

CONNECTIONS DURING COVID:

EMERGING AS DISABILITY PROFESSIONALS AND EMBRACING NEW ENVIRONMENTS AMIDST A PANDEMIC

By: Dr. Hunter Duncan, PhD and Austin Connell, M.Ed.

Introductions

Dr. Hunter Duncan, PhD



- PhD, English Literature May 2020 (Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI)
- Areas of Specialization: Disability Studies; Victorian literature; the long nineteenth-century; rhetoric and composition; pedagogy; universal design for learning

Austin Connell, M.Ed.



- M.Ed., Counseling – Student Affairs May 2020 (Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ)
- Areas of Specialization: Student Development; bridging the gaps between student affairs and academic affairs; universal design; peer mentoring

Overview:

- Let's get started....
- Creating a Sense of Self in the Remote Workplace
- Building Rapport with Students
- Developing Trust with Supervisors/Coworkers
- What to Expect Moving Forward...
- Concluding Thoughts

Let's Get Started...

Some brief reflective questions

- Do you remember how you felt when you first started in your role?
 - Nervous? Scared? Stressed? Excited?
- How do you feel now?
 - Do you feel the same, better, or worse than when you started?
- What are some key take aways you have learned so far?
 - Best Practices? Adaptability? Flexibility?

Creating a Sense of Self in the Remote Workplace

- Establishing Boundaries
 - Create a routine that works for you
 - Communicate those boundaries to others
 - Reassess as time goes on
- Finding your Personal Style for your Work
 - Try new things
 - Continue to reassess
 - Finding systems that work for you
- Understanding Current Practices in your Office
 - Hint: They are constantly changing
 - Everyone has a unique perspective on them



Building Rapport with Students

- Get to Know your Students in your Meetings
 - Create conversations that are beyond the accommodation process
- Acknowledge the Virtual Environment
 - Online engagement looks and feels different
 - Technical difficulties exist
 - Many different platforms (can cause confusion)
 - Just as we are learning a new environment, so are our students
- Be Open/Transparent with Students
 - Establishing expectations
 - Explain the process and where you are at
- Make it Personable
 - Have fun with it!
 - Share some personal details about you, if comfortable



Develop Trust with Supervisors/Coworkers

- Set Goals and Boundaries
 - Respect people's time and calendars
 - Understand the dynamics of the relationships
 - Always be respectful
- Be Intentional in Meetings
 - Do introductory meetings
 - Continue one-on-one meetings, as needed
 - Have a goal for each meeting
- Have Fun with Coworkers
 - Encourage conversations beyond the day-to-day work ones
 - Be genuine and thoughtful in conversations



What to Expect Moving Forward...

- Return to Office
 - Online?
 - In-Person?
 - Hybrid?
- Meet Students Where They are At
 - Do students prefer online meetings? Or do they want in-person?
- Meet Staff Where They are At
 - What works best for you?
 - Advocate for yourself
- How Might Accommodations/Barriers Change Moving Forward?
 - Expanding our understanding of what access looks like



Concluding Thoughts

- Where do we go from here?
- How might you apply what you have learned throughout the past year(+) to your own day-to-day experience moving forward?
- Taking on a new job has been challenging, but it has expanded our understanding of inclusion in the workplace



COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

THANK YOU

Dr. Hunter Duncan: hdeiglme@purdue.edu

Austin Connell: adconnel@purdue.edu