PHOTOVOICE
In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) recognizes that challenges remain for persons whose disabilities impact major life activities. OARS has developed this PhotoVoice Project to highlight some of the barriers that students, staff, and faculty face on our campus.

PhotoVoice is a participatory approach that empowers students to use photos, drawings, art, and their words to document such barriers. This project will remain fluid, with plans to be featured by OARS every five years to and thereby reflect our community’s growth and understanding of access opportunities for persons with varying abilities.

The PhotoVoice project is intended to reflect on the meaning within the pictures, and to engage in critical dialogue with others to ignite the spark of change. Goals include raising awareness, normalizing the inclusion of individuals with disabilities, and reducing stigma that may be associated with living with a disability.

By viewing this project through the lens of our students, staff, and faculty who live with a disability, we can work toward continually improving access for all students.

ENJOY!!!
This is my tattoo that represents my acceptance of my bipolar disorder diagnosis. It is my daily reminder that no how bad it gets, it always gets better. There’s a sun at at the end of every dark night, there’s a kite for every anchor, there’s a high tide to every low tide and a smile to every frown. It helps keep me going when I get overwhelmed during a test, can’t get out of bed to go to class, or have to leave the room because I’m having a panic attack. I used to be in denial of my disorder, but I am no longer ashamed of my mental health. This tattoo reminds me of everything I’ve overcome, and that list continues to grow.

-Anonymous
“The daily life of a chronically ill PhD student.”

- Sharayah Bradley, English Department, Class of 2024
This is a screenshot of the UNCG Canvas website on my phone. I am an online student due to my ADHD and Autism. Being in a comfortable environment such as at my home allows me to do my best with school work. I'm thankful for UNCG to have an online program!

-Sara Weaver, Philosophy Major
"Ann's Hands"
12 x 12 in., acrylic on canvas, 2017

-Ann Millett
I have a nerve disorder that makes it hard for me to do some things without help, even though I am very independent and usually can get around campus just fine by myself. This style of door (found in Graham, Curry, and Mossman) is my natural enemy—I don’t have the hand strength to push down the button catch with my thumb or fingers. Last year, I couldn’t get into the Graham Building and missed a class. All because I couldn’t get the lever pressed and I didn’t have anyone with me to help. When I asked to make the door handle an ADA-compliant lever, they told me to just use another door.

-Anonymous
Although my disabilities may be invisible to a degree, (Bipolar Type 1, anxiety, and PTSD) there are tell-tale signs that are apparent that I have mental and emotional differences. To manage my panic attacks, depression and manic episodes, anxiety, and uncontrollable traumatic responses, I take several prescriptions. In order for me to function and concentrate as optimally as possible, I cannot skip a dose of either medication. Otherwise, I will find myself losing interest in all aspects of life, falling behind in my classes, unable to interact with people, and being stuck in a never-ending downward spiral of guilt and shame, while reliving traumatic experiences. At times, I feel like I’m trapped in another world with no way out. It has been difficult to accept that someone who is a doctoral student can be so lost and not be confident at times because of their diagnoses. However, I try my best not to let these labels define who I am.

-A.L. - 3rd Year Doctoral Student
Standing in all shapes and colors, these are going to the pets and their caregivers for their daily care. The list includes everything from small bottles of aspirin, which are usually given to pets, to large packages of heartworm medication.

While we are making strides in our industry in both recognizing the reality of mental health in pets, there is still so much to learn. Many experts believe it is crucial to keep pets healthy mentally. This is why we are offering this new line of products for pets. These products are designed to help pets maintain their mental and emotional well-being.

As a person with anxiety and depression, these dogs are family members. They are our partners and are always there for us. In fact, I can't wait to argue with them. I am happy and feeling well in the best way ever. It's rewarding when you see them happy and healthy when getting off of things can change their condition.

We are committed to providing the best care possible for your pets. That's why we have developed these new products, which are designed to help pets lead healthy, active lives. Whether you have a cat, dog, or any other type of pet, we have products that can help them.

Visit our website today to learn more about our new line of pet health products. We are confident that you will be happy with the results and will continue to use them for years to come.
Disabilities comes in all shapes and sizes. Some are easy to see and make accommodations for while others are not as obvious. You might look at someone two or three times a week, never knowing the struggles they experience because their disabilities are not visible or even physical.

While we are making strides in our society in both recognizing the reality of, and working towards the acceptance of mental health issues, there is still undoubtedly a stigma attached to those of us with mental health challenges. This prejudice persists even though, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness website, one in five (almost 50 million) US adults currently struggle with mental illness.

As a person with anxiety and depression, some days are normal(ish). Others are golden and going to work is a pleasure I can't wait to experience. I am happy and looking forward to the best day ever (a la SpongeBob). Other days are scary and overwhelming and getting out of bed seems an insurmountable challenge.

-April
In this exhibit, viewers are encouraged to reflect on the realities of mental health care and the stigmatization of mental illness. The images and text highlight the challenges faced by individuals living with mental disorders, emphasizing the need for greater understanding and empathy.

While we often associate stigma with mental illness, the exhibit also acknowledges the broader societal issues that contribute to the marginalization of those living with mental health challenges. It underscores the importance of destigmatization and the role of education in fostering a more inclusive society.

As a society, we must work towards creating a more supportive environment for individuals with mental health conditions, ensuring they have access to the resources and support they need to lead fulfilling lives. The exhibit serves as a reminder of the importance of compassion and understanding in our collective journey towards a more inclusive and equitable future.
Because of my medical issues, I live with my service dog. I suffer from epilepsy, anemia, a lack of depth perception, and the inability to walk long distances. My Service Dog alerts me to whether I'm going to have a seizure or black out, and she helps me up stairs and sometimes walking in general. While most people have no issues with her, there are some who think that I have her just because I want my dog with me. It is really disheartening, but I have to remind myself that I both know the truth about my situation, and that these people are the minority. I have several professors and friends who have no issue with her presence in the classroom and love to see her when she is off duty.

-EmilyMay Serafim
Each of the drawings in my series on Mental Health, Disability, and Blackness has a theme, and for this showcase, I let the theme come naturally: "Dan." The Dan (the "n" is silent, plurals don't use an "s") are primordial snakes in the cosmology of Vodu, the lifestyle I adhere to, although I am largely apathetic (I don't really believe in a supreme creator or afterlife among some other things) and don't concern myself with whether anything supernatural is objectively real or not, as the Vodu I live and breathe is more important than such a fleeting question. That said, it's said they created all the matter that exists and as a result, the Dan - especially Dangbe - are our first ancestors. The Dan honored me to be one of those people, and in time they will share a little of that knowledge with me when I have earned their trust and respect through the proper ceremonies.

-Mwatuangi
-Anonymous
Special Thanks to:

*All Student, Staff, and Faculty participants!*

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