

Accessible Learning Services: What I Didn't Understand at First

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When I first heard about Accessible Learning Services at Seneca, I assumed it wasn't for me.

Back home, learning support services weren't something we talked about. If you struggled, you were expected to work harder, not ask for accommodations. So when I saw information about Accessible Learning Services, I thought it was only for students with visible disabilities or serious learning challenges, something that didn't apply to me.

As an international student, everything already felt new: academic expectations, assignments, deadlines, and adjusting to life in Canada. Learning support services felt like another unfamiliar system, and honestly, I didn't think I needed it. I told myself other students probably needed it more.

Part of that thinking came from fear. I didn't want to be labeled or seen as someone who couldn't cope. In many cultures, asking for academic support feels embarrassing, almost like admitting weakness. So I kept telling myself to manage everything on my own.

Then something happened that changed everything.

One day, I suddenly passed out and was sent to the hospital. After that, I had to go through ongoing medical tests, appointments, and long waitlists for specialists. Managing appointments, arranging transportation, and handling uncertainty about my health became part of my daily life.

These unexpected health conditions affected my life more than I expected. Some days I felt exhausted or unwell. Appointments sometimes conflicted with classes or exams. I began missing lectures and struggled to keep up with assignments. Slowly, my study progress was affected, and I felt stressed and worried about falling behind. The hardest part was that this situation was unexpected, and I didn't know how to manage both my health and my studies at the same time.

It was during this period that someone suggested I connect with Accessible Learning Services. At first, I hesitated. I still thought accommodations were meant for others, not for situations that suddenly appear in the middle of your studies. But eventually, I realized I couldn't handle everything alone.

What I learned surprised me. Accessible Learning Services isn't about labels or giving students an advantage. It's about removing barriers so students can continue learning when health or other challenges affect their academic life. Support can be flexible and adapted to each student's situation.

Looking back, I wish I had understood this earlier. Many international students, like me, may not realize these services exist or assume they don't qualify. But unexpected things happen, and support systems are there to help us continue when life doesn't go as planned.

At Seneca, Accessible Learning Services helps students access accommodations and learning supports so they can continue participating in their studies. Understanding that support exists doesn't mean something is wrong with you, it simply means you don't have to handle everything alone.

🔗 [Learn more about Seneca's Accessible Learning Services:](#)

<https://students.senecapolytechnic.ca/spaces/122/accessible-learning-services/home>

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