

AWARENESS & ACCESS Newsletter

WELCOME!



University of Windsor
Volume 1, Issue 5

Winter 2007

The Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC) invites you to view our fifth issue of Awareness & Access! This newsletter is meant to be a source of information, and our goal is to enhance your awareness about disabilities and accessibility issues within our University community. We hope to make our campus a more welcoming, accessible and inclusive environment for all.

In this issue we inform you that we will soon welcome our new Chairperson; encourage you to view the University's "Scent-free Guidelines"; tell you a little about the "Breaking Down Barriers" Conference; inform you of the New Surgeon General's Report which focuses on the effects of second-hand smoke and include resources; invite you to view the University of Windsor's proposed Smoking/Tobacco Policy, and welcome your feedback; provide you with statistics on disabilities in Ontario; inform you about Non-evident disabilities, and highlight anxiety. To view our newsletter _please visit our SNAC website: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/snac>



Have you Heard?

The Chair of the SNAC committee, Karen Roland has accepted an academic appointment with the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education commencing January 2007. We congratulate Karen, and although our committee members will really miss working with her in her previous role as Employment Equity Manager, we are very proud and happy for her!! Stay tuned to meet the incumbent Employment Equity Manager who will assume the chairship of our committee!

The Special Needs Advisory Committee wishes to express our sincere gratitude to Karen Roland for Chairing our Committee for the past four years. It has been an honour and privilege to have worked with her on disability and accessibility issues, and we wish to thank Ms. Roland for working so hard to remove barriers for persons with disabilities at the University of Windsor. Karen, you really have made a big difference in the lives of persons with, and without disabilities!! Many thanks, and wishing you well and much success in your new exciting career!!

Scent-free Guidelines

Please consider how fragrance use affects others who may be highly sensitive. The University of Windsor's "Scent-free Guidelines" may be viewed at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/equity>

Student Disability Services
University of Windsor, 401 Sunset Avenue, Windsor ON, N9B 3P4
Room 122 Dillon Hall, Phone 519-253-3000 ext. 3463 TTY: 519-973-7091
Email: disability@uwindsor.ca
Websites: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/snac> and <http://www.uwindsor.ca/disability>



Breaking Down Barriers~Conference

The 2006 CanWAPSS (Canada-Wide Accessibility for Post-Secondary Students) conference “Breaking Down Barriers” was held on December 1st and 2nd in Toronto. On behalf of the University of Windsor, Sociology student Valerie Doumani attended. This conference brings together students, staff, faculty members, community members and business representatives to discuss the numerous barriers experienced by post-secondary students with disabilities. The focus was on disability culture and community development. Many different issues faced by people with disabilities in terms of their lived experiences both within the post-secondary setting and beyond were discussed. Other topics explored were “The Art of Activism”, “Our Life our Community”, “Allies and Enemies”, and “Can Non-disabled people Affectively Represent the Disabled Community?”

The Key Note speaker was Tanya Titchkosky. She is a Disability Studies Professor at the Ontario Institute for studies in Education, University of Toronto. Professor Titchkosky is the author of ‘Disability Self and Society.’ She spoke on Culture and Community Development paving the foundation for many of the challenging concepts that were explored during the rest of the conference.



New Surgeon General's Report Focuses on the Effects of Second-hand Smoke

U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona issued a comprehensive scientific report in 2006 which concludes that “there is no risk-free level of exposure to second-hand smoke”.

“The report is a crucial warning sign to nonsmokers and smokers alike,” HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt said. “Smoking can sicken and kill, and even people who do not smoke can be harmed by smoke from those who do.”

“Even brief exposure to second-hand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and increases risk for heart disease and lung cancer”, the report says.
Resource: www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/.

Note: If you are trying to quit smoking, please view the following websites for helpful information

Resources: www.gosmokefree.ca and <http://www.leavethepackbehind.org/main.cfm> and http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/about-apropos/index_e.html and <http://www.smokefree.gov/>

Proposed Smoking/Tobacco Policy

The University of Windsor is working toward implementing a policy where smoking on campus would be strictly limited to Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs). These clearly identifiable, outdoor DSAs will be located 10 metres away from all building entrances, windows, walkways, air-intake vents, freestanding shelters, stadium seating, buildings, overhangs, loading docks, and any flammable or combustible materials. Please visit the SNAC website to review the proposed policy in its entirety at www.uwindsor.ca/snac. The Smoking/Tobacco Policy committee welcomes your feedback on this issue. Comments can be sent to the committee Chair, Beth Oakley at oakleyb@uwindsor.ca.



Did you know?

According to Statistics Canada, approximately 1.5 million people, or about 13 percent of the population in Ontario have disabilities, and that is expected to increase to 20 per cent in 20 years, as the population ages. However, despite the fact that people with disabilities make up a significant portion of the population, barriers in various forms, be they physical or attitudinal, often prevent them from reaching their full potential.



What are Non-Evident (invisible) Disabilities?

Under the Ontario Human Rights 'Code' "the nature or degree of certain disabilities might render them non-evident to others. Chronic fatigue syndrome and back pain, for example, are not apparent conditions. Other disabilities might remain hidden because they are episodic. Epilepsy is one example. Similarly, environmental sensitivities can flare up from one day to the next, resulting in significant impairment to a person's health and capacity to function, while at other times, this disability may be entirely non-evident. Other examples might include:

- ❖ Persons whose disabilities do not actually result in any functional limitations but who experience discrimination because others believe their disability makes them less
- ❖ Persons who have recovered from conditions but are treated unfairly because of their past condition, and
- ❖ Persons whose disabilities are episodic or temporary in nature

Other disabilities may become apparent based on the nature of the interaction, such as when there is need for oral communication with an individual who is deaf, or there is a need for written communication with an individual who has a learning disability. A disability might become apparent over time through extended interaction. It might only become known when a disability accommodation is requested or, simply, the disability might remain "non-evident" because the individual chooses not to divulge it for personal reasons.

Although a mental disability is a form of non-evident disability, it raises particular issues that merit independent consideration. Over the years, many employers have expressed the need for specific guidance on the issue of mental disabilities. Section 10 of the Code expressly includes mental disability. Persons with this type of disability face a high degree of stigmatization and significant barriers to employment opportunities. Stigmatization can foster a climate that exacerbates stress, and may trigger or worsen the person's condition. It may also mean that someone who has a problem and needs help may not seek it, for fear of being labeled.

Regardless of whether the disability is evident or non-evident, a great deal of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities is underpinned by social constructs of "normality" which in turn tend to reinforce obstacles to integration rather than encourage ways to ensure full participation. Because these disabilities are not "seen" many of them are not well understood in society. This can lead to stereotypes, stigma and prejudice."

Resource: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/english/publications/disability-policy_1.shtml#idx13

Note: "What is Environmental Sensitivity?" ~ may be viewed in our Awareness & Access Newsletter~ Winter 2006, Volume 1, Issue 2, at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/snac> "What is Epilepsy?" ~ may be viewed in our Fall 2006 ~ Volume 1, Issue 4

Psychiatric Disorders

Psychiatric Disorders are disorders of the brain and are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour (or some combination thereof) associated with significant distress and impaired functioning over an extended period of time ex. anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, depression, obsessive compulsive disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders, etc.

Life can be very stressful, so it is important to eat healthy, get adequate sleep, and also enough exercise. If you are interested in acquiring new skills in reducing stress, you may wish to attend the free workshops on Stress and Anxiety Management offered by the Student Counselling Centre (SCC), located at the CAW Student Centre, 2nd floor, Room 293, Phone 519-253-3000 ext. 4616. They also provides free short-term and crisis counselling by appointment.

Resource: www.uwindsor.ca/scc



What are Anxiety Disorders?

Individuals with anxiety disorders experience excessive anxiety, fear or worry, causing them to either avoid situations that might precipitate the anxiety or develop compulsive rituals that lessen the anxiety. While everyone feels anxious in response to specific events, individuals with an anxiety disorder have excessive and unrealistic feelings that interfere with their lives in their relationships, school and work performance, social activities and recreation.

Anxiety disorders affect approx. 12% of the population, making it the most common mental illness in Canada. Unlike the relatively mild, brief anxiety caused by a stressful event (such as speaking in public or a first date), anxiety disorders last at least 6 months and can get worse if they are not treated. Anxiety disorders commonly occur along with other mental or physical illnesses, including alcohol or substance abuse, which may mask anxiety symptoms or make them worse. In some cases, these other illnesses need to be treated before a person will respond to treatment for the anxiety disorder.

Anxiety disorders include: generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), specific phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), social phobia also known as social anxiety disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Effective therapies for anxiety disorders are available, and if you think you may have an anxiety disorder you should seek medical treatment as soon as possible. Resources <http://www.mayoclinic.com> and <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/anxiety.html>

Students who are registered with Student Disability Services and have a documented generalized anxiety disorder may wish to participate in TAG (Test Anxiety Group). The sessions are free and will be offered in Dillon Hall Room 267. For more information, email tag@uwindsor.ca. The first session is on Wednesday, February 14th at 4:00 p.m.

This newsletter is for information purposes only. Consult your doctor for any medical conditions you may have.

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Websites: www.uwindsor.ca/snac and www.uwindsor.ca/disability