

Counselling and Accessibility Services: The Students We Serve

Published 3/26/2021 by [Ashley Ribbel](#)

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in the **March 2021 issue**

Every year, the Counselling and Accessibility Services department is required to report to the Ministry on our work, our programs, and our activities to support students with disabilities at Seneca.

According to our most recent report, we had involvement with 4,000 Seneca students who identified as having a disability. Of those 4,000 students:

- Almost 500 students identified a physical disability.
- Over 1,000 provided documentation of a mental health disability.
- Over 800 had documented learning disabilities.
- Other kinds of disabilities that we are required to report on include students experiencing Autism Spectrum Disorder as well as those with Attention Deficit Disorder.
- 1,100 chose not to disclose a diagnosis.

Some additional demographic information about the students we serve:

- Gender: 37% identified as male; 62% as female; 1% reported other identity.
- Age: 31% were 20 and under; 50% were between 21-30; 19% were 31+.

Each of these 4,000 students has provided us with documentation of a disability. While they do not have to disclose a diagnosis, they do have to provide documents from a professional (specializing in the field of the disability that is being reported) confirming a disability and giving specific information on the functional impact of the disability on their academic life.

Some of our students are born with a disability, others have experienced events along the

way that have left them with a challenge that affects their ability to function in certain aspects of their life.

Students have told us about the stigma that they have experienced because of their disability. Some have been made to feel incapable and told that they needed to lower their expectations for their future.

On top of all this, some may be dealing with issues that many other students also confront: poverty, gender, sexuality, race, and physical and/or sexual violence.

In the end, these are simply proud Seneca students struggling like many others to do the best they can, made a little more difficult in these trying times. Your efforts in supporting, encouraging, and challenging them are appreciated.

The staff in Counselling and Accessibility Services are available to answer any questions that you might have about working with students with a disability.

View the [March 2021 issue of the Academic Newsletter](#).

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tags : counselling-and-accessibility-services, march-2021