

Jan. 17, 2014

Transcription Katie

Introduction: A video in which Katie describes her experience with accommodation for bipolar disorder.

What impact has your disability had on your college or university experience?

Inside the class room is definitely hard because I have definite shifts in mood. I've been every stable for the last three years, so it's really more of a proactive approach that I have to take in school. There are days when I'm not as good as others and I have to definitely take the day off or maybe take a little time to de-stress, because stress is a definite trigger. So, I have to lighten my load, I can't take as many classes as most people do. Outside the classroom it affects me in a way that I need to have a strict schedule. I have to eat a certain way, I have to sleep at a certain time, I can't drink alcohol, I need to be very cautious in my stress levels and it just requires a large amount of awareness inside and outside of school that I don't think other people really need to consider.

What accommodation measures have you received to help you succeed in your studies?

From the Student Accessibility Centre I do have a separate room to do my tests, I have extra time and I don't necessarily even need to use it. But for me it's limiting the stress, limiting the anxiety so that it's easier for me to know that I don't have to hurry. They give me a pen that records my lectures, just in case I'm out of it that day. That way you know if I need to go back to it on a day that I do feel better I can and I can make up that work. I have people that know that I am bipolar, accept me for being bipolar and know what to look for in me when I start to go down the wrong track.

What other things have helped you overcome your challenges and be successful in your college or university life?

The U.N.B Counseling Services is another safety net, I have so many things in place that I don't want to fall again. And it is the community—it's being able to speak freely about my illness because it's a part of me and it's a big thing to look for and worry about and to have people that understand and don't judge you for it is really important.

I have a 3.7 GPA and in my first year I had a 3.9 and I made the Dean's list so I mean it's possible even with a disability and it's because of the things I have in place to catch me if I fall, so to speak, that really make me able to be successful.