UW Family Medicine Clerkship Best Practices: Services for Students

**Disability Resources for Students**

Disability Resources for Students (DRS) works with students who have disabilities and/or health conditions that effect a wide range of major life activities. In addition to serving students with physical and sensory disabilities, DRS works with students who have:

* Psychological diagnoses such as Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar, or PTSD
* Learning disabilities such as ADHD or Dyslexia
* Chronic health conditions such as HIV, cancer, traumatic brain injuries, food allergies or diabetes

While this is not an exhaustive list, it does represent common reasons that students work with DRS. It is not uncommon for students to be unaware of DRS as many students did not engage with resources in K-12.  Faculty or staff are often the first people who students share health conditions and/or struggles related to disabilities in interactions. Below are some resources on how to refer a student to DRS to see if we can be of assistance and support for them**.**

**When a referral to DRS needs to happen**

* If a student directly discloses a disability, health condition, and or pregnancy to you
	+ Example: a student shares with you that they are depressed and on medication
* Students discloses receiving past accommodations or services, either as a transfer student or in K-12
	+ Example: a student shares they previously had extra time on an exam in another course or school and want to use them here

**When a referral to DRS could happen**

* If you see a student who is struggling, you engage with them directly and share campus resources available to them

**Ways to document a referral to DRS**

* **Email template idea to share with a student who directly self discloses a disability or health condition to you is below**. You are welcome to copy and paste, with necessary edits related to your situation, while cc’ing uwdrs@uw.edu so we can follow with an outreach directly. If a student shares information with you about a disability, making this direct referral is not a violation of confidentiality; rather, you’re giving them the resource who can best help them explore options:
	+ Hello Student- Thank you for our conversation yesterday it was great to learn more about you and discuss aspects of the class. I wanted to follow up with information about an office on campus who you can connect with to discuss resources that could be helpful in your academic pursuits.
		- Disability Resources for Students (DRS) works with a wide range of disabilities and health conditions either on a temporary or permanent basis. Their focus is to ensure access for students. You can learn more about them in a variety of ways: visit daily drop in hours (view website for details), [view the DRS website](http://disability.uw.edu/) and “[Getting Started](http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/prospective-students/getting-started/)” information and or scheduling a personal consultation meeting if you want to talk in detail about questions you have. They will be reaching out to you as well, as I have included them on the email, in case you want to get any more information. Thank you.
* **Email if a student is referred to campus resources.** You are welcome to copy and paste, with necessary edits related to your situation, while cc’ing uwdrs@uw.edu so we can follow with an outreach directly.
	+ Hello Student- Thank you for our conversation yesterday it was great to learn more about you and discuss aspects of the class. I wanted to follow up with information about a few offices on campus that you may want to connect in support of  your academic pursuits.
		- Disability Resources for Students (DRS) works will a wide range of disabilities and health conditions either on a temporary or permanent basis. Their focus is to ensure access for students. You can learn more about them in a variety of ways: visit daily drop in hours (view website for details), [view the DRS website](http://disability.uw.edu/) and “[Getting Started](http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/prospective-students/getting-started/)” information and or scheduling a personal consultation meeting if you want to talk in detail about questions you have. They will be reaching out to you as well, as I have included them on the email, in case you want to get any more information. Thank you.
			* NOTE: Add additional offices you are suggesting to the student, including the new [Husky Health & Well-Being website](https://wellbeing.uw.edu/).

**Students right to self disclosure & confidentiality**

Remember that our students are adults; they may respond best to private conversations in which you use an inquiring and supportive approach and share information about the existence and location of the DRS office. Only the student can decide to disclose their disability, or to pursue information about services available in the DRS office. Therefore, it is essential that disability information be kept confidential as it falls under FERPA.  Again, making the direct referral to DRS is not a violation of the student’s confidentiality but at no time should the class or other students be informed that a student has a disability, except at the student’s request. All information that a student shares with a faculty member is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study.

**What is the privacy requirement for health information provided to DRS?**

All information and documentation submitted to the DRS office is kept separate from an academic record and is considered private under the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).](http://www.washington.edu/students/reg/ferpa.html) HIPPA privacy and confidentiality guides do not apply to documents submitted to DRS for they are not being used for treatment. Under FERPA guidelines DRS cannot guarantee complete confidentiality as there may be times when sharing some information with other UW staff/faculty is necessary on an educational need to know basis (i.e. facilitation of the accommodation process).

**DRS Website:** <https://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/>