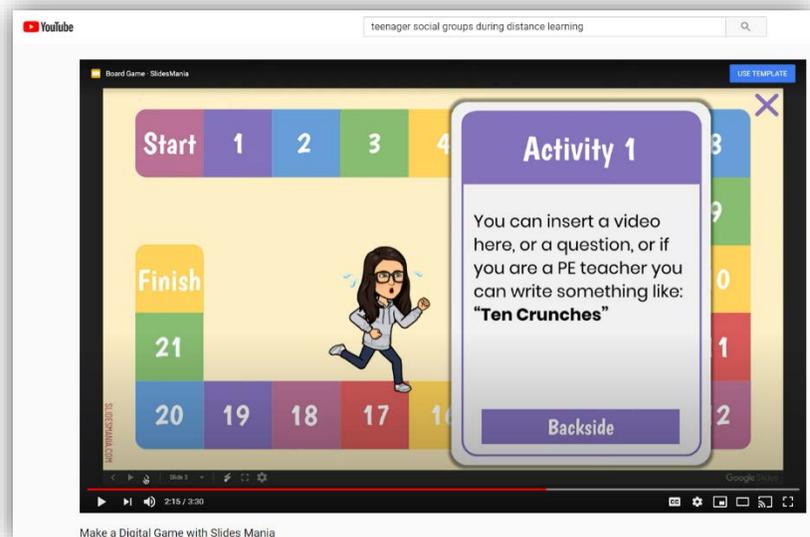
  NOTE: Some students on the autism spectrum may find participation in face-to-face meetings via various video platforms uncomfortable and challenging. Encourage the student to try and participate; however, if they are too uncomfortable with seeing everyone on the screen, first attempt allowing them to turn off their own camera so that they do not see themselves and no one can see them and then if that is not successful, perhaps try one

to one meetings or only sharing your screen so they can watch the instruction being provided on a white board and not having to look at faces. Another option would be to position the camera so that the view is offset meaning that it is focused on the side of your face or at an angle rather than a front and center position in front of the camera.

- Stay in contact often via email, the online learning platforms, or via phone and check for understanding often!

- Establish small group and/or partner type activities that can be completed via the online learning platforms, video meetings, etc.

- Create classroom games for the online learning platform as this creates a safe and fun way to promote interactivity, engage learners with new content or use as a review of previously learned content needed for certification testing, etc. This will be especially helpful to students who have memory challenges as it will provide them with one more resource that they can reuse to rehearse and practice the learning content.

- Respond to student questions on a timely basis. This is critically important for students with disabilities who may need more frequent interactions, more frequent feedback, or more information to complete their assignments.

Referral Process

Suspicion of a disability and/or disclosures of a possible disability (i.e., information provided orally, via medical or educational documentation, etc.) should be referred to the DC(s) for follow up. These referrals should be made in writing (i.e., the referral may be documented via email correspondence, use

center's "Suspicion of Disability Referral Form", a memo to the DC, etc.). If the student is determined to be a person with a disability, DCs should enter the student into disability data collection, and complete the interactive reasonable accommodation process (i.e., **convene a RAC meeting (including the student**) to discuss possible needed accommodations. If accommodations are requested and/or identified, then the DC should enter these accommodations into the CIS Accommodation Plan entry screen. The referral and the outcome

should be documented in the Accommodation Plan with Notes screen in CIS and the referring staff person should be provided basic feedback (i.e., please see student accommodation plan in CIS or see updates to student accommodation plan, etc. for example.)

Staff Mentors, Disability Coordinators and Learning Coaches

Students with emotional and/or behavioral functional limitations likely would benefit from having a single assigned staff mentor who could be sought out for all their guidance and support needs. Although Job Corps Counselors are a primary resource for discussion of the student's general program needs, referrals to center licensed health professionals, etc., the DC is the suggested contact for this purpose. DCs can facilitate convening a RAC for additional accommodation plan modification(s), offer suggested strategies, help secure documentation if additional needs are identified and not supported in current documentation, consult with academic/career technical staff and/or counseling and Wellness staff regarding concerns, etc. The DC, in distance learning scenarios, can function as the "point" person for students with disabilities similar to the role of a Learning Coach in a more traditional academic scenario. Peers can also be a source of support to students, modeling appropriate behavior in an online classroom environment, small group activities, one-to-one peer support or in online social situations.

Indicators that Clinical Support or Additional Accommodations are Needed

Many students may engage in avoidance behaviors due to anxiety about DL or exhibit challenges in other areas that were not problematic for them in the traditional learning

environment. Successful participation in DL can be demanding for some students, especially those who tend to need more direct guidance and instruction or benefit from prompts and cues for behavior management, and so forth. Given this, center staff (i.e., instructional, counselors, etc.) should refer students to the center DC if they are expressing that they are having difficulty concentrating, staying focused, or experiencing other basic challenges. The DC can

When discussing behavioral concerns, it might be helpful to initiate the conversation with the student by stating something like, "It seems as if you are having a rough time."

work with the student to potentially modify the existing accommodation plan to include additional supports and/or offer some learning strategies that may be helpful. However, if the student seems to be experiencing symptoms or exhibiting behaviors that are not ameliorated with additional accommodations and supporting strategies or appears that clinical intervention or review is needed, the student should be referred to the center Wellness Department.

NOTE: If the student exhibits behavior that is disrespectful of peers and staff or disruptive to an online discussion, then the teacher/instructor should speak to the individual privately (when possible) via phone or video meetings just as they would if they were in the physical classroom environment. If the issue cannot be resolved, a referral to the Wellness Department, to the center DC and/or appropriate staff to address student conduct may be necessary.

Identifying Emotional/Behavioral Accommodations

How can existing accommodation plans be modified to meet the new demands/challenges of the DL environment or what accommodations can be implemented to support the emotional/behavioral functional limitations that students may experience?

REMINDER: Best practices used in traditional learning environments should not be discarded simply because learning is taking place in a DL format. According to **edutopia.org**, the use of the following strategies will assist in creating effective online classrooms:

- Build community and create an engaging environment.

- Have organization and routines for students to be at ease.
- Learn about each participant (not just what they submit for an assignment).

See Appendix A for a chart of Emotional/Behavioral Accommodations and Strategies. This chart lists some of the commonly used emotional/behavioral accommodations within "center" accommodation plans and offers suggestions for relevant related accommodations that potentially could be used in the DL environment.

Apps for Supporting Students with Emotional/Behavioral Functional Limitations in Distance Learning

Apps are great tools to support students, but they do not take the place of clinical care and referrals to Wellness if needed. If there is not a Center Metal Health Consultant (CMHC) involved with the student, the DC is encouraged to offer check-ins and support to encourage students to keep on track with apps. If the student is receiving services from the CMHC, the DC should ensure the CMHC is aware of any apps suggested by the DC for the student to use.

APPENDIX A: Emotional/Behavioral Accommodations and Strategies

Accommodation Suggestions			
Functional Limitation	Center Accommodations	DL Accommodations	DL Strategies
Difficulties with Communication	Simplify language	Simplify language in instructions to students on website platforms, in paper packets, and when communicating via email, text or video-based meetings.	Ask student to summarize or state their understanding of the instructions, information, etc. to confirm that the communication is effective.
	Allow alternate format(s) for communicating (e.g., written response in lieu of verbal response; texting; use of pictures/graphics)	Provide instruction through video conferencing options. Provide ways for students to see AND hear information. For students that have difficulty with written communication/ reading, teach and allow use of tools/apps such as: **Immersive Reader, Adobe Read Out Loud** or **Office Lens**.	

APPENDIX A: Emotional/Behavioral Accommodations and Strategies

Accommodation Suggestions			
Functional Limitation	Center Accommodations	DL Accommodations	DL Strategies
Rules/Expectations	Frequently check for understanding of rules and expectations, assignments, tasks, etc.	Provide copies of instructor's notes. Host Face to Face (F2F) virtual meetings to review assignments, tasks, rules /expectations, provide positive reinforcement (i.e., praise, acknowledgement of effort when noted, etc.).	Review together to ensure understanding. Ask for student to paraphrase their understanding of especially important points.
	Allow the student a pass to access a supportive adult (counselor, mentor, CMHC, trusted instructor, etc.) when behavior is escalating	Assign a center staff contact person such as the student's counselor. Provide opportunities for telehealth appointments (counselor, mentor, CMHC, instructor, etc.) as student needs (i.e., by request and/or if behavior, anxiety, etc. starts to escalate).	Respond promptly to student inquiries and efforts to contact center staff.
Difficulties with Change/Transition	Maintain open channels of communication between the student and the	Provide "check in" routines (e.g., regular scheduled	If using Google Classroom, post tasks, assignments, expectations, routines, and any changes on digital bulletin boards and/or link a

APPENDIX A: Emotional/Behavioral Accommodations and Strategies

Accommodation Suggestions			
Functional Limitation	**Center Accommodations**	**DL Accommodations**	**DL Strategies**
	instructors to ensure an effective transition	phone calls, texts, emails, virtual meetings). Provide a weekly schedule of upcoming assignments via email, shared calendar, google classroom, whiteboard, etc.	Google Calendar with due dates for assignments, tests, and other important dates. Using the google classroom app the instructor will post a list of upcoming instructional topics and any related resources. (YouTube instructional videos, documents, outlines).
	Use timers/reminders to prepare students for upcoming transitions	Provide/use apps or other assistive technology (AT) to set up timers, reminders for tasks due, upcoming transitions (e.g., on the learning platform, schedules, change in expectations, etc.). The instructor can/should assist the student in installing and using the AT as needed.	Create a step by step video of directions or process steps. For example: **CanPlan app**
Difficulties with Social Skills	Provide a role model/mentor	Provide/assign a role model/mentor with whom to connect routinely and/or to work together remotely	

APPENDIX A: Emotional/Behavioral Accommodations and Strategies

Accommodation Suggestions			
Functional Limitation	**Center Accommodations**	**DL Accommodations**	**DL Strategies**
		via video meetings, email, text and so forth.	
	Teach acceptable social behaviors in different contexts (academics, career technical, recreation, residential)	Provide clear expectations for DL settings. See Rules/Expectations. Review expectations (with simplified language if needed) with the student and verify understanding. Provide pre-recorded video clips or podcasts of upcoming events, assignments, tasks, changes.	Set up a check-in schedule 3 times per week (or based on student need) to review behavior in virtual settings and ask the student to demonstrate an understanding of acceptable behavior in virtual/group settings. Provide YouTubes or video clips that focus on specific social skills (e.g., self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, employability skills, etc.) uploaded to Google Classroom or other DL platforms for anytime access. For example: **Employability Skills-All 8 Skills**
Difficulties with Self-Regulation and Focus	Allow frequent breaks for refocus	Establish periodic movement breaks and time outs at intervals determined by the instructor and student.	Encourage the students to set up an app to assist with prompts for movement. For example: **Move-it**

.