

Accommodations and Supports Beyond High School

Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities Benchmark:

Explore differences between secondary and postsecondary support; and

Discover resources available in a postsecondary environment, including how to access disability services or accommodations needed for success.

Note to those providing service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on your learner's strengths and needs.



Extended Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or postsecondary education, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and postsecondary education are identified as extended activities and pathways.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Know the student's knowledge or awareness of their own accommodations and ability to ask for support needs (this helps with knowing how much time you may need to spend on an activity)
- Prepare needed assistive technologies and/or accommodations (ex: communication supports (visual, objects, pictures, voice output devices, etc.), physical supports/space access needs, vision supports, hearing supports, sensory needs/supports).
- Computer to access videos. Print materials in advance if necessary.
- There are many Click and Explore resources in this lesson. Be sure to explore them yourself so you can help match students with any additional resources that may help their learning.



Print

- [High School vs Postsecondary Accommodations](#)
- [Prepping for Disclosure](#)
- [Scenario Cards](#)
- [Postsecondary Self-Evaluation](#)

Activities to Meet Benchmarks:

Activity 1: Accommodations and Supports Through IDEA vs ADA

This activity aims to help students understand how requesting accommodations changes after high school



Discuss: One of the major differences between high school and postsecondary schools or programs is how accommodations and supports work. An accommodation is an adjustment that can be made to help make sure individuals can participate in an activity, school, or work. In high school, your IEP or 504 Plan helps you get the supports and accommodations you need. After high school, any supports or accommodations you need, whether for school, program, or work, are up to YOU to request and make sure they are put in place. Your IEP or 504 Plan does not follow you past high school.

Because of this, you should be a part of your IEP or 504 Planning while you are in high school. Knowing what accommodations you need and planning your goals is part of self-advocacy. Practice these skills now because it will help you in your journey.



Resource: [High School vs Postsecondary Accommodations](#) (PowerPoint) reviews the differences between supports and accommodations in high school versus postsecondary, including training, college, and work.

- **Accommodations:** A change or support that helps someone complete a task or participate in an activity in a way that works best for them. Accommodations can be for school or work. Examples include accessible space, additional breaks, or access to quiet space, and more.
- **Accommodations in High School:** If a student needs help, the school checks if they qualify for accommodations. A team creates an IEP or 504 Plan, outlining support to help them learn and show their knowledge. The school is responsible for identifying and providing these accommodations.
- **What Happens After High School? (Postsecondary):** Postsecondary is anything you do after high school, so this could include college, training, or going into the workforce. Whether you are going to do more training or schooling or going into the workforce, you become responsible for requesting any accommodations once you exit high school. If you have an IEP or 504 Plan, these documents do not follow you once you leave high school.
- **Requesting Accommodations – College or Training Program:** You will need to contact the school's Disability Services Office (if they have one) or training program to request accommodations. Examples include note-taking services, assistive technology, accessible dorm room, etc.
- **Requesting Accommodations – Internship or Workplace:** You will need to work with the employer or human resources department to request accommodations. Examples include flexible schedules, assistive technology, ergonomic workspace, etc.



- **Why is it so Different?:** There are different laws protecting your rights depending on your age and if you are in high school. When you are in high school you are supported by law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Once you leave high school the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects you from unfair treatment because of your disability.
- **Key Differences – High School:** IDEA: entitled to services. School provides accommodations. Parents/guardians can advocate for you.
- **Key Differences – Postsecondary:** ADA & Rehab Act: must be eligible. You must request accommodations. You advocate for yourself.
- **Self-Advocacy:** Know your rights and what accommodations you can request. Practice explaining your needs to others. Have documentation ready (e.g., IEP or 504 Plan, medical records, etc.). Ask for help when needed.



Extending the Conversation: IDEA or ADA Scenarios



Review: Here are [Scenario Cards](#) that give different scenarios that are either covered by IDEA, ADA or even both.

[Note to Instructors: Hand the cards out and read and review with students. Have students decide if the scenario is covered by IDEA or through the ADA. This can be done together, in groups or individually then shared.]

Group Discussion: Have each student pull a scenario card and take turns reading them aloud. After the student has read their scenario aloud, discuss the following questions as a group:

- Which law applies to this scenario?
- What rights or protections are relevant?
- What actions should be taken?
- Repeat until each student has had a turn or until time is up. Remember, some scenarios describe situations where both ADA and IDEA apply.

Activity 2: Disclosure and Accommodations

This activity aims to help students understand how getting accommodations changes from high school to postsecondary



Discuss: Accommodations work to remove barriers to help someone learn or get work done. If you are on a 504 Plan or IEP while you are in high school, there are people on your team that usually help share accommodation information with your teachers. After high school, you can still get help to succeed in college, work, or other programs by asking for accommodations.

Regardless of what path you choose after high school, you will need to have conversations to establish what accommodations you may need and what documentation you need to submit. You will need to start this process before school, training, or work starts. For example, if you pick a training program that starts in August, you will need to work with the employer, human resources, or disability services office in the spring or early summer. It will take time to gather documentation, submit records, for the offices to review them, and approve accommodations. In this activity, you'll learn how to ask for the help you need, who to talk to, and what steps to take. Knowing how to request accommodations will help you feel confident and stay on track toward your goals.



Watch: [Accommodations after High School \(5:12\)](#). Halima shares her experience as a student going from high school to college and how she advocated for herself.



Resource: [Prepping for Disability Disclosure](#). This worksheet asks several questions to prepare for disclosing information about your disability. Knowing how to explain your disability, your strengths, and accommodations you need shows that you're taking charge of your future. In this activity, you'll practice building a script to help guide these conversations. Preparing ahead of time can help you feel confident and clear when talking about your needs.



Click to Explore: Here are some additional websites for more information about shifting accommodations from high school to postsecondary.

- [Disclosing Your Disability and Requesting an Accommodation | Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship \(PIA\)](#) – the focus of this site is to build support for individuals with disabilities pursuing an apprenticeship.
- [Fast Facts | Center on Transition Innovations at VCU](#) – This document shows differences between high school and college accommodation processes.

Activity 3: Exploring Accommodations

This activity aims to help students learn more about accommodation options in postsecondary.



Discuss: Sometimes you may know what accommodations you need and sometimes you may not. A starting point is to think about what accommodations you have now and what is on your IEP or 504 Plan. Another way to explore accommodations is to research schools and programs for what they offer and to talk with their disability services office. Here are some sites that you can use to explore accommodation options.



Click to Explore:

- [Ohio Department of Higher Education – Students with Disabilities](#) – This page shares information for students to help prepare for postsecondary supports. Towards the bottom of the page, students can find links for the departments and offices that help students with disabilities for various postsecondary schools in Ohio.
- [Accommodations | ApprenticeshipUSA](#) – this factsheet shares examples about accommodations and protections of students with disabilities.
- [Postsecondary Institutions and Students with Disabilities | ADA National Network](#) – provides information on building requirements, service animals, equal access, and more.
- [A to Z of Disabilities and Accommodations | Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) – This site allows users to look up various accommodations by disability, limitation, work function, and others.



Review: Help students search for accommodation information related to specific programs. Instructors can demonstrate how to find this information, explaining the process and importance of each step.

- Pick a program to research. Select a disability services office or department for a school or program. This can be a military branch, trade/apprenticeship program, community college, college/university, or other adult learning option.
- Highlight key steps. How to connect with the office, ask questions, and search for information.
- This is an activity that can be demonstrated, done together or in a small group, or completed independently depending on the learner.
- Share information with each other afterwards.

1. Instructor Assisted: Instructors can demonstrate how to find information on disability services. Ensure students can see and follow along. Pick a program to research.

2. Guided Activity: Instructors can guide students through looking up a program's disability services information. Students can work together or independently.

3. Independent Activity: Students can independently research a program's disability services information.

Activity 4: What Do You Need to Succeed

This activity aims to help students identify their needs for postsecondary planning.



Discuss: After high school, everyone's path is different, and it's important to think about what you'll need to succeed in your next steps. Whether you're planning to go to college, join the workforce, enter the military, or learn a trade, identifying your strengths and the areas where you may need support is key. This lesson will help you reflect on what you still need to research. By understanding your needs, you can start planning for a smooth and successful transition to life after high school.

Use this opportunity to think about what you have learned so far in these postsecondary lessons. There are things you may feel confident about and have a plan for. There may be things you feel less confident about. That's ok if you still have questions. These are big decisions. Take time to research and talk with others who may help you. It's important to know what questions you have and who can help you.



Resource: [Postsecondary Self-Evaluation](#). This is a worksheet to help you think through your plan and what you may still need help with. There are various questions that you can answer yes, you are prepared or no, you may need more help. Either answer is fine. For anything you answer "no" to, think about who could help you with that area. Consider parents, guardians, teachers, counselors, or other trusted adults. You will want to plan who you talk to and when you will do it.



Discuss: After doing the self-evaluation, who is someone you can work with to help you? Are you feeling prepared? If not, that's ok, this can be overwhelming. What is important is knowing who to talk to when you need help and making a plan.



Wrap Up:

Accommodations are tools and supports that can help you succeed in school, work, and other areas after high school. By identifying what you need and understanding how to request accommodations, you're taking an important step toward advocating for yourself and your future. Planning ahead and knowing where to find support will make the transition to college, work, or any other path much smoother. Remember, asking for help isn't a weakness—it's a strength that shows you're ready to take control of your success.