WHAT IS A CHRONIC ILLNESS?

Chronic health conditions are ongoing, generally incurable illnesses or conditions, such as heart disease, asthma, cancer, and diabetes. The diseases can range from mild conditions, such as minor hearing loss to debilitating arthritis and low back pain, and to life-threatening heart disease and cancers.

Students with a chronic illness or pain may have limited energy and difficulty walking, standing, or sitting for a long time. In addition, they may miss class occasionally due to treatment schedules. Medical conditions, including medication side effects, can cause problems with fatigue and stamina, which adversely affect attention and concentration. Students with some medical conditions may become dizzy and disoriented, or may lack physical stamina. Thus they may be unable to quickly get from one location on campus to another.

These diseases are often preventable, and frequently manageable through early detection, improved diet, exercise, and treatment therapy.

TREATMENT, THERAPIES AND SUPPORTS

Medication – There's no medicine specifically for chronic diseases, but medication can help control many of the problems that cause the condition and complications that can occur as a result of it.

Psychotherapy – Evidence shows that the beneficial effects of psychotherapy include improving mood and reducing depression among individuals with chronic health conditions.

Support network – Guidance and understanding from the support network, including families, teachers, university staff and peers, can help people with chronic disease to live up their full potential and enjoy total campus life. Resources such as chronic disease support groups and skill training are also available in the community.

WHAT DOES SEN MEAN?

A Special Educational Need (SEN) refers to an individual student's learning needs while facing academic challenges and difficulty in adjustment to learning environment due to a disability or an impairment, that can be a temporary or permanent condition.

SUPPORT SERVICES AT HKUST

The SEN & Diversability Team (DA) of the Counseling and Wellness Center is the primary contact with students who declare their SEN with the University. DA supports students from the very first step of the SEN declaration through completion of study at HKUST. DA officers meet with each declared student individually to map out a reasonable academic accommodation plan (aka IEP / Individualized Educational Plan) and to assess the needs for available resources and suitable support services.

The data collected will be handled with strict security and confidentiality and in compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance of Hong Kong. The below lists out some of the possible accommodations to address the special needs of students with a chronic illness:

- allow medicine, food and/or water in testing
- alternate date and/or site for testing due to medical conditions
- early access to syllabus and course materials to facilitate arranging medical appointments
- extended time and breaks during testing to address medical needs
- extended time for assignments due to medical conditions
DARE is a group of enthusiastic students who want to empower the HKUST campus community to positively impact the support to students with SEN. The role of the ambassadors is to cultivate a campus where everyone's diverse abilities are appreciated and where everyone feels accepted and nourished.

No matter how much you know about SEN, where you are from, and who you are, you can be a part of DARE if you want to contribute to campus inclusion!

(Special thanks to DARE for the great contribution to the production of this leaflet series!

THINK POSITIVE

Many chronic diseases are linked to lifestyle choices that are within a person's own hands to change. Eating nutritious foods, becoming more physically active and avoiding tobacco can prevent from developing many of these diseases and conditions.

Individuals have diabetes, heart disease, arthritis or another chronic condition, eating more healthful food and getting more exercise, whether it's a brisk walk, a bike ride, a jog or a swim, can help them better manage their illness, avoid complications and prolong life.

CONTACT US

SEN & Diversability Team
Counseling and Wellness Center
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

+852 2358 6656 | sen@ust.hk | http://sen.ust.hk/