

Riding a Tightrope
University Policies vs. Needs of
Students with Chronic Illness

**Students with Chronic Illness in the
University Setting**

- Are often invisible and frequently disbelieved
- Need accommodations that differ from what is commonly offered by disability offices
- May be defeated by administrative issues, not academic ones
- Are covered by the ADA
- ? Other basic problems they face or facts that need to be recognized?

The Chronic Illness Initiative

- History
- Design
- Discoveries and new directions

Students with Chronic Illness Have Unique Needs

- Extra time and simplified administrative processes due to slowed processing or exhaustion
- Opportunity to regroup after relapse and/or hospitalization
- Validation due to disbelief
- Access of a different kind (e.g. avoidance of over stimulation, a place to rest)
- Reduced course load
- Specialized opportunities for socialization

And Needs Common to Other Students with Disability

- Financial assistance
- Notetakers
- Special evacuation procedures
- Physical access
- Others?

Universities Need

- Cost containment (no extra staff)
- Maintenance of academic standards (no dilution due to special dispensations)
- Time containment (no unreasonable expectations of faculty)
- Fairness to other students (class time not disturbed, etc.)
- Other?

Both are served by

- Policies appropriate to students with CI
- Simplified administrative processes
- Knowledgeable staff who can
 - Advocate for them
 - Design appropriate isolation reducing activities
 - Maintain contact
 - Teach appropriate self-determination skills
 - Streamline administrative burdens
- Peer mentors
- Scholarships

And

- Training for faculty and staff
 - ADA
 - Diversity/sensitivity
 - Practical suggestions for working with students with CI
- Training for students
 - CI students in how to manage illness in the context of the university
 - Other students re diversity

And

- Ongoing dialogue within the university and with service agencies, employers, and others who affect students' lives
- Research: prevalence, accommodations, needs, best practices
- Public Awareness
