

## How to Refer a Student to Disability Services

*By Andrew Childress*

When students seem to be having difficulties, and it's unclear whether they have a disability, it's important that staff and faculty do not assume or ask that question directly. Below are some suggestions about how you can discuss this with the student.

**First:** Focus on the behavior you have observed in the student and their work rather than any specific diagnosis.

**Second:** Ask the student if this pattern is familiar or something that they or someone else has noticed previously.

**Response 1:** If the student says, "Oh yeah, I've always had these problems and thought maybe I had a disability," or they say they

received accommodations or had an IEP in high school, encourage them to check in with Disability Services to see if they would be eligible for services and accommodation.

**Response 2:** If the student is not forthcoming with any clues about possibly having a disability, then you can say: "If you'd like to explore resources on campus that might be able to assist you with these problems, I suggest you contact some of these departments to see if they can help."

Then give them a list of resources such as **TRiO**, **Tutoring Center**, **Khan Academy** and include

Disability Services in that list. But don't particularly emphasize Disability Services over any of the others. This way you are providing the student with the appropriate resource but not unnecessarily, and perhaps inaccurately, suggesting they experience a disability.

\*Content from Lane Community College and condensed by Andrew Childress

"We're here for a reason. I believe a bit of the reason is to throw little torches out to lead people through the dark."  
—Whoopi Goldberg

## Rogue Community College Disability Services

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