Help Students with Disabilities Self-Advocate

Webinar Presenter: Ace Parsi
Webinar Date: January 24th

Welcome!

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Learning outcomes:

1. Discuss ideas and research behind self-advocacy, self-determination and personalized learning.
2. Describe the connection between these ideas and the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success.
3. Identify the role of school counselors in effectively facilitating these skills and capacities to benefit both students with and without disabilities.

NCLD’s Mission

To improve the lives of the 1 in 5 children and adults who struggle with learning and attention issues.
NCLD’s Strategy

Today, we work toward inclusion of the 1 in 5 in the following ways:

- Engaging parents with online resources and community on Understood.org
- Building the capacity of educators to support all struggling learners
- Developing young adult leaders who can advocate for themselves and their peers
- Informing local and national policy efforts to ensure equal opportunity and access
- Strengthening the field through innovative research and collaborative partnerships

NCLD’s Policy Agenda Focuses on Achieving 5 Goals:

1. Expanding Early Screening
2. Empowering Students & Families
3. Cultivating Creative, Informed Educators
4. Promoting Personalized Learning
5. Strengthening and Enforcing Civil Rights Laws
What we’ve done in the last year

Phase I:
- Lit Review
- Parent Survey
- Site Visits
- Expert Interviews

Phase II:
- National Convening
- Development and Dissemination of Recommendations

Phase III:
- Deep Dive in NH, CO, and NC
- General Recs

Phase IV:
- National Self-Advocacy Convening
- Recommendations

Public Perception

- 43% of parents wouldn’t want others to know their child has learning and attention issues
- 33% of teachers believe sometimes what people call a learning or attention issue is really just laziness
- 20% of doctors almost always ask about LAI symptoms
Achievement Gap

Reading Scores on the 2013 NAEP

The NAEP category of students with disabilities (SWD) includes students with IEPs and 504 plans.

Barriers to Success

- Of students with LD or OHD have to repeat a grade, which increases the risk of dropping out.
- Of disciplinary removals in special education involve students with LD or OHI.
- Of young adults with LD or OHI have been involved with the justice system.
What is “Personalized Learning?”

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

*Working Definition:*

Students’ learning experiences—what they learn, and how, when, and where they learn it—are tailored to their individual needs, skills and interests, and enable them to take ownership of their learning.

Although where, how, and when they learn might vary according to their needs, students also develop deep connections to each other, their teachers, and other adults.

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**Personalized Learning Continuums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-Size Fits All</th>
<th>Personalized</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult-Centered</td>
<td>Student-Centered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited Learning</td>
<td>Expanded Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separate Education</td>
<td>Student Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>Mastery of Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions</td>
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</tbody>
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Personalized learning systems should include students with disabilities now.

Avoid Retrofitting!!

What is “Self-Determination”? A condition by which an individual is the “origin of his or her actions, has high aspirations, perseveres in the face of obstacles, sees more and varied options for action, learns from failures, and overall, has a greater sense of well being” (Little et. al)
Self-Determination is shown by...

(1) The person acts autonomously
(2) The behavior is self-regulated
(3) The person initiates and responds to the event(s) in a psychologically-empowered manner
(4) The person acts in a self-realizing manner. (Wehmeyer)

What is “Self-Advocacy?”

A concept related to student empowerment defined by four elements:

(1) Knowledge of self
(2) Knowledge of rights
(3) Communication of one’s knowledge of self & rights
(4) Leadership where a person moves from individual self-advocacy to advocating for others as a group of individuals with common concerns (Test et. Al., 2005)
SA and SD: A Historical Context

- **Full Exclusion Lens** (Early to mid 20th Century)
- **Rehabilitation Lens** (Post-World War II to Late 20th Century)
- **Inclusion Lens** (Late 20th to 21st Century)

Research-Based Benefits of Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination

- Students with disabilities have less SA/SD skills than peers;
- SA/SD can be influenced by interventions
- SA/SD have significantly positive impacts on educational and life outcomes
ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors and NRC Competencies

Cognitive Domain: Learning Strategies
- Goal setting
- Decision-making and problem solving
- Navigating resources and educational opportunities

Intrapersonal Domain: Self-Management Skills
- Self-awareness and self-assessment
- Confidence
- Self-regulation
- Cognitive reappraisal and growth mindset

Interpersonal Domain: Mindset Standards and Self-Management Skills

Personalized Learning Self-Advocacy/Determination Essential Skills

Cognitive Domain: Learning Strategies

Intrapersonal Domain: Self-Management Skills

Interpersonal Domain: Social Skills
- Capacity to initiate, establish, and maintain relationships
- Communicating learning preferences, interests, and needs
- Leadership and followership
Mindset and Behavior Standards
Advanced Through Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination

Learning Strategies
- Critical thinking skills to make informed decisions (B-LS 1)
- Time management, organizational and study skills (B-LS 3)
- Short and long-term goal setting (B-LS 7)

Mindset Standards and Self-Management Skills
- Self-confidence (M2)
- Positive attitude toward work & learning (M6)
- Ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities (B-SMS 10)

Social Skills
- Create relationships with adults that support success (B-SS 3)
- Collaboration and cooperation skills (B-SS 6)
- Demonstrate advocacy skills and ability to assert self when necessary (B-SS8)

Discussion Question #1
The strategy we’ve used to incorporate these mindsets and behaviors into how our school educates students that I’m most excited by is __________, because ____________________.
Discussion Question #2

The greatest challenge we’ve had in incorporating these mindsets and behaviors into how our school educates students that most frustrates me is __________, because ____________________.

ASCA School Counseling Competencies and SA/SD

• Human development theory and developmental issues affecting student success (II-A-5)
• Capacity to work with students with diverse and special needs (IV-A-7)
• Strategies to support student planning (IV-B-2b)
Discussion Question #3

What do you see as the greatest opportunity in bringing a focus on self-advocacy and self-determination for students with disabilities in your school?
Recommendations for School Counselors

- Learn more about the needs of students with visible and invisible disabilities in claiming student agency;
- Identify out-of-school experiences that provide perspective related to student goals;
- Advocate for a Comprehensive School Counseling Program to be implemented in conjunction with personalized learning system;
- Incorporate the capacity of educators to support self-advocacy skills and self-determination in classroom observations; and
- Ensure students are engaged in decisions that relate to their goals and lives.

Discussion Question #4

Are there any essential actions that you think are missing from this list? Why is this important?
Questions?

Thank you!

National Center for Learning Disabilities
SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN PERSONALIZED LEARNING

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS
SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN PERSONALIZED LEARNING

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EDUCATORS

Personalized learning systems (PLS) offer students more decision-making authority over where, when, and how learning takes place and is demonstrated. For students with disabilities to succeed in personalized settings, they must learn, practice, and develop strong self-advocacy skills and self-determination (SA/SD), which have been shown to improve educational and life outcomes. School counselors play an important role in helping students develop, practice, and exercise these capacities.

DEFINING KEY TERMS

- **Personalized learning** is a process in which students’ learning experiences are tailored to their individual needs, skills, and interests, enabling them to take ownership of their learning.
- **Self-determination** is a dispositional characteristic that enables a person to act in service of freely chosen goals and make or cause things to happen in their own life.
- **Self-advocacy skills** include understanding yourself, your rights, and your needs, and communicating that understanding—leading to self-determination.

SA/SD ARE EMBEDDED IN THE ASCA MINDSETS & BEHAVIORS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS: K–12 COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READINESS STANDARDS FOR EVERY STUDENT

While all school professionals play a role in supporting student development of self-advocacy skills and self-determination, the field of school counseling embraces these ideas and incorporates them into its best practices. In particular, the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) Mindsets & Behaviors are centered on three domains—**academic**, **career**, and **social/emotional**—that rely on students building

Helping students develop essential self-advocacy skills and self-determination supports their academic, career, and social/emotional development and prepares them for a successful transition to opportunities beyond high school.

—Rebecca Lallier
School Counselor, Dothan Brook School, Hartford, Vermont

For more information, visit: ncld.org/personalizedlearning or e-mail policy@ncld.org
a foundation of self-determination and self-advocacy skills. The standards that school counselors aim to help students achieve include standards relating to:

- **Mindset**: The attitudes and beliefs students have about themselves in relation to their academics; and
- **Behavior**: Outward signs that a student is engaged in learning, including tactics to aid student learning, self-management and persistence, and social interactions with peers and adults.

### SPECIFIC ASCA MINDSETS AND BEHAVIORS THAT CONNECT WITH SA/SD

**When self-advocacy skills and self-determination capacities are developed, students have:**

- Self-confidence in their ability to succeed (M 2)
- An understanding that postsecondary education and lifelong learning are necessary for long-term career success (M 4)
- A belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes (M 5)
- A positive attitude toward work and learning (M 6)

**When self-advocacy skills and self-determination capacities are developed, students can:**

- Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions (B-LS 1)
- Apply self-motivation and self-direction to learning (B-LS 4)
- Identify long- and short-term academic, career and social/emotional goals (B-LS 7)
- Actively engage in challenging coursework (B-LS 8)
- Demonstrate perseverance to achieve long- and short-term goals (B-SMS 5)
- Demonstrate ability to overcome barriers to learning (B-SMS 6)
- Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities (B-SMS 10)
- Demonstrate advocacy skills and ability to assert themselves (B-SS 8)

### SPECIFIC ASCA SCHOOL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES THAT RELATE TO STUDENT SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS AND SELF-DETERMINATION

School counselors should have an understanding of:

- Human development theories and developmental issues affecting student success (II-A-5)
• Leadership principles, including sources of power and authority and formal and informal leadership (III-A-1)

• Ways to use student data to demonstrate a need for systemic change in areas such as course enrollment patterns; equity and access; and achievement, opportunity and/or information gaps (III-B-3c)

• Principles of working with various student populations based on characteristics such as ethnic and racial background, English language proficiency, special needs, religion, gender, and income (IV-A-7)

• Strategies to implement individual student planning, such as strategies for appraisal, advisement, goal-setting, decision-making, social skills, transition, or postsecondary planning (IV-B-2b)

**TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP SA/SD IN PLS, YOU CAN:**

1. **Establish a comprehensive school counseling program as part of the foundation for PLS implementation, and ensure that implementation is inclusive to the needs of a variety of learners. Example:** Ensure that all students have access to information about career development and postsecondary education opportunities and that students with disabilities are empowered to act in a self-determined manner in taking advantage of these opportunities.

2. **Learn more about the needs of students with disabilities and how you can leverage PLS structures to support student SA/SD. Example:** Participate in a professional learning opportunity on supporting the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success for students with disabilities.

3. **Work with other educators to identify out-of-school experiences that reinforce students’ personalized learning plans and IEP goals. Example:** Work with teachers to support students’ career development goals by helping identify rigorous student internships that can fulfill academic credits.

4. **Help measure student progress around SA/SD in PLS. Example:** Participate in classroom behavior observations, and use those observations as a foundation to meet with and advise teachers on best practices in supporting students with disabilities as they develop SA/SD and other ASCA Mindsets.

5. **Ensure that students are engaged in decisions relating to their goals and lives. Example:** Advocate for and facilitate student involvement in the development of personalized learning plans, IEPs, and transition plans, and help empower students to develop the capacity to facilitate these meetings as they get older.