

504 and IEP Teamwork: Establishing Collaborative Relationships between Mental Health Providers and Educators

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Introduction – OCD in school

- Obsession – contamination
- Compulsions
 - Repeated bathroom trips for handwashing
 - Difficulty sharing supplies
 - Difficulty eating in cafeteria
 - Inability to use public bathrooms
 - Difficulty changing classes due to the number of people

Introduction – OCD in school

- Obsession – fear of harm coming to self or others
- Compulsions
 - Reassurance seeking
 - Repeating activities/rereading passages to prevent harm
 - Checking locks or safety procedures in classrooms
 - Rituals involving safe zones
 - Avoidance of sharp objects around other students

Introduction – OCD in school

- Obsessions/compulsions related to counting/numbers
- Scrupulosity obsessions and compulsions related to apologizing or confession/telling on others
- Pervasive doubting
- Rearranging objects in desk/backpack
- Just right compulsions

Introduction

- Ways OCD might interfere with academic functioning
 - Divided attention
 - Engaging in rituals during class time
 - Distress/shame
 - Fatigue (emotional or physical)
 - Absenteeism/tardiness
 - Avoiding triggers (reading, being around classmates)

Introduction – OCD in school

– Problems

- Grades
- Social difficulties/bullying
 - 25% describe bullying as chronic
- Behavioral issues

– Possible solutions

- Homeschool
 - Approximately 3.4% of children are homeschooled, up from 1.7% in 1999
 - 15% of parents indicate mental health concerns as reason for homeschool
 - 91% indicate concern about the academic environment
- Advocate

Overview

- 504s and IEPs: What the Law Says
- What to Ask For: Possible Accommodations for Students with Anxiety
- Integrating Educational Accommodations and Psychological Treatment
- Managing Transitions
- Communication Strategies
- Discussion and Questions

Special Education Law 101



WISCONSIN
STATE PUBLIC
DEFENDER

Amanda Merkwae, J.D., M.Ed.

**Why do we provide
special education
services?**

IDEA – 20 U.S.C. § 1400

- “(c) **Findings.** Congress finds the following: **Disability is a natural part of the human experience** and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. **Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy** of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self sufficiency...”

IDEA – 20 U.S.C. § 1400

- “(d) **Purposes.** The purposes of this title are to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a **free and appropriate public education [FAPE]**...designed to meet their **unique** needs **AND prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living...**”

IDEA: 6 Core Principles

1. Appropriate evaluation/assessment
2. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
3. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
4. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
5. Parent (and student) participation in the decision-making process
6. Procedural safeguards

Referral



Evaluation



Eligibility



IEP



Placement



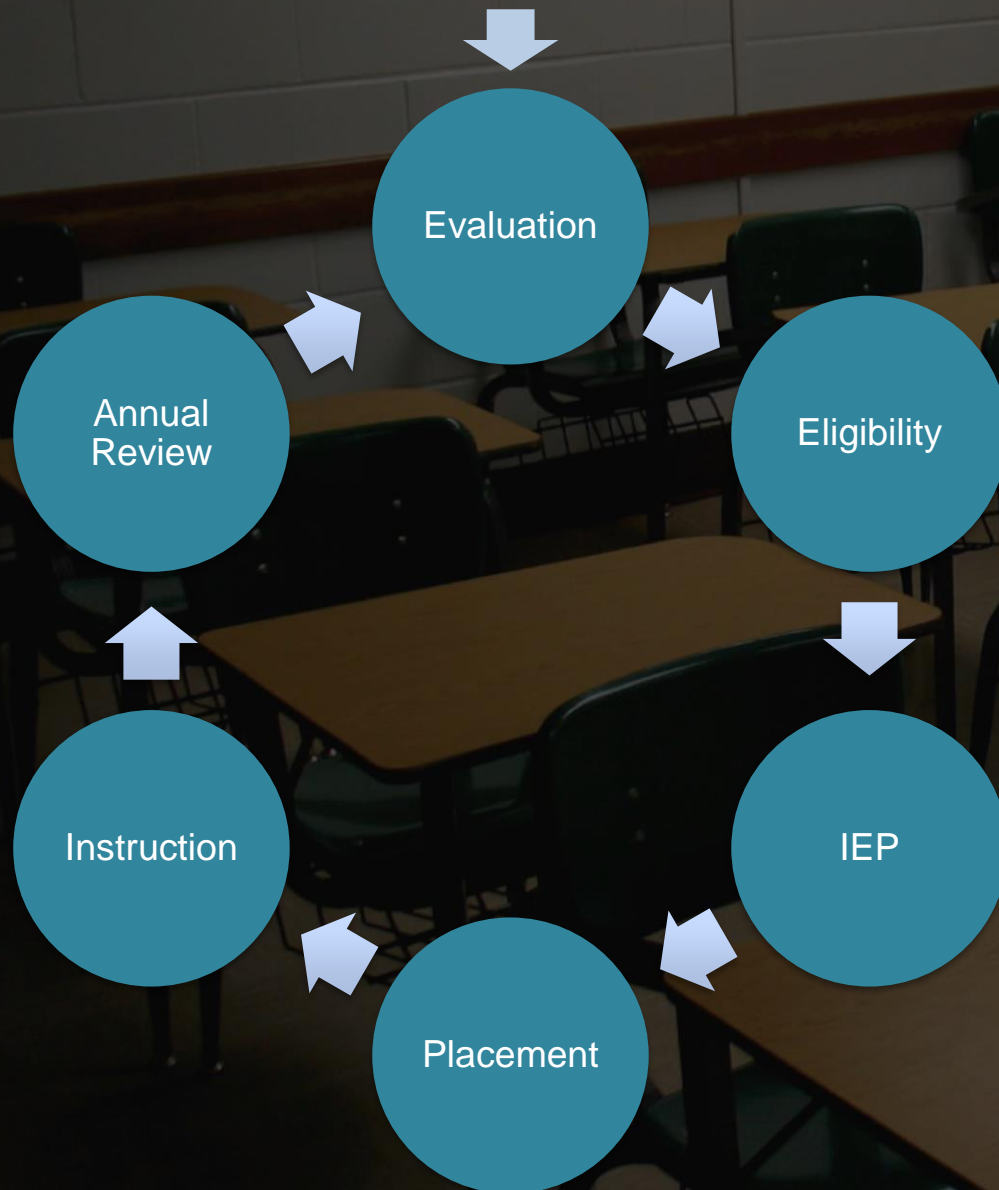
Instruction



Annual Review

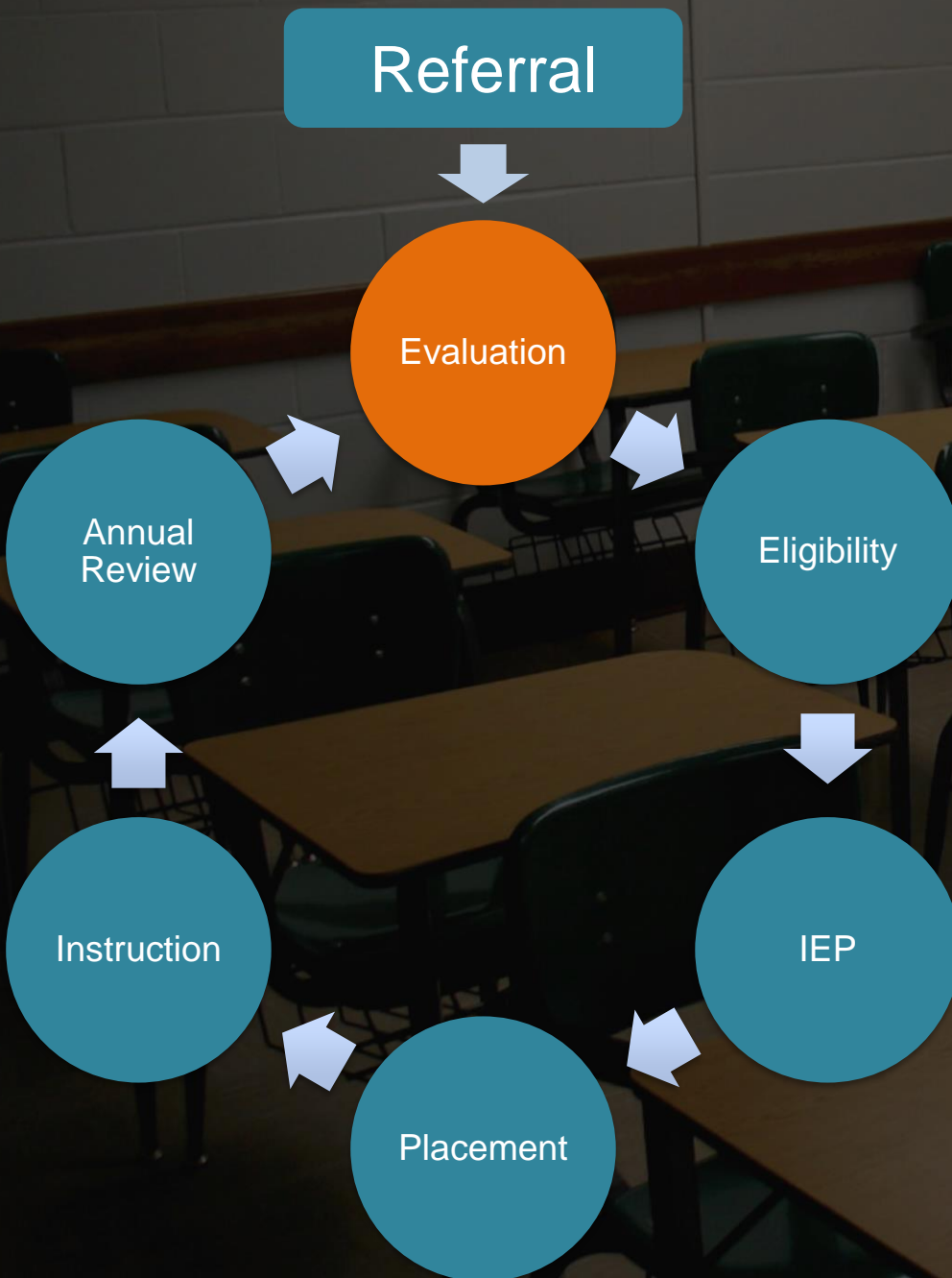


Referral



The Referral Process

- "Child Find" obligation
- Parent request for evaluation
- Community referral
- **Do everything in writing**

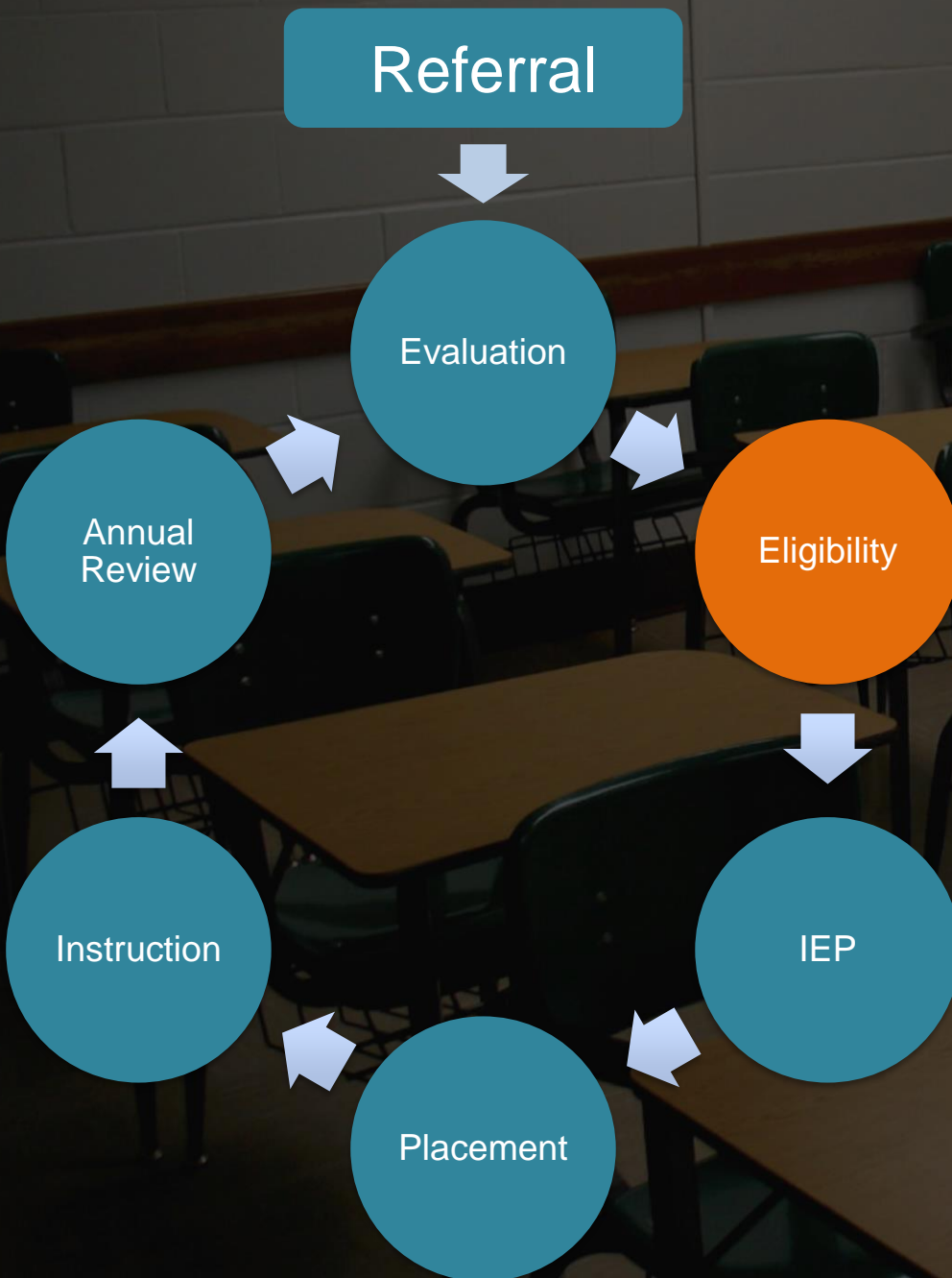


The Evaluation Process

- 60 days to complete after consent signed
- Variety of assessments, observations, and procedures to gather information
- Technically sound testing instruments
- Evaluated in **all areas** of suspected disability
- Right to IEE if disagree with results of district's evaluation

Who is a child with a disability?

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairments
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment



Eligibility Determination

- Eligibility meeting
- Determination
 1. Have one or more of the 13 disabilities listed in IDEA, **and**
 2. Student, as result of that disability, needs SPED services to receive benefit from gen ed program
- Additional procedures for SLD

Who makes up the IEP team?

Test
explainer



Student



Educational
Rights
Holders



Gen Ed
Teacher

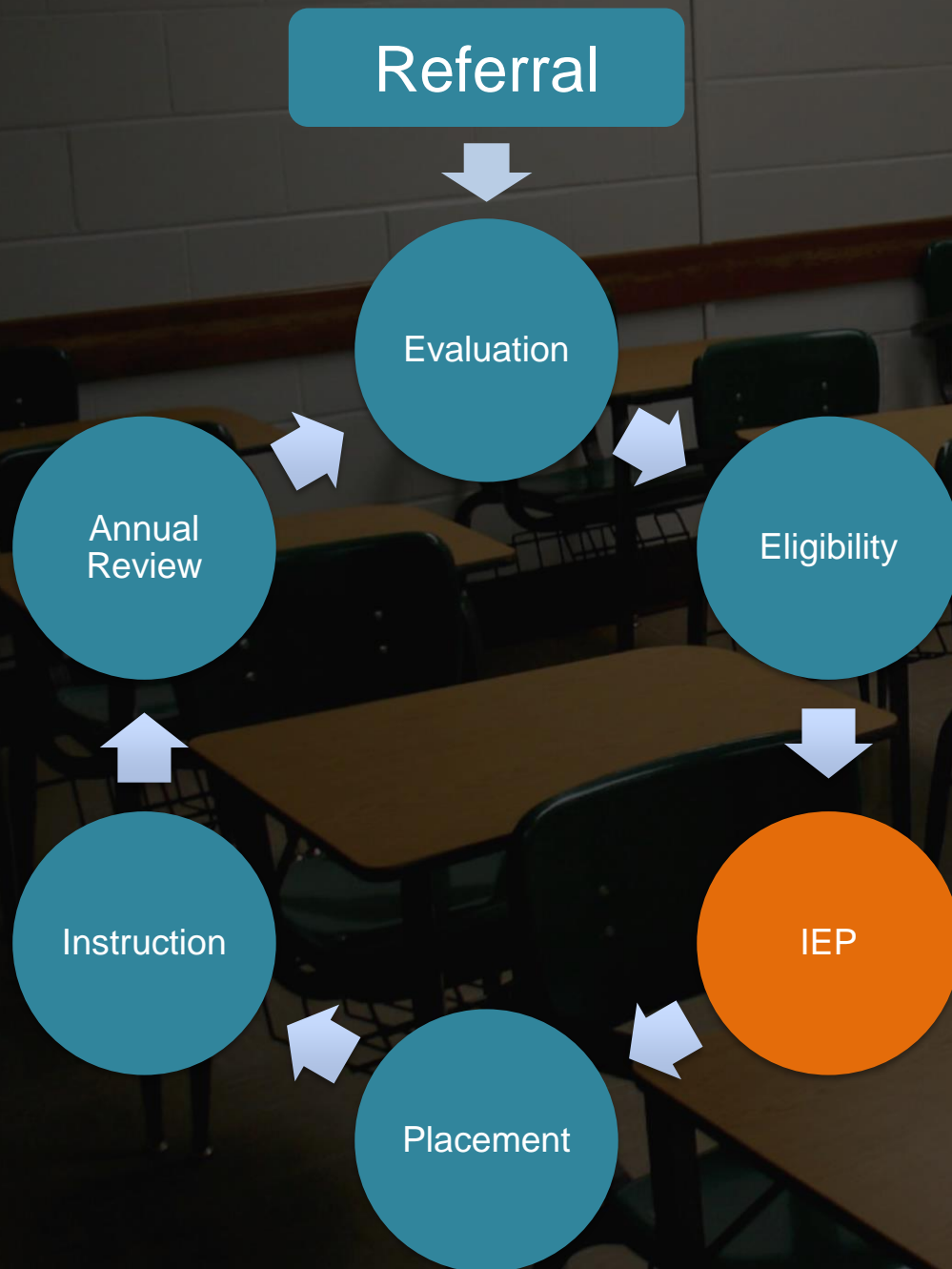


SPED
Teacher



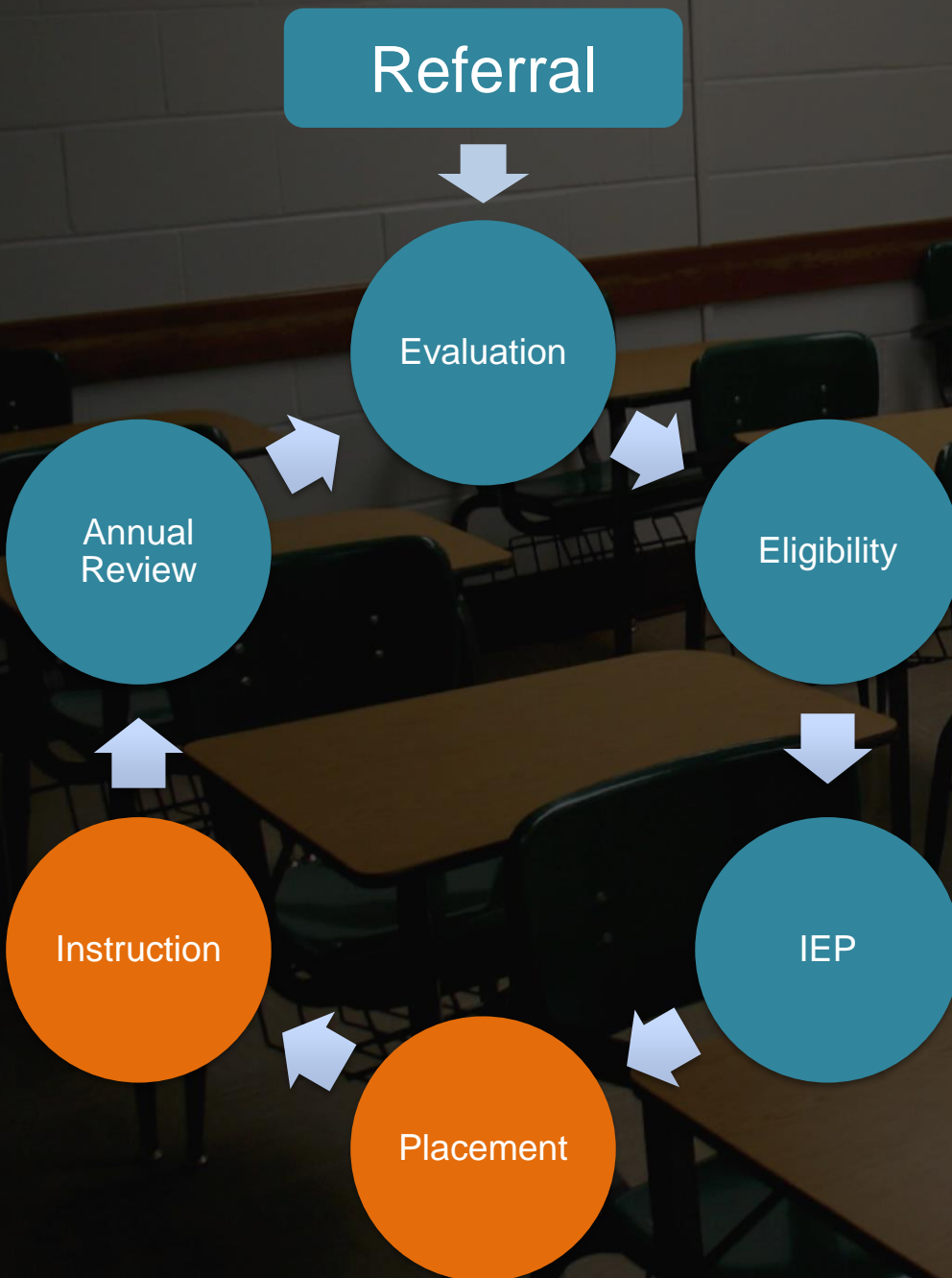
LEA





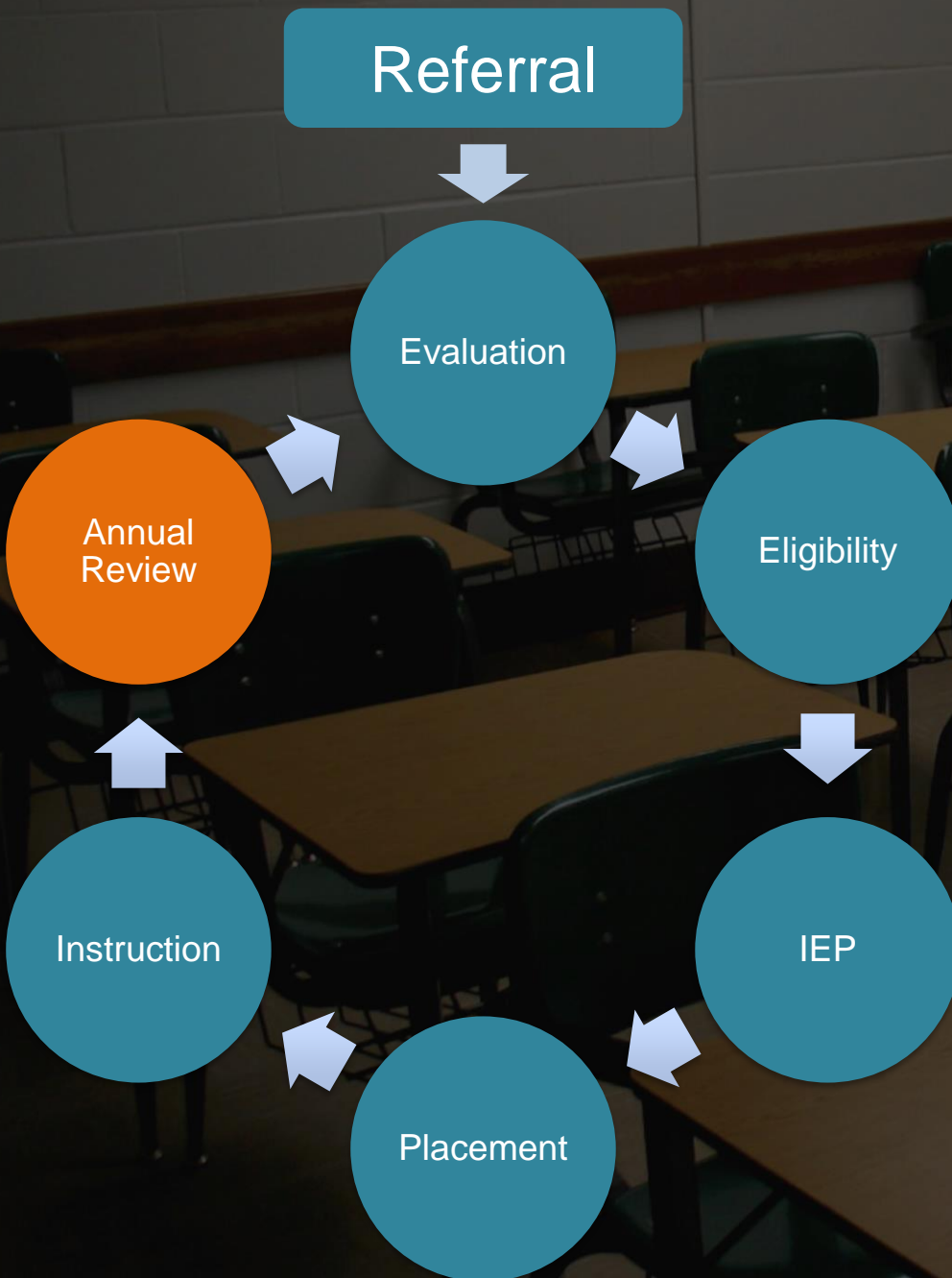
Individualized Education Program

- **Where's the student now?**
 - Present Levels of Performance (PLOP)
- **Where's the student going?**
 - Goals
 - Objectives
- **How will the student get there?**
 - Services
 - Instruction
 - Accommodations
 - Modifications
- **How do we know when student has succeeded?**
 - Measurement
 - Progress Reports



Placement & Instruction

- Placement is more than a physical location
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Must receive notice for proposed changes in placement



Annual Review

- Must hold IEP meeting annually
- Can request IEP meeting at any time
- Check on progress towards goals

Prior Written Notice

- Required whenever the school proposes (or refuses) to initiate a change in the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child
- Must include:
 - Description of the action the school proposes or refuses to take
 - Explanation of why the school district is proposing or refusing to take that action
 - Description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the school district used in deciding to propose or refuse the action
 - Description of any other choices that the IEP team considered and the reasons why those choices were rejected
 - Description of other reasons why the school district proposed or refused the action

Record of Prior Written Notice

Student Name _____ DOB _____ Parent Name _____ Meeting Date _____

Description of the action that the school district proposes or refuses to take	Explanation of why the school district is proposing or refusing to take that action	Description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the school district used in deciding to propose or refuse the action	Description of any other choices that the IEP Team considered and the reasons why those choices were rejected	Description of other reasons why the school district proposed or refused the action

Under 34 C.F.R. § 300.503(a), the school district must give you a written notice (information received in writing), whenever the school district: (1) Proposes to begin or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to your child; or (2) Refuses to begin or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child or the provision of FAPE to your child. The required content under 34 C.F.R. § 300.503(b) is listed above. The school district must provide the notice in understandable language (34 C.F.R. § 300.503(c)).

Referral

Re-
evaluation

Eligibility

IEP

Placement

Instruction

Annual
Review

Test
explainer

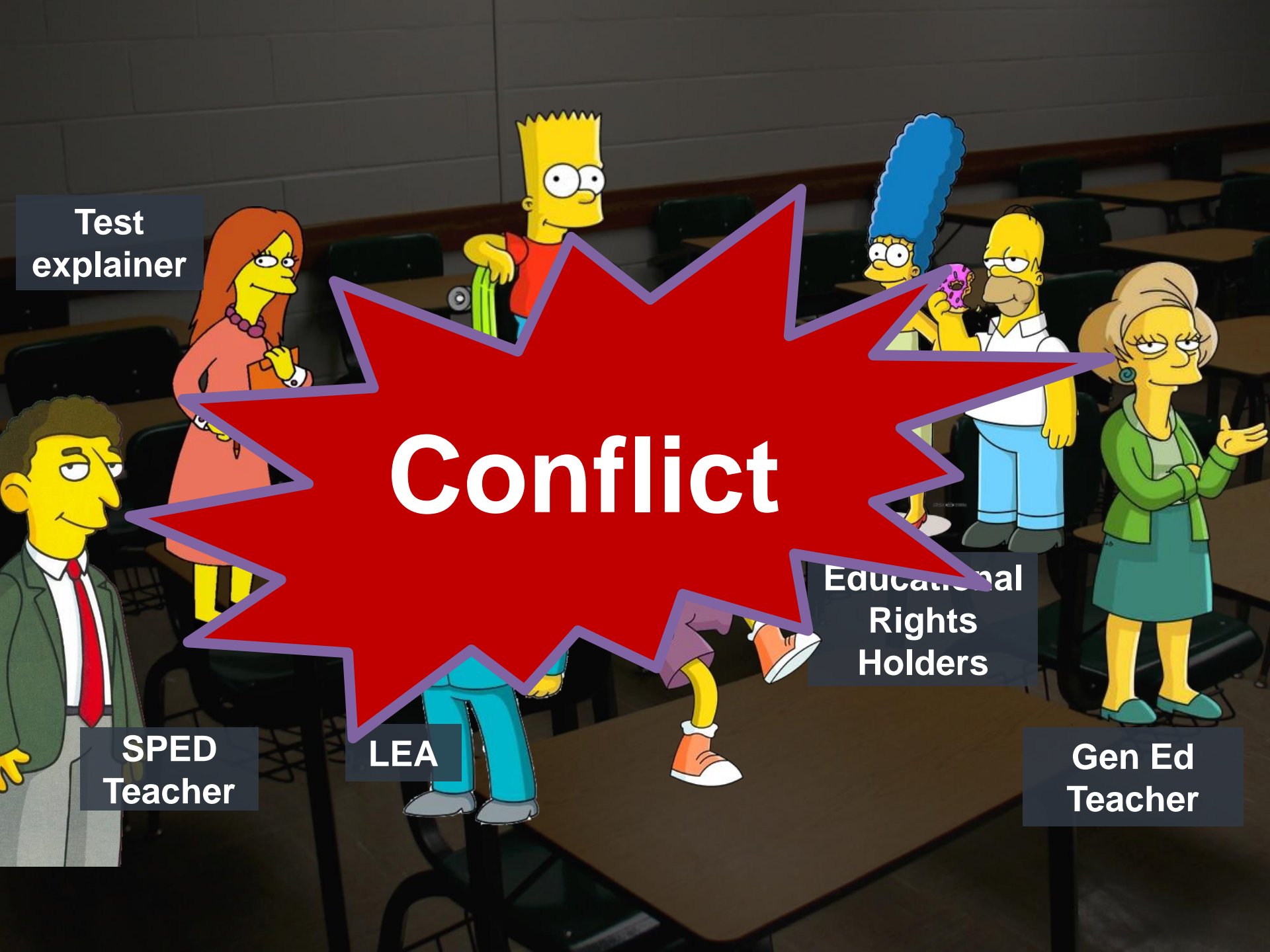
Conflict

Educational
Rights
Holders

SPED
Teacher

LEA

Gen Ed
Teacher





Conflict

Resolving IEP Team Disagreements

- Bring experts to meetings
- Be clear about what you're asking for
- Back up requests with data
- Request **special education mediation**
- File a **state IDEA complaint**
- File a **due process complaint**

Section 504

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Anti-discrimination law
- Protects all people with a **disability that impairs a major life activity**
- Prohibits discrimination in any program receiving federal \$
- Provides **accommodations**
- **504 Plan** removes barriers to educational opportunities

Possible Accommodations at School & Integration with Treatment

Andrea Guastello, M.S.



Developing Hierarchies with School in Mind

- Where are you now and what are the steps we need to take to get you where you want to be?
 - Are you going to school everyday?
 - Are you attending all of your classes everyday?
 - How are we going to get you the work that you're missing
 - Sending assignments and class notes home
 - Taking tests at school
 - Online curriculum
 - How are we going to get you to spend more time in the classroom
 - Partial days
 - Meeting with school counselor before school
 - Preferential seating or locker
 - Allowing Breaks

Are you able to fully participate in your classes?

- Testing
 - Separate location
 - Extra time
 - Breaking it into chunks
- Changing clothes for gym class
 - Allow them not to change clothes or to wear different clothes
 - Changing in a teacher's bathroom
- Dissections
 - Alternate assignments
- Note Taking
 - Assistive technology
 - Access to teacher's notes
 - Paired with a note buddy
- In class presentations
 - Presenting for the teacher separately
 - Alternative written assignments
- Homework
 - Assigning for mastery rather than repetition
- Assistive Technology
 - Typing rather than writing
 - Dictation software
 - Scribe pen – audio recordings

Are you comfortable (enough) at school?

- Some discomfort is expected as your student challenges their anxiety
- Is their distress tolerable enough that they can actually learn in class?
- In class accommodation options
 - Allowing fidget toys or chewing gum
 - Allowing breaks
 - Preferred seating
 - Agreement not to surprise call on them
- Eating lunch
 - Can they eat in a separate area with a friend or two
 - Can they be allowed off campus for lunch
- Using the bathroom
 - Can they be allowed to use a different bathroom
 - Can they be allowed to be late to class so they can use the bathroom
 - Can they be allowed to go during class

Do I need an IEP or a 504

- If you can get an IEP, do
 - IEPs provide more protections
 - They also require more resources from the school
- If you need modified curriculum ask for an IEP
- If you only need accommodations for distress management in the classroom a 504 may be sufficient
 - If you don't qualify for an IEP you may still qualify for a 504 plan
 - IEPs only apply to grades K-12. Accommodations under section 504 are available in college.

Fading out accommodations

- School accommodations for OCD should be temporary!
 - Work with your provider to determine how to fade out school accommodations as your child progresses through treatment
 - May require multiple meetings with the IEP team to update the plan
 - Identify daily and weekly communication strategies
 - Especially important for students with multiple teachers (middle school and high school)
 - Identify a point person for communication and relaying messages
 - Set specific goals and closely monitor progress (or lack of progress).
 - Use the most up-to-date data to make decisions
 - Re-administer measures regularly
 - Don't waive your right for reassessment

Integrating with Treatment

- Let your providers know what difficulties you are facing at school
- Try to be as specific as possible about your school difficulties
 - Each school and teacher is different
- Create in session exposures and homework assignments that move toward fading out school accommodations

Facilitating Collaborative Relationships

- Let your provider know you would like help advocating at school
 - Ask questions
 - Draft letters to the school in session
- Providers can write letters detailing the diagnosis and making suggestions for accommodations
 - Can support you in educating school staff on how this disorder impacts learning and emotional experiences at school
 - Remember schools get to decide what will work for their classrooms and districts
- Share records
 - Share testing reports with the school
 - Share school behavioral records, academic records, and IEP/504 documents with your provider

Facilitating Collaborative Relationships

- Sign a release so the provider can speak to the school directly
 - You might need to sign a release at school and for your therapist
- Identify most helpful people
 - School social worker, principle, special education director
- Inform your provider of important meeting dates
 - Allow sufficient time before the meeting and ask school to move meeting times if needed (you are not bound to the first time they suggest)
 - Invite providers to attend or phone into meetings
 - Ask for letters
- Hire an educational advocate

Managing Transitions

Danielle Cooke, M.S.







SIPRESS

"Your mother and I are feeling overwhelmed, so you'll have to bring yourselves up."

The Transitional Approach

- Transitions are an ongoing conversation between patients, families and stakeholders (school administrations, teachers, school counselors)
- Occurs in the context of the family
- Transitions should start early, and continue throughout childhood and adolescence
- Parents should task children with **developmentally appropriate** responsibilities

(Betz, 2004)

Transitional Shifts

- High School:
 - Schools are primarily responsible for identifying and evaluating disabilities
 - Parents and guardians are the primary advocates
 - Schools are responsible for developing and providing personal services
- College:
 - Students are expected to self-identify their concerns, and provide their own documentations
 - Prior IEP and 504 documentation may not be sufficient
 - Students are expected to advocate for their needs with the disability offices and teachers
- This is a big jump!

(Gil, 2007)

Why is transition important?

- Transferring to adult care and self-management can leave patients feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and underprepared
- Transitions are intended to make this process easier on the patients and families by encouraging the development of a repertoire of skills
- Responsibilities should change, and build over time until autonomy is reached

Factors for Consideration

- Age and developmental level
 - These two do not always line up!
- Cognitive abilities
 - Children with neurodevelopmental disorders will need more scaffolding.
- Support Structures
 - Will your child be leaving home? If so, are they living in a dorm or living independently? What supports are or are not in place? What additional stressors will they have to manage in addition to their healthcare (laundry, cooking, paying bills, school)?
- Timelines
 - Are there particular milestones or events coming up? What challenges will they pose? Will they need to start with all new providers? Will your child be starting new schools, new responsibilities?

Good transitions include...



Planning

Communication

Support

Younger than 12 years

- Keep in mind middle school stressors:
 - Peer relationships, more classes, increased academic responsibilities
- Model appropriate healthcare and academic interactions (letting your child know when and why you're scheduling appointments with teachers and providers)
- Ensure your child is completing age and developmentally appropriate chores and responsibilities

(Quann et al., 2015)

13 to 14 Years

- Continue previous work
- Begin conversations with healthcare providers and educators about office and school policies regarding transitions from youth to adult care
- Begin a conversation with your child about their academic accommodations and how/why they are provided

Freshmen: 14-15 years

- Continue all previous work
- Explain the importance of self-advocacy
- Encourage your child to attend IEP meetings and ask questions
- Discuss academic and career goals with your child, and discuss how best to reach these goals

Sophomore: 15-16 years

- Continue all previous work
- Role play: help your child develop a script to communicate with their instructors what their experiences are, and what they need to succeed
- Include your child in IEP meetings, and encourage them to speak up
- Set short-term and long-term goals: make sure your child knows how to reach them

Goal Setting

S

- Specific
 - What do you want to do?

M

- Measurable
 - How will you know when you've done it?

A

- Achievable
 - Can you actually ever achieve it?

R

- Relevant
 - Is it in line with your values and broader goals?

T

- Time limited
 - When can you achieve this?

Junior: 16-17 years

- Continue all previous goals
- Transition to independence
- Encourage your child to lead their IEP meetings, and step in only when necessary
- Have your child meet with their instructors individually and explain their needs and accommodations
- Discuss how to balance new responsibilities, such as driving, with school assignments, part-time work, and extracurricular activities

(Quann et al., 2015)

Senior: 17-18 years

- Continue all previous work
- Update goals
- Reward and encourage independence and autonomy
 - With increased responsibility should come increased privileges
- Monitor progress to graduation
- Accessing external resources
- Connect to post-school services
- Discuss impending expectations

(Quann et al., 2015)

18 years +

For the parent:

- Take a step back – provide support and encouragement
- Encourage your child to use self-advocacy skills, research available resources
- **Do not contact your child's instructors or employers for them or on their behalf**
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (**FERPA**) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

(Gil, 2007)

College: 18 years +

For the student:

- Get registered with your school's disability office as quickly as possible
- Discuss with a disability resource officer what accommodations you are and are not entitled to
- Contact your professors early on, and establish ongoing communication
- Take a **proactive**, not **reactive** approach: if you're having a rough semester make sure to talk to them before your grades suffer!

(Chan, 2016)

The Workforce: 18 years +

For the employee:

- Get informed on what you're entitled to via the Americans with Disabilities Act and through state laws
 - “reasonable accommodations”
- Discuss concerns and collect documentation from mental health providers
- Understand that not all workplaces understand or are equipped to meet all accommodations

(Brandes, Ormsbee, & Haring, 2007)

Workplace Resources

- The [Job Accommodation Network](#) (JAN) is a free consulting service from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy that provides individualized accommodation solutions and information on the ADA and services related to employment for people with disabilities. JAN can be accessed at 1-800-526-7234 (V/TTY).
- The Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation's [Reasonable Accommodations page](#) includes specific tips for employers on developing and implementing accommodations.
- Ten regional [ADA National Network Centers](#), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, provide ADA information, training and technical assistance across the nation. They can be contacted at 1-800-949-4232 (V/TTY).
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's [Enforcement Guidance on the ADA and Psychiatric Disabilities](#) answers some of the most common questions about the ADA and persons with psychiatric disabilities.

This list was obtained from US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy website

“Do’s” and “Don’ts”

- **Do** start early and small: building each step will make the next one easier
- **Don’t** expect too much, too quickly
- **Do** make a task list and discuss expectations
- **Don’t** get frustrated if they struggle, it’s a part of the process!
- **Do** discuss fears and concerns with your child’s mental health provider – they can help set up a plan for the whole family
- **Don’t** be afraid to let your child experience the consequences of their actions (missed assignments, failed tests), but be prepared intervene when necessary (tutoring, gentle reminders, appropriate support)
- **Do** offer age appropriate rewards for successful self-advocacy
- **Don’t** assume your child will always be eligible for their accommodations! Talk to their evaluator and therapists about whether your child
- **Do** remember when it is and is not important to get involved – high school teachers may only respond to an adult, no matter how good your child is at advocating for themselves!

Communication Strategies

Danielle Cooke, M.S.



Developing a Script (High School)

1. Introduce yourself
2. Briefly explain why you have an IEP/504 (diagnosis, and what it means for your daily life)
3. Identify your areas of strength
4. Ask stakeholders (teachers, parents) to identify concerns about your academic performance
5. Identify your needs
6. Identify your goals and ask instructors to review them
7. Check that you are on track for your goals (re: graduation)
8. Ask to stakeholders review and explain your accommodations

Developing a Script (College)

Sample email:

Dear _____,

My name is _____. I will be taking your course, XXX0000, this semester. I am excited to begin. Attached you'll find my accommodation letter from the disability office. You'll see that I am entitled to _____. I find that I do well in courses when _____. Please let me know if there is anything you feel that I should keep in mind in order to be successful in your course, and let me know if you have any tips or suggestions for success in your course.

Thank you!

College Communication

- It may be helpful to communicate more specifically if you believe your diagnosis may impact your class performance.
 - EX: I think it is important for you to know that I have been diagnosed with _____. This means that I _____.
- Make sure you're connecting with care providers early (psychiatrist, mental health counselors) to continue care.
 - They can also provide documentation of any mental health concerns if necessary
- Communicate early if you run into problems
 - If you're given extensions, make sure to set up new deadlines and meet them
- Cultivate a relationship – go to office hours and ask questions!
- Be aware of what services your school may offer in addition to disability resources (such as medical withdrawals, and deadlines associated with them).

Things to remember...

Disclose

- Explain, to the limits of your comfort, what you need to succeed and why
- Start a dialogue early: you are not entitled to accommodations until you provide documentations
- Maintain communication with your instructors and disability resource officer

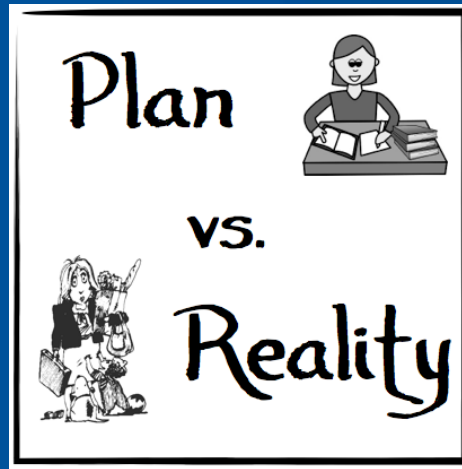
Understand

- Understand what your disabilities are
- Know what accommodations you are and are not entitled to
- Understand that you are entitled to confidentiality and what processes are in place should that be violated
- Research your school and state's policies

Boundaries

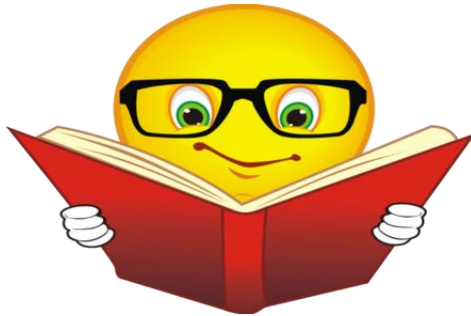
- Utilize appropriate boundaries when necessary – your health information is yours to keep private
- Answer only questions you feel comfortable answering
- Keep a paper trail

Discussion and Case Examples



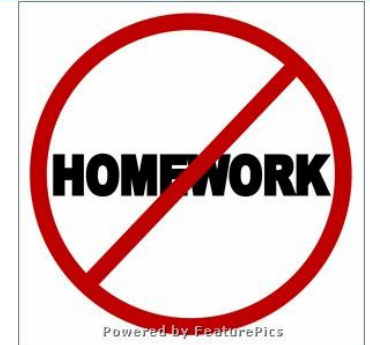
Case 1-Identifying Characteristics

- “PBJ”
- Pre-adolescent male
- Long history of academic success
- History of being highly engaged in school
- Lives at home with parents and a sibling



Case 1-Clinical Presentation

- History of undiagnosed or subclinical OCD
 - Minimal academic impact
 - Family accommodation
- Acute stressors led to exacerbation in OCD symptoms
 - Refusing to bathe
 - Refusing to use the restroom
 - School avoidance
 - Multiple months
 - Hospital home bound, online school
 - Rewriting
 - Homework avoidance
 - Low motivation for treatment



Case 1-School Reintegration

- Discussing goals with parents
 - Working with parents to understand the special education process
- Determining aspects of OCD contributing to school avoidance and other school related problems
- Continue school meetings
 - Parents alone
 - Later with clinician
 - Develop a plan for reintegration
 - Initiate the plan
 - Follow up and adjust as needed



Case 1-School

Accommodations/Modifications

- Use of computer for tests and assignments
- Use of scribe
- Opportunity to leave classroom to use restroom when needed
- Iterative class schedule
 - Online,
 - Less triggering
 - More days
 - Preferred classes



Case 2-Identifying Characteristics

- “BLT”
- Adolescent male
- Long history of academic success
- History of tolerating school but some hesitance
- Parents divorced
- Shares time at both parents house with siblings



Case 2-Clinical Presentation

- History of anxiety and social anxiety
 - Private school accommodation
 - Transferring to public school
 - Family accommodation
- Child in class vomited
 - Triggered strong reaction
 - Began school refusal
 - Low motivation



Case 2-School Reintegration

- Discussing goals with parents
 - Working with parents to facilitate their process
- Determining aspects of OCD contributing to school avoidance and other school related problems
 - Fear of harm of parents
 - Fear of contamination
- Continue school meetings
 - Parents alone
 - Develop a plan for reintegration
 - Initiate the plan
 - Follow up and adjust as needed

Case 2-School Accommodations/Modifications

- Having parents in the room
- Allowing parents to stay in school
- Increasing time in school



**KEEP
CALM
AND**

**Catch Up On Your
School Work**

References

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