



BOSTON COLLEGE

Documentation Guidelines for Mental Health Disorders

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and may be entitled to reasonable accommodations and rights of equal access to programs and services. A diagnosis of a disorder/condition alone does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations under the ADAAA. To establish that an individual is covered under the law, the documentation must explain how the disability substantially limits one or more major life activities, and supports the request for services, accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

Students who wish to request academic accommodations based on a mental health disorder must submit documentation from a licensed professional who is qualified to evaluate and diagnose psychiatric and psychological disorders. Information about licensure/certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment, and state or province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated in the documentation. The documentation should be in English and must be typed on the provider's letterhead. It should also be signed and dated and include the following information:

- A diagnosis that conforms to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders including relevant code
- The student's history with this diagnosis
- Description of the student's functional limitations relevant to an academic setting
- Current treatment plan including medications
- Recommendation for accommodation(s)
- Justification for why recommended accommodation is medically necessary. There must be a very clear connection between the functional limitation(s) described and the recommended accommodation

Documentation should be recent (**within one year**) and should address the student's need for accommodation(s) based on the student's **current level of functioning** within an educational setting.

Diagnosis of mental health disabilities documented by family members will not be accepted due to professional and ethical considerations even when the family member is otherwise qualified by virtue of licensure/certification. The issue of dual relationships as defined by various codes of professional ethics should be considered in determining whether a professional is in an appropriate position to provide the necessary documentation.