

# **Presentation Abstracts**

**The Fifth Annual  
Chronic Illness and Postsecondary Education Symposium**

**After Graduation: Creating Opportunities for  
Employment, Education, and Community  
& Family Involvement**

Sponsored by

**DEPAUL  
UNIVERSITY**

**THE CHRONIC ILLNESS INITIATIVE**



**DePaul University Student Center  
Lincoln Park Campus  
2250 N. Sheffield Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60614**

**Tuesday  
April 28, 2009**

Continuing Education Co-Sponsored by the American Academy of Disability

**Evaluating Physicians and DePaul University's Department of Nursing  
and the Master of Social Work Program**

### **Location of Meeting Rooms:**

All scheduled activities are in the DePaul University Student Center located at 2250 N. Sheffield Avenue, Chicago IL 60614. All presentations will be taking place on the third floor in rooms 312, 313, 314 A&B, 315 (Quiet Room), 316, and 324. Registration will take place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor lounge, right when you get off the elevator.

**9:00 AM**

**Workshop**

***Empowering students with chronic illness: The value of support groups***

**50 minutes**

**Sharon Mack (Professional Mentoring & Leadership Training Programs)**

Information will be provided to help workshop participants realize important steps in starting a support group. The workshop will also allow for questions and discussion points from participants. A summary of the information provided, as well as support group information, will be formatted into a workbook handout for participants. The desired outcome is to empower participants, some who may be living with chronic illness, to understand how support groups work and how groups may be a valuable resource.

**Workshop**

***Mind the gaps: Professional skill development during times of illness***

**50 minutes**

**Gabriele Strohschen (DePaul University, Faculty Mentor/Assistant Professor) & Paulette Glass (United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago Employment Services)**

Workshop presentation on techniques to assist employable individuals to create individualized job maps for career choices and design self-directed employable skill development plans to fill their gaps of unemployment caused by chronic illness or lifelong disabilities. Participants will also learn how to apply the skills of mind mapping and career development combined with the basics of project management to create a better work-life balance in order to deal with times of illness and maintain a healthy employee-employer partnership.

**Panel Discussion**

***Access, accommodations, & advocacy: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the workplace***

**50 minutes**

**Marla Morgen (DePaul University) & Jeff Rabin**

This session will provide an introduction to the protections offered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Although we will briefly discuss how the ADA functions at the University-level, the session will primarily focus on the ADA in the workplace. Topics to be discussed will include an analysis of which types of chronic illnesses may allow for access to the protections of the ADA, the various types of reasonable accommodations available for individuals with chronic illnesses in the workplace, and the process for obtaining reasonable accommodations from an employer. Special attention will be paid to the recent amendments to the ADA, and how these amendments could expand the applicability of the ADA to more individuals with chronic illness. Finally, we will discuss how individuals can use the ADA as an advocacy tool--both in the workplace and in the community.

**10:00AM**

**Workshop**

***Empowering students with chronic illness: Making good decisions about the future***

**50 minutes**

**Sharon Mack (Professional Mentoring & Leadership Training Programs)**

Information will be provided in a workshop format to help participants learn what choice management is and to realize important steps in making good decisions. The workshop will also allow for questions and discussion points from participants. The desired outcome is to empower participants, who are living with chronic illness, to make good choices about their futures through an enhanced understanding of choice management and good decision-making skills.

**Lecture/Discussion**

***Bringing your employment search to new avenues with technology***

**50 minutes**

**Bill O'Connor (AbilityLinks, Employment Information and Referral Specialist)**

In this presentation, Mr. O'Connor will discuss how using technology and social networking on the internet can bring forward better results for job-seekers with a chronic illness. He will touch on free networking sites, finding internet job sites that are effective, and offering answers to questions from the audience.

**Lecture/Discussion**

***Developing effective attitudinal and presentational skills: Studentship strategies that can translate to the workplace.***

**50 minutes**

**Paula Kravitz (DePaul University, CII Advisor and Assistant Director)**

Students can, and should, develop skills while in school that will assist them in the workplace; good studentship translates into good employeeship. Advisors can help students to develop these skills. Paula Kravitz, Assistant Director of the CII and Advisor to students, will cover issues such as assessing strengths and limitations, developing a reputation as someone who is responsible and competent, and using resources effectively.

**11:00 AM**

**Roundtable Discussion/Workshop**

***Succeeding through collaboration and participatory learning/teaching: A workshop on the why, what, and how of the Learner-Teacher Team.***

**50 minutes**

**Gabriele Strohschen and Kenneth Elazier (DePaul University Faculty)**

Accommodating school, work, and personal activities when chronic illness is part of the equation poses challenges to the learner-teacher team. Too often, the most well-meaning

educator and most motivated student fails because of a lack of knowing how to teach or adapt learning strategies. Adult students with CI need to develop a repertoire of strategies and proactive approaches that optimize their opportunities and access to instruction. At the same time, educators need to develop appropriate instruction, time management, and classroom management approaches. The ‘team’ has to adapt schedules, plans, instructional/learning strategies and techniques to provide the environment and support for academic success.

This interactive workshop will present essential principles and specific “how-to’s” to build a foundation, then practice in hands-on exercises how to design, develop, and deliver such strategies and techniques.

### ***Coalition Meeting***

**Coalition members, staff of college disability offices, and advisors of students with chronic illness are welcome.**

The Chronic Illness Coalition is a group of college and university disability staff members who meet quarterly in person or by conference call to share strategies and discuss best practices in working with students with chronic illness. If you are an advisor or disability counselor please feel free to join us.

### **Panel Discussion**

#### ***University resources for finding employment***

**50 minutes**

**Anissa Jones, Ty Matthews, Katie Brick, Donna del Guidice (DePaul University, University Resources)**

Since more and more students with chronic illness are now attending college, accommodating these students is a pressing issue. The challenges that chronic illness presents—rapid changes in health status, lack of visible symptoms, seasonal fluctuations of illness, to name a few—are not often ones with which faculty, staff, or administrations are familiar. Furthermore, students with chronic illness often lack an institutionalized support system, have few advocates, and only limited assistance in various arenas of their lives. By working together, university resources such as counselors, physicians, educators, caregivers, and support groups can open more avenues for student success. Participants at this presentation will have an opportunity to learn about each other’s work and will be encouraged to find ways to develop channels of communication and cross-disciplinary projects among members of the university community.

**12:00 PM**

**Director's Welcome and Awards Presentation: Lynn Royster, CII Director**

**Followed by:**

**Keynote Speaker: Karen McCulloh,  
Executive Director, disabilityworks**

**Managing chronic illness: Am I the same person I always was or am I better? How we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us. Damn the torpedoes!**

Karen McCulloh, Executive Director of disabilityworks and disability rights activist, shares her perspective on how to reject negative scripts written for us by those who believe we are less capable and how to move forward with our lives and careers as persons with chronic illness and other disabilities. McCulloh confirms that living with chronic illness does not define who we are but offers us the opportunity to discover ourselves. This highly interactive presentation will include audience participation.

**1:45PM**

**Panel Discussion**

***Community & Family Support Networks***

**60 minutes**

**Carole Howard (Executive Director of the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, and Chemical Sensitivity Coalition of Chicago), Barbara Morrison (President of the CFCCC), Mary Jo Perlongo LCPC, NBCC (Lead Case Manager at Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago), Sonya Loynachan (Health Promotion Manager at the Lupus Foundation of America, Illinois Chapter), Stephen Stocker (Jewish Vocational Services, Career Planning Center)**

A panel of local support group leaders will exchange their knowledge of community resources and strategies for living with chronic illnesses. Friends and family members of job seekers with chronic illness will be able to collect--and contribute--ideas for ways to help with the job quest and other challenges. This session is intended to be an audience participation event!

**Workshop**

***Working while receiving Social Security cash benefits***

**60 minutes**

**Michelle Lawrence (Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services, Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program)**

During this session you will learn the difference between SSI and SSDI. She will discuss the work incentives that are available to beneficiaries who are interested in seeking employment as well as those who are already employed. Michelle will also touch base on how earnings from work will affect both State and Federal benefits. In addition you will receive contact information on the CWIC that serves your area so you can contact them and request to receive personalized information on exactly how work will impact the specific benefits you are receiving. So if you are interested in going to work but are concerned about what will happen to your benefits, this is the session for you.

**Roundtable Discussion**

***The CII student presentation: Considering post-graduation opportunities with a chronic illness***

**60 minutes**

**Teresa Stallone, Cecilia Reyes, Lacey Wood, Derrick Winding, Patrick Holaday**

Participants will gain an understanding of complex issues facing individuals with chronic illness who choose to pursue opportunities after graduation. They will gain knowledge of important characteristics and skills students need to successfully overcome concerns associated with achieving success in mainstream society. The effect of familial and social perceptions will also be explored.

Panelists will each share a short personal journey of navigating sectors within various systems, including education, employment, insurance, and SSDI while managing their illnesses. They will explore feasible services and resources that may assist the needs of

individuals that experience chronic health challenges who wish to further their education and/or seek employment. Panelists will also share beneficial strategies to self-advocate with determination in order to make better choices moving forward.

**2:50PM**

**Panel Discussion  
Lecture/Discussion**

***Strategies to a successful job search***

**50 minutes**

**Janice Duvall, M.A. (AbilityLinks, Employment Information and Referral Counselor)**

It's no secret that you must master certain skills to accomplish anything in life. A job search is no different. Considering our dismal economy, the job search is increasingly competitive. How does the person with a chronic illness move across the finish line ahead of the pack and land the job they want? This discussion will outline 10 steps that, if followed in the proper order, can help lead to your next job.

**Lecture/Discussion**

***Personal problems as public issues: Dealing with chronic illness in the academy***

**50 minutes**

**Leslie Rott (Graduate Student, University of Michigan)**

As a current graduate student managing chronic illnesses, Leslie Rott knows firsthand what it is like to be a student with a chronic illness. Because of the personal hardships that she faced in trying to gain help and recognition from the University in regard to her own illnesses, she is currently working with several organizations in order to create programs that would provide the following: protections for disabled and chronically ill graduate students who work, a support group for students (with rheumatological conditions), and a web page linked with the University health clinic that will provide chronically ill students with resources available to them at the University. The major task that these projects include is coordination between several different programs, departments, and areas of the University community. Leslie will be discussing her personal experience as well as strategies for dealing with being a student with chronic illness.

**Panel**

***We've been there: Sharing stories and experiences about holding a job while managing a chronic illness***

**60 minutes**

**Laurie Edwards (Author, Blogger), Matt Morgen (Artist/Musician), Brian Smith (Graduate Student in Pharmacology), Paula Kravitz (Assistant Director/Advisor of CII)**

Research indicates that persons with disabilities such as chronic illness have similar work-related aspirations as those without disability. While this is true, these

individuals face unique challenges in our society as they work towards financial independence and community participation/inclusion. Chronic illness is usually characterized by periods of wellness and periods of sickness which means the person and his/her employers must regularly be adjusting and readjusting to these changes. A college education offers persons with chronic illness opportunities to expand their skills and become marketable for several occupations and community engagement, but what happens next? How do individuals with a chronic illness succeed professionally and find a place in their communities? This panel will consist of people who have "been there" sharing their stories of what works/worked and what doesn't /didn't along with time for discussion.

### **Workshop**

**Next steps: Taking charge of planning your future**

**60 minutes**

**Lynn Royster, JD, PhD (DePaul University, Chronic Illness Initiative, Founder/Director)**

Many people with chronic illness feel that they have little ability to obtain what they want in life. Lynn will discuss how to use planning techniques to create the kind of future you want to have. Whether you're contemplating returning to work after developing an illness, looking for a lifestyle change, or about to graduate, learning to break your plan into manageable steps, acknowledge and overcome obstacles, and discover new resources will help you to create a satisfying life. Lynn teaches goal-setting and planning at DePaul and, as chair of the Long Range Strategic Planning Committee of the CFIDS Association of America, led the effort to produce the first comprehensive strategic plan for the organization.

**3:55PM**

### **Workshop**

***Assessing and understanding depression: Strategies for dealing with depression at school and the workplace***

**60 minutes**

**Patrick J. McDevitt, C.M. (DePaul University, School of Education), Darrick Tovar-Murray, Ph.D. (DePaul University, School of Education)**

The struggle with depression is prevalent in all age groups, gender, nationalities, and socio-economic status. This workshop is designed to assist students with chronic illness and those who advise students with chronic illness recognize depression along with utilizing cognitive behavioral strategies for successful self-care at school and the work place. The learning objectives for the session are to (1) learn to recognize and self-assess depression and (2) learn basic cognitive behavioral techniques for better coping mechanisms, improving quality of life, and increasing the level of job

performance. The workshop will include clinical cases, role-playing, handout materials, and a PowerPoint presentation.

#### **Video with Phone Discussion**

##### ***Illness Induced Trauma: Types and Effects on Employability and Workplace Accommodations***

**60 minutes**

**Patricia Fennell, MW, LCSW-R**

This presentation will describe types of psychological, cultural, and physical traumas resulting from the chronic illness experience, as well as the application of the Fennell Four-Phase Model in assessment and intervention of chronic illness-induced trauma. Fennell will offer suggestions for how employers and job seekers can use this understanding to improve working conditions and employability of people with chronic illness. Using her extensive experience with chronic illness patients, Patricia Fennell has created an original, comprehensive, research- validated approach that brings clarity and order to what feels like an unmanageable and isolating experience.

#### **Lecture/Question & Answer Session**

##### ***Career considerations for young adults with chronic illness***

**60 minutes**

**Laurie Edwards (Author of “Life Disrupted: Getting Real About Chronic Illness in Your Twenties and Thirties”)**

Many of the realities of living with chronic illness—fatigue, acute flares, frequent medical appointments, to name just a few—can make finding a job and building a career a daunting task. From deciding when to disclose illness to the importance of evaluating corporate culture, there are many considerations that can make this process easier. A brief reading from *Life Disrupted: Getting Real About Chronic Illness in Your Twenties and Thirties* with real-life scenarios followed by a discussion and Q&A session will explore strategies for entering the workforce and address student concerns about employment and chronic illness.