

Information on Invisible Disabilities

Many students have disabilities that are not immediately apparent, but still have significant impact on a student's ability to study. Invisible disabilities may interact in complex ways that affect the student differently from day to day.

Invisible disabilities may include:

- Medical conditions like cancer, diabetes, epilepsy or respiratory conditions.
- Mental health disabilities like anxiety, depression or bipolar disorder.
- Neurological conditions such as migraine or traumatic brain injury.
- Print disability.
- Problems with dexterity e.g. OOS/RSI, injuries to fingers, hands, arms.
- Specific learning disabilities like dyslexia.
- Sensory problems like low vision or hearing impairment.

Examples of impacts of impairments:

- Fatigue, sleepiness, poor concentration.
- Poor organisational skills.
- Time away from lectures, hospitalisation.
- Spelling and other surface errors in written work.
- Difficulties with timed tasks e.g. tests and exams.

Ways staff can assist:

- Avoid making assumptions.
- Give students opportunities to talk with you early in the semester.
- Remember to treat disclosures with care.
- Use inclusive teaching practices e.g. face students when talking, write clearly, use easy to read print, consider learning styles of students, allow time for questions for clarification.
- Where necessary, seek advice from the relevant support service, as listed below

Available support services for staff and students:

- Student Disability Services: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936
Email: disabilities@auckland.ac.nz
- Student Learning Services: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 88850
Email: sls@auckland.ac.nz
- Student Health & Counselling: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 87681

Disclosure is voluntary:

Students may choose not to disclose their invisible disability because they

- Don't want special treatment, or want to see if they can cope alone.
- Fear discrimination.
- Feel embarrassed about asking for help.
- Want to get to know staff first, and then decide whether to disclose.

The University of Auckland encourages partnerships between Faculties, student services and students, to support students achieve their academic potential.

CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT

Student Disability Services

Room 036 Basement

ClockTower Building

22 Princes Street

Auckland

Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936

Fax: 09 308 2354

www.eo.auckland.ac.nz

www.disability.auckland.ac.nz

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