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College readiness standards often does not differentiate based on neurocognitive profiles and general social-emotional skills, leading students with diagnosed learning differences to be more susceptible to transitional barriers when matriculating to university life. This transition becomes more complex if the traditional trajectory takes different routes, ultimately leading for more time between graduating from high school and enrolling at a full-time, residential college. The interplay between learning disabilities and age of entrance in college is a topic often not researched, and therefore, IHE’s do not always differentiate the transitional support offered for this unique, complex profile. In other words, for adult learners, the transition becomes more complex as institutional interventions often focus on “college-aged” students, leaving this subset of students more vulnerable to falling through the cracks.

Beacon College’s Navigator PREP is a year-long pre-enrollment program that virtually works with students who learn differently, and their parents, to proactively identify and intervene on barriers that will impede on their transition to college. Using a newly designed Transition Questionnaire that identifies discrete skill deficits, this individualized program addresses complex areas including family dynamics, self-awareness, social integration, emotional management, and executive functioning skills (self-monitoring, planning, prioritizing, and time management). Although initially planned for at-age students, the program worked with several transfer or adult learners who are entering college in non-traditional ways.

Using case studies, this presentation will provide a comparison of at-age students verse their adult counterparts. In this regard, a conceptual frame will be shared in an effort to better understand their unique social, emotional and executive functioning skill needs and how proactive interventions were used to increase college readiness. Additional focus will be placed on intervention methods for adult learners and their parents, all whom, based on age and educational history, have a system of operating that can be counterproductive to student autonomy development. Thusly, an emphasis will be placed on common barriers that were seen for adult learners in Navigator PREP, what interventions were used, and how the approach to family work was adjusted to confront many areas that were distinct to their circumstance. Finally, data will be shared that evaluates how adult students and parents who enrolled in pre-enrollment transition programming adapted to college life through indicators such as campus connectedness, use of resources, and academic functioning. In this capacity, intercollegiate collaboration will be explored to address how to increase communication between admissions and other campus departments, especially around this vulnerable population, as well as how narrative transition plans increased proactive interventions, including both on and off sight resources.