Introduction:

* Key to navigating higher ed: YOU are the catalyst (not parents, not school, not professors)
* Rights under the ADA:
  + Student must disclose a diagnosis
  + Document disability
  + And request accommodations
* Required documentation:
  + Documentation of your disability - letter from doctor or psychologist documenting your disability
  + Functional limitations (impact of your disability on your ability to function in college)
  + Copy of latest IEP from high school
  + Most recent triennial evaluation if done in the last 3 years
    - If not, request an updated report from your doctor or psychologist that details your functional limitations
    - Recommendations from your doctor about specific accommodations that may be helpful can be included
* Disability services will write an accommodations letter that YOU give to your professors
  + Up to you to disclose more information about your disability beyond the brief letter
  + Information besides your disability & recommended accommodations are confidential and are not shared without your written consent
* Professors typically comply & provide accommodations, but if not then collaborative problem-solve:
  + Listen to professors concerns
  + Be polite & respectful
  + Do not sacrifice your rights & needs to learn
    - Explain how your goal is to learn the material your professor is teaching
  + Can have an advocate with you, but you do the speaking
  + **Papertrail - request meeting in writing, follow up meetings with summaries, keep memos, accommodations**
* If communicating with professor is not effective, you can request disability services for assisstance
  + If disability services is unable to help, next steps should be contacting a compliance officer for ADA or Section 504
  + Can file a formal complaint with the department of justice, this may be a long & drawn out process that does not help you but may help change future procedures
* Colleges are allowed to fail and dismiss students for not meeting academic requirements even with reasonable accommodations and modifications
  + You need to assess if this program is right for you

Example accommodations with documentation of your need for them:

1. Note takers in class - decrease need to switch attention between lecture & notes
2. Copies of visual aids professors use in class
3. Extra time for exams
4. Separate room for exams (if sensitive to fluorescent light, request a room without this)
5. Receiving course materials in alternative forms (e.g. audiobooks, recording, electronic texts, etc.)
6. Reduce courseload - take less courses so you have less shift between topics, classes, & can go deeper and at a slower pace if needed
7. Might be allowed to substitute a non-essential course for another one if that specific course is difficult for you for some reason

Student Code of Conduct:

* You will still be held to the same code of conduct as any other student
* READ THE CODE OF CONDUCT
  + Think about if you will have difficulties adhering to it
    - Arrange for support if needed
* Examples:
  + Asking too many questions/comments in class → turn it to an autistic strength by:
    - Respect for professors time: limit to 2-3 per class, if more write them down & email to professor or ask during office hours
    - Initiative: research them yourself & go to professor with findings
    - Show eagerness, passion for learning, & focused interests through initiative and respect for professors’ class time
  + Disruptive - meltdowns in class, sensory overload → turn it to an autistic strength by:
    - Create self-managment plan based on your support needs you had in high school & if they helped
    - Ex. finding an aid for sensory overload
    - Identifying triggers and stressors to be proactive
    - Schedule down time
    - Have designated safe space/crash space on campus
    - Request single living with documentation
    - Avoid large areas, crowds, stimulating activities, or anxiety-provoking meetings during already stressful times
    - Bring an advocate or facilitator with you during potentially confusing or difficult administrative meetings
    - Checking in with trusted friend or mentor
  + Inappropriate sexual behavior
    - Be very careful not to violate boundaries
      * Understand definitions of sexual harrassment, assault, consent, and critically look at your behavior to make sure you are in line with boundaries
    - Protect your own boundaries
      * A person who tries to invade your boundaries or make you feel bad is not your friend
      * Autistic people can find themselves in manipulative, abusive friendships/relationships due to either naivety of social situations or need to be included
    - Do not interfere with anyone else’s ability to go about their business
    - Be clear about mandatory & voluntary things to reach your goals
      * Ex. showing up to class vs. going to a holiday party

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