WHEN CARING IS COMPLICATED: EXPLORING THE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

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UNIVERSAL DESIGN

"the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design"

www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf)

PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER

Class Climate

Interaction

Physical Environments

Delivery Methods

Information Resources and Technology

Feedback

Assessment

Accommodation

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN OUTREACH

- Strive for an inclusive experience that meets the varied learning and living needs of students in a physically accessible space.

- Use a range of delivery methods

- Create interactions allowing students to support one another and that place high value on different types of skills and roles.

- Think broadly about print materials, videos, and technology.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN OUTREACH

- **Provide regular feedback to students participating and to regularly and consistently seek feedback from participants.**

- **Try to identify all the possible barriers and find ways to remove those barriers during planning stages.**

- **There is no way to remove all barriers for all people, but every barrier we can remove increases the opportunity for students to learn and grow.**

SCENARIO ON TECHNOLOGY USE

You often try to incorporate technology in your outreach presentations such as recommending apps. and web-based tools that promote wellness to students. You have found that some students, who are visually impaired, do not have easy access to devices that allow these apps to work properly.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the scenario and discuss the following questions:

1. What considerations are you taking into account as an outreach provider?
2. What assumptions were made?
3. Are you creating new barriers for any of your students or staff members?
4. Whom might your efforts help or support?
5. Whom might your efforts hurt or exclude?

SCENARIO 1 - STATING SAFETY GUIDELINES

After reading about the importance of establishing safety in discussing difficult content, you begin most outreaches by asking what everyone needs to feel safe (e.g., one person talking at a time, being respectful of differing opinions, stating when someone feels hurt by the content of the discussion). At one outreach, a student points out that safety guidelines tend to protect those in privileged positions and do not acknowledge that marginalized individuals often do not feel safe in most spaces.

SCENARIO 2 - PRONOUN USE DISCLOSURE

After a discussion about the importance of using pronouns to reduce any microaggressions and assumptions about how your students identify their gender, you decide to begin outreaches by disclosing your preferred pronouns and asking participants to do the same. This has worked well in previous outreaches but one student shared on the evaluation that they felt "forced" to disclose their preferred pronoun ("they") which made them feel uncomfortable.

SCENARIO 3 - COUNSELING CENTER IDENTIFYING STAFF PREFERRED PRONOUNS

Your center has been thinking about ways to be more inclusive so you decide to make buttons and stickers with pronouns on it. You ask that staff wear them to communicate to students that the center is welcoming to all students on the gender spectrum. A few staff members express concern about how they will be perceived by students if they choose not to wear a button, other staff members are concerned that this may be "too political" and some do not feel comfortable disclosing their preferred pronouns.

SCENARIO 4 - HAVING A THERAPY DOG IN THE COUNSELING CENTER

The center has decided to have a therapy dog twice a week, which you have fully supported. You think having a therapy dog may increase access to services for students. Some staff are concerned about how students and staff with any allergies, phobias or trauma may find the presence of a dog aversive.

SCENARIO 5 - REDUCING PRINTED MATERIALS AT OUTREACHES

You have decided to go green and reduce the amount of printed material for outreaches. However, some international students and students with visual impairment disclose that written materials are more helpful to them in understanding the content, and having to ask for the paper copies feels shaming.

SCENARIO 6 - MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

You would like to begin a campaign focused on a message focused on relationship issues, adjustment, academic concerns and mild anxiety and depressive symptoms. Your student advisory board feels that this approach minimizes the concerns of those with severe mental health concerns such as Bi-polar Disorder, Schizophrenia and personality disorders. They feel that these students are being silenced which in turn is increasing stigma and reducing help seeking behaviors.

RESOURCES FOR ACCESSIBILITY

- UDI Principals and examples

- http://cast.org

- Creating accessible documents

- Accessible Event checklist

- Web Accessibility Tools

- WebAIM's WAVE Online (Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool)

- WebAIM Color Contrast Checker

- AUCCCO guidelines for inclusive presentations

RESOURCES FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Creating Accessible PDFs and Documents

Adobe's Create and verify PDF accessibility

WebAIM's PDF Accessibility

Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker

Do-It-Yourself Caption Tools

Amara

YouTube Self-Captioning Service