# MOVING ON: Transitioning to College

**Disability Services Newsletter for High Schools**

It has been said that life has treated me harshly; and sometimes I have complained in my heart because many pleasures of human experience have been withheld from me…if much has been denied me, much, very much, has been given me…
— Helen Keller, *The Open Door*

## Thinking About the (Industrial) Trades?
*What Your Students Need to Know:*

➢ In addition to many other programs at the College, there are 37 trades programs from which to choose.
➢ Most of these programs have Red Seal certification. ([www.redseal.ca](http://www.redseal.ca))
➢ Training is a combination of classroom, field, shop, and lab activity.
➢ While many programs do not require an academic high school program, those students who have completed academic math and science may find the academic/theory component of their programs less challenging.
➢ The pass mark for all courses within the trades programs is 70%.
➢ There is an exam rewrite policy for the trades. You can view this policy at: [http://www.cna.nl.ca/about/PoliciesPDFs/Approved/Policy%20AC-117%20Industrial%20Trades%20Rewrites%20(R1%202011).pdf](http://www.cna.nl.ca/about/PoliciesPDFs/Approved/Policy%20AC-117%20Industrial%20Trades%20Rewrites%20(R1%202011).pdf).
➢ Disability Services encourages all students who have a documented disability and are receiving supports in high school to also request supports in College. Many students wish to "try it on their own" at first, but this can be risky given the rewrite policy and the fast pace of our programs. It is better they request the accommodations and later decide they do not need them than to request them only when they have difficulties, as the process required to request and have accommodations approved takes time.
➢ When a student finishes the first year of a trades program, it means the student has only finished the entry level of the apprenticeship.
➢ Once the program is completed and the student finds work, s/he can register with the Department of Advanced Education and Skills (AES) as an apprentice.
➢ As an apprentice, s/he will alternate between work and blocks of training at the College.
➢ While working, s/he will be under the supervision of a journeyperson until s/he has the required hours to write the final certification exam. This process could take three-four years.
➢ Any student with a disability will have to provide current documentation to an Industrial Training Office (AES) in order to receive accommodations for the final certification exam. The documentation must include a definitive diagnosis of disability.

## Transition and Tips for Students with Autism/Asperger's

Students with Autism/Asperger's have specific characteristics and needs to consider when transitioning from high school. Many of these individuals have difficulties with verbal and non-verbal language, social skills, abstract reasoning, attention, inference, and generalization, to name a few areas. Some tips that may help to ease the transition for these students include the following:

➢ Investigate programs thoroughly so that the student is fully aware of what s/he is undertaking (i.e. some programs have camps or other intensive projects that require living in close quarters with other students for a significant period of time and many programs require strong language skills).
➢ Guide students toward programs that will capitalize on any focused areas of interest or personal strengths.
➢ Help minimize the "newness" of the post-secondary institution by arranging for the student to tour the building and meet the CDS and other instructors/staff while still in Level III.
➢ Provide direct instruction in non-verbal language skills, abstract reasoning, and social skills. Ensure that students understand the social expectations of the classroom and have opportunities to practise these in high school (i.e. self-monitoring of how many questions they ask during classes and teaching of common "turns of phrase").
➢ Provide opportunities to participate in group work projects, team sports, etc.
➢ Teach metacognitive skills and increase student responsibility for these throughout high school (i.e. how to approach multi-step tasks, organize an agenda, and improve study skills and time management).
➢ Students with Autism/Asperger's also need to develop their self-awareness, understanding of their disability, and self-advocacy skills, just like any other student with a disability.

## Mental Health

Increasing awareness and effectively responding to mental health issues are priorities for the College. In 2013, Bell and Bell Aliant announced $15,000 in funding through the **Bell Let's Talk Community Fund** to provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to employees at CNA. MHFA is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. It is given until the appropriate treatment is found or until the crisis is resolved.

College counsellors do <u>not</u> provide treatment for psychiatric illnesses; however, a counsellor may work with a student's mental health treatment team to address any additional needs resulting from participation in an academic program.

Students with mental health conditions, as with all documented disabilities, may qualify for academic accommodations (i.e. reduced course load, quiet testing space) while attending CNA. Students who are considering requesting accommodations are encouraged to meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services <u>PRIOR</u> to the start of their programs.

If a student with a mental health disability does not wish to register with Disability Services, s/he may still be able to access the Canada Study Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities which is $2,000 per academic year. For more information regarding this grant, students can visit http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/studentaid/assistance/fulltimestudents_201314.html or discuss it with their high school counsellor/a CNA counsellor. Students may also contact Student Aid to ask questions or to get more information: (709)729-5849 (St. John's area) or 1-888-657-0800 (rest of NL).



THE MOST APPROPRIATE LABEL IS USUALLY THE ONE PEOPLE'S PARENTS HAVE GIVEN THEM.

Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.
—Albert Einstein

## Inventory of Services for Students with Disabilities at College of the North Atlantic

### Assistive Technology Available at CNA
**(available at most or all campuses)**

- ❖ Kurzweil software program (stand alone and site licence) that scans documents and reads them. It also can assist with writing. This will typically benefit students with reading and/or attention issues.
- ❖ Dragon Naturally Speaking - voice recognition computer program that creates documents from speech. You speak; it types. This is a great resource for students with dysgraphia, spelling, and/or typing issues.
- ❖ Laptop (with AT) Loan Program
- ❖ Electronically-adjustable desks
- ❖ WhisperRooms – used to accommodate students using Dragon or who require a separate testing environment.
- ❖ Variety of headphones
- ❖ Variety of adjustable tables/ergonomic options
- ❖ Laptops/Desktops with AT (on-site use)
- ❖ Scanners and printers

*Individual campuses may have the following items which can be shared with others as the needs arise:*

- ❖ ZoomText
- ❖ SpeakQ/WordQ
- ❖ Smart pens, digital recorders
- ❖ iPads
- ❖ Various magnifiers including hands-free and handheld options…"Optelec Compact +" digital magnifier, Opti-VISOR, CCTV, Merlin Magnifier
- ❖ a one-handed keyboard and a specialized mouse for physical disabilities
- ❖ Victor Readers
- ❖ AlphaSmart-small computerized note-taking device

### Accommodations
**(most commonly requested)**

- ✓ Additional time for exams (standard is time plus half)
- ✓ Exams in separate location
- ✓ Alternate format exams (Kurzweil)
- ✓ Enlarged font–exams/handouts, etc.
- ✓ Scribing using Dragon
- ✓ Extended program/reduced course load
- ✓ Note-taker/copy of notes
- ✓ Clarification of exam questions
- ✓ SpeakQ/WordQ
- ✓ Accessible desk



**Notes:**

- ❖ All campuses have a Peer Tutoring program at no cost to the student. There are times, however, when it is not always easy to find peer tutors-particularly at smaller campuses.
- ❖ CNA relies on technology as the first and preferred option to deliver accommodations (i.e. Dragon where scribes are requested and Kurzweil where readers are requested).

*Advocacy Reminder*: Schools know who students with disabilities are; College of the North Atlantic usually does not know who students are unless they self-identify. Please encourage students to: understand their disabilities; accept responsibility for their own successes; learn time management skills; learn and use the relevant assistive technologies; and know their strengths! If students want support, they must self-identify and request accommodations.

**Eliminate the Disability Double Standard:** *If it's not okay for people without disabilities, it's not okay for people with disabilities.* People *without* disabilities are known by their strengths; many people *with* disabilities are known by their "problems or deficits". People *without* disabilities dream big dreams; people *with* disabilities are told to be "realistic." People *with* disabilities are ready to be included in ordinary, inclusive environments: to access post-secondary; to have real jobs; and to live the lives of their dreams! To make this happen, a person may need assistive technology devices and/or other supports and accommodations (just like people *without* disabilities). People *without* disabilities do things whether they're ready or not and they learn and grow from their experiences. (Don't we all learn more from our failures than our successes?) Students *with* disabilities need the same opportunities (experiences, failures, etc.) to learn and grow. There should not be one set of rules for people *without* disabilities and a different set for people *with* disabilities. At College of the North Atlantic, the same standards are in place for all students who meet entrance requirements and are seeking diplomas, certificates, or degrees.

—adapted from *A Disability is Natural* by Kathie Snow
 (www.disabilityisnatural.com)

**Dates and Deadlines:**

**While there are few specific application deadlines, some programs do fill up quickly so students should apply early. High school students can send in their applications once they have started grade 12. Students with disabilities should take particular care to apply early as some academic accommodations may take time to arrange, there are deadlines to apply for disability-related funding, and students can be offered the opportunity to shadow the programs they are interested in to ensure a good fit.**

**Please check out our website at http://www.cna.nl.ca/disability-services/.**

**Contact Information—Coordinators of Disability Services (CDS):**

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|---|---|
| **Baie Verte, Gander, and Grand Falls-Windsor** | **Corner Brook and St. Anthony** |
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| **Bay St. George and Port Aux Basques** | **Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador West** |
| *Paula Gillis*<br>P: (709) 643-7793<br>F: (709) 643-2328<br>paula.gillis@cna.nl.ca | *BettyAnn Knight-Brake*<br>P: (709) 896-6344<br>F: (709) 896-3733<br>bettyann.knight-brake@cna.nl.ca |
| **Bonavista, Burin, and Clarenville** | **Prince Philip Drive, Seal Cove, and Ridge Road** |
| *Donna Piercey*<br>P: (709) 891-5612<br>F: (709) 891-2256<br>donna.piercey@cna.nl.ca | *Judy Kendall*<br>P: (709) 758-7213<br>F: (709) 758-7059<br>judy.kendall@cna.nl.ca |
| **Carbonear and Placentia** | or |
| *Wendy Monk*<br>P: (709) 227-6272<br>F: (709) 227-7185<br>wendy.monk@cna.nl.ca | *Ted Power*<br>P: (709) 758-7479<br>F: (709) 758-7445<br>ted.power@cna.nl.ca |

**Rethink "Deficits/Problems": They might be gifts, assets and strengths.**
www.disabilityisnatural.com