



National Alliance on Mental Illness
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Mental Health Services and Choosing a College: Striking a Balance

Must Do's Before Applying

Research Psychological and Psychiatric Services on Campus

- Most campus websites offer an overview of services
- Be proactive and call or visit to make sure they offer adequate treatment tailored to your situation
- Ask whether the services are free to students or if they are available for a fee
- Find out how many psychologists are on staff and make sure the school employs *at least* one licensed psychiatrist. In the case of larger universities, multiple psychiatrists should be on staff.
- Make sure the school keeps your records confidential from other entities, both within the college and outside of it

Research Hospitals and Private Practices in the Community

- Nearly all school health or counseling centers only offer short term care, then the student must find a practice in the community
- Find practices compatible with your insurance
- If you don't have a car, look up information on public transportation in order to get to the clinic or practice
- Ask if they offer discounted rates or a sliding scale for students

Research Disability Resources

- Discover the breadth of disability resources the college offers for psychiatric disabilities, as they vary greatly from campus to campus
- Inquire as to what specific services are provided, i.e.: test rescheduling, priority registration, reduced course load, class substitution etc.
- Find out the confidentiality policies, especially ask whether professors and instructors are informed of the student's disability or just the accommodations to be made for him or her

Helpful Hints

Campus Counseling Centers

- Counseling centers on campus typically offer excellent services when dealing with typical 'college' problems, such as: relationship conflicts, adjusting to college and academic problems. They also deal with anxious and depressed moods, substance abuse, and trauma recovery. Dealing with these problems is very important, as they produce added stress which may trigger the onset of an episode, or compound on a current one.
- However, there are certain drawbacks to most counseling centers:
 - Again, they usually only offer short term care; the student must then find another place for therapy, usually a private practice. The counseling services typically assist in this
- Most counseling centers on campus are not equipped to effectively handle more serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, anxiety disorders etc.

Psychiatric Care on Campus

- There is typically a long wait to see a psychiatrist on campus
 - Try and make an appointment as soon as you can, possibly even in the summer, prior to arriving at school. This will allow you to see a doctor earlier and establish a set schedule
- Nearly all psychiatrists on campuses take students upon referral only
- As with the counseling services, some psychiatrists also have a limit on the number of times a patient can be seen
- If you see a private doctor and your school's medical center has a pharmacy, check to see if they will fill prescriptions from outside practices. Many times certain medications are filled for free as a result of the student fees paid each semester.
- Know what to do in case of an emergency
 - Ask about emergency procedures are during business hours at the psychological services center as well as with a psychiatrist.
 - A few schools offer a 24 hour hotline to call; however, most don't, so be sure to have the number of a local hospital in case of a emergency during evening or weekend hours

Campus Size

- Smaller campuses can feel less overwhelming than a large university. However, there tends to be less psychological services on smaller campuses
- Large campuses generally offer a wider array of services. Nonetheless, even though more services are available, the wait is still usually long due to the size of the campus.
- If attending a large campus, try to join an organization, find a social group, and make friends, especially in the dorms. This will make the campus seem smaller and less overwhelming
- Compare the number of counselors and especially psychiatrists that are employed at the school to the number of students on campus. This is a good indicator of how long the wait will be, and shows the importance and dedication the school places on mental health

Making a decision

- The most important factor is narrowing your search to a few schools where you can see yourself living at for four years, where you will feel comfortable at and feel that you will succeed while you are there
- When looking at mental health services, keep in mind that you will need to find a balance
 - You will most likely not find a program that meets your needs in every aspect of your care
 - Keep in mind your specific condition and needs, and use that as a guide when making a decision

Campuses with NAMI Clubs

The University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign
 University of Vermont
 Central Methodist University, MO
 Ohio State University
 Missouri Southern State University
 Martin Methodist College
 Centenary College, NJ of Pulaski, TN
 West Virginia University
 University of Northern Iowa
 Indiana University
 University of Iowa
 East Carolina University, NC
 Purdue University, IN
 Wayne College, OH
 Central Washington
 Bowling Green State University, OH
 Bloomsburg University, PA
 Utah Valley State College
 Central College, IA
 Washburn University, KS
 University of Arizona
 Western Michigan University
 Louisiana State University

Scholarship Information and Tips

In today's world there is an extremely large amount of scholarships available to students. By utilizing online search engines, students can provide personal information and interests, and will then be provided with a list of scholarships they would be eligible for. Many search engines provide the option of placing 'mental illness' or 'disability' in your profile, and they will provide scholarships specifically tailored to those with mental illness.

A *few* of the *many* search engines available are:

FastWeb: a database of tens of thousands of scholarships totaling over \$1 billion

GoCollege: an engine comprised of over 8,000 funding sources and 60,000 awards

FastAid: a site that claims to be the world's oldest private scholarship database

However, the majority of scholarships related to mental illness can be found at the state and local levels. Be sure to research local scholarship opportunities through your high school, library, and community. Also, find out what scholarships are available at your college. Conduct an exhaustive search in many areas including, the financial aid office, your specific college if you're attending a large university, and your major. Many colleges offer scholarships for those with disabilities. Contact your college and ask if mental illness is included before applying for the scholarship.

Below is a non-comprehensive list of national scholarships available to those with mental illness. Again, be sure to conduct your own search online, as the results will be more tailored to your specific needs and interests, and remember to look at the state and local level as well.

Eli Lilly & Company / Moving Lives Forward Reintegration Scholarship

Award Amount: Varies

Number of Awards: Varies

Description: Annual awards for persons diagnosed with schizophrenia, schizophreniform disorder, schizoaffective disorder, or bipolar disorder who are enrolled in high school equivalency studies, a trade or vocational school, or a two- or four-year college university. Applicants must be U.S citizens, currently receiving medical treatment for one of the above conditions, and be actively involved in rehabilitative or reintegrative efforts. An essay must be included with the application packet. Nonrenewable.

Contact Information: Eli Lilly & Company
 c/o Lilly Secretariat

PBM 327 310 Busse Highway
Park Ridge, IL 60068-3251
(800) 809-8202

Special People In Need / Scholarship Grants for Disabled Students

Max. Value of Awards: \$4000

Number of Awards: Varies

Description: Annual awards for disabled undergraduate students pursuing a postsecondary education. Applicants must be U.S. citizens/permanent residents. A letter from the student or institution describing the nature of the disability, a letter from the student's physician confirming the disability, and tax returns for the student and parents must be submitted.

Contact Information: Special People In Need
Secretary, Gary H. Kline
500 West Madison Street
Suite 3700
Chicago, IL 60661-2511
(312) 715-5235

Anne Ford Scholarship

Provided by: National Center for Learning Disabilities, Inc.

Award Amount: \$10,000

Number of awards: varies

<http://www.ld.org/awards/afscholarinfo.cfm>

Description: The Anne Ford Scholarship is available to high school seniors who have an identified learning disability and will pursue an undergraduate degree. You must be a U.S. citizen, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and demonstrate financial need to be eligible for this award.

Stanley E. Jackson and Sara Conlon Memorial Scholarship

Provided by: Yes I Can! Foundation for Exceptional Children

Award Amount: \$500

Number of Awards: Varies

<http://yesican.sped.org/>

Description: The Stanley E. Jackson and Sara Conlon Memorial Scholarship is available to students enrolled in full-time post-secondary education or training during the 2005-2006 school year. You must be a student with a disability to be considered for this award. Three letters of recommendation and a statement of your goals are also required.

Success in College is Attainable and NAMI on Campus is Here to Help!

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