CONNECTIONS DURING COVID:

EMERGING AS DISABILITY PROFESSIONALS AND EMBRACING NEW ENVIRONMENTS AMIDST A PANDEMIC

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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 takeaways 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

Disability Resource Center
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.
THANK YOU

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