SUPPORTING NEURODIVERGENT STUDENTS IN SLP MASTER'S PROGRAMS

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REED SENTER PHD, CCC-SLP, BCS-CL AND JULIE SANTORO PH.D., CCC-SLP

REED IS A FACULTY MEMBER AT DESALES UNIVERSITY, AND WILL BE REIMBURSED FOR HIS TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE. NONFINANCIAL DISCLOSURES: REED IS NEURODIVERGENT, AND HIS TEACHING PHILOSOPHY IS INFORMED BY HIS IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCES.

JULIE IS A FACULTY MEMBER AT DESALES UNIVERSITY, AND WILL BE REIMBURSED FOR HER TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify strengths of the neurodiversity paradigm, including the rationale for supporting neurodivergent students in higher education
- Describe common characteristics and learning needs of neurodivergent students
- Implement a variety of strategies for instruction, assessment, supervision, and mentorship, to support the outcomes of neurodivergent students

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Neurodivergent students represent a growing demographic in higher education, including graduate programs for speech-language pathology. These students often bring unique skills and perspectives to the table, which can be a valuable asset in their future work with clients. However, neurodivergence is often accompanied by unique instructional needs, atypical communication styles and/or behavior, and other differences that may pose a barrier to the successful completion of their graduate training. Drawing from current research and best practices, this session will support faculty, clinical instructors, and supervisors in creating inclusive, supportive learning environments for neurodivergent students. We will discuss the application of the "universal design for learning" framework to higher education settings, identify common challenges for students along with possible methods with which we can address them, and discuss case studies highlighting the implementation of these techniques.

Speaker's Bio: Reed Senter is an Assistant Professor of Speech-Language Pathology at DeSales University. He has worked as a school-based SLP, and now conducts research, teaching, and supervision in pediatric speech-language pathology. He is particularly interested in neurodiversity-affirming practices for autistic clients, as well as interdisciplinary collaboration and education. Reed is a licensed SLP, a Board Certified Specialist in Child Language, and earned a Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Maryland.

Julie Santoro is the Director of Clinical Education and an Assistant Professor of Speech-Language Pathology at DeSales University. Julie worked with children as a clinical SLP in outpatient and educational settings. She moved into administration in a special education school before working on language and literacy intervention research. Currently, she participates in research, teaches, and is involved in SLP program development. She is interested in interdisciplinary collaboration and education, supporting struggling students, and effective teaching and assessment strategies, both academically and clinically. Julie is a licensed SLP, and earned a Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Maryland.