

The University of the Incarnate Word is committed to providing a supportive, challenging, diverse, and integrated environment for all students.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—Subpart E and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University ensures accessibility to its programs, services, and activities for students with documented disabilities.

To qualify for services, the student must provide the Office of Student Disability Services appropriate documentation of his or her disability at the time services and/or accommodations are requested.

This brochure is available
in alternate format
upon request

*Information provided by the University of Southern California

The University of the Incarnate Word
Student Disability Services
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San Antonio, TX 78209

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Student Disability Services

**The University of
the Incarnate Word**



**Psychological
Disorders**

**Administration Building
Room 105**

Telephone: 210-829-3997

Psychological Disorders

A psychological disability can affect individuals of any age and is often difficult for others to detect. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that one in five Americans has some form of diagnosable and treatable mental illness. This means that between twenty and forty million people may experience the symptoms of a mental illness in any given six-month period. The disability is unique for each person and limitations are not usually intellectual in nature, although the age of onset may affect the extent and type of disruption of learning and vocational goals.

A psychological disability reflects a mental condition that interferes with a major life activity. Examples of psychological/psychiatric disabilities include: major depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive/compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Exceptions of conditions are identified in the Americans with Disabilities Act (28 CFR 35.1040). These exceptions include diagnoses such as gender disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, and substance abuse.

Psychological disabilities often lead individuals towards social isolation, development of low self-esteem, struggles with disclosure of their disability, and an unawareness of their legal rights. Consequently, students with psychological may be reluctant and unprepared to request the reasonable accommodations to which they are entitled. These disorders are often episodic and unpredictable. They may have genetic, biochemical, psychological, or environmental origins. Most symptoms are treatable with medication and/or psychotherapy and social support.

Instructional Strategies

- Accommodate students with psychological disabilities through exam modifications, alternative ways of completing assignments, time extensions, tape-recording lectures, early syllabi, and study skills and strategies training
- Spend extra time with the student during office hours when necessary, and assist the student with planning and time management
- Be flexible with deadlines when necessary
- Permit the student to tape-record lectures
- Assist the student with finding an effective note-taker or lab assistant from the class
- Give advance notice of assignments and clearly define course requirements, the dates of exams, and when assignments are due; provide advance notice of any changes
- When in doubt about how to assist the student, ask him or her
- Allow the student the same anonymity as other students (i.e., avoid pointing out the student or the alternative arrangements to the rest of the class)
- Encourage students to discuss functional limitations
- Give immediate and honest comments when behavior is inappropriate and suggest acceptable behavior. Set clear boundaries and goals with the student.

Functional Limitations

Affective

- Lack of affect
- Feelings of anxiety or fear
- Depressed mood
- Feeling worthless
- Inappropriate guilt
- Irritability or outbursts of anger

Cognitive

- Short-term memory problems
- Time perception and planning
- Extreme self-absorption
- Concentration problems
- Screening environmental stimuli
- Distractibility
- Recurrent suicidal thoughts
- Preservation

Behavioral/Physical

- Impulsiveness
- Repetitive motion
- Speech may be rambling, halting, weak, pressured, or incoherent
- Muscle tension
- Pacing
- Fatigue or loss of everyday energy

Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep)

Psycho-Social

- Lack of support system
- Interpersonal conflict
- Detachment or estrangement from others

Side Effect of Medication

- Drowsiness
- Thirst
- Blurred vision
- Hand tremors