Transition to College and Self-Advocacy: Understanding Your Student’s Perspective

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Self Advocacy is Not Easy!

➢ Think about it …………………

• How easy would it be for you to ask your supervisor for a raise next week?

• How about telling your senior colleague that you simply will not be able to meet the client deadline because you need more time?
What is self advocacy?

• An individual’s ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her interests, desires, needs, or rights
  (Van Reusen et al., 1994)

• Assumes the ability to make informed decisions; and take responsibility for those decisions

• It is developmental – our approach to self advocacy changes as we grow

• Gender and cultural differences
When do we ask students to self-advocate?

• At IEP meetings
• College applications or interview
• Asking for accommodations in college
• Talking to college professors and academic advisors
• At an internship

What is the common thread?
1. **Metacognitive Awareness**

- Awareness of one’s own thinking
- Active monitoring of one’s cognitive processes (Hennessey, 1999)
- Knowing one’s strengths and weaknesses

**StUDENT PERSPECTIVE**

Joel

Austin
Metacognition - Insight from Neuroscience

• Higher order cognitive abilities continue to mature until early and sometimes late 20’s

• Learning is dependent on excitatory signals between neurons; repeated excitation creates neural connections

• Experience with self-advocacy is critical for the brain to learn
2. Emotional Self-Regulation

• Being able to manage and modulate one’s emotions
• Having the emotional self-confidence and self-esteem to speak up

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

• Stereotype threat
• Stress and anxiety
Self-Advocacy and Perceptions of College Readiness (Stamp, Banerjee & Brown, 2015)

• Extensive interviews with 12 students at Landmark College

• Sample demographics:
  - average age-22
  - transfer students
  - ADHD
  - high to above average IQ
  - difficulty with executive function skills
What the students said:

“If you sat me alone to do work, it wouldn’t get done. And I was always being told that I was capable of doing it because if you sat down with me, I could do it, but left alone it wouldn’t get done. So—I was always being asked why I wasn’t doing my work, and I didn’t know why…I just felt like I was letting everyone down…and really ashamed.”

“I did not ask for help. I thought it was me just being very lazy...being too lazy to put in the work...I knew when I would attempt to write papers and do those things—study for exams—it would breed such an awful feeling... I really had a really averse feeling to doing all of it...I really think about it as physical pain—going through writing papers—or studying.”
Emotional Regulation - Insight from Neuroscience

• Limbic system develops before the pre-frontal cortex

• Paradox of the teenage brain
The teenage brain is primed for learning, but it is not yet fully developed (Jensen, 2015)
Self-advocacy is an adult skill ....

• Need to validate the student’s position
• Invest in student self-esteem; peer academic reputation
• Varied experiences