Secondary students with disability and the challenges they face continue to elude numerous SWD (Quick, Lehmann & Deniston, 2003). College success is bolstered by adjustment to the range of demands and experiences associated with college life. The needs of SWD extend beyond standard academic accommodations. The number of students with disability (SWD) on college campuses has rapidly increased in the past quarter century. Despite this increase in enrollment, academic success and satisfaction continue to elude numerous SWD (Quick, Lehmann & Deniston, 2003). College success is bolstered by adjustment to the range of demands and experiences associated with college life. These demands extend beyond the classroom and necessitate a set of life skills that are complex and challenging. The needs of SWD extend beyond standard academic accommodations.

**Purpose:** Understand the broader needs of post-secondary students with disability

**Introduction**

The number of students with disability (SWD) on college campuses has rapidly increased in the past quarter century. Despite this increase in enrollment, academic success and satisfaction continue to elude numerous SWD (Quick, Lehmann & Deniston, 2003). College success is bolstered by adjustment to the range of demands and experiences associated with college life. These demands extend beyond the classroom and necessitate a set of life skills that are complex and challenging. The needs of SWD extend beyond standard academic accommodations.

**Methods**

- 2 Focus groups = 4 per group
  - 1 student group
  - 1 faculty & staff group
- 14 Individual in-depth interviews
- 2 Dynamic interview guides (student & faculty)
  - Participants lead dialogue to topics of saliency
  - Student version: Questions re: experiences re: campus life & in classrooms
  - Faculty/Staff: Questions re: experiences working w SWD & university policy re: SWD
- Thematic analysis: Nuanced description of experiences
  - audio-recording & verbatim transcriptions
- IRB approval & written informed consent

**Participants**

- N=22
  - n=1 Parent of traditional age SWD
  - n=10 Faculty/Staff (mean affiliation 17 yrs)
  - n=11 Students (5 undergrad/6 graduate)
- 6/11 traditional age

**Themes**

- **Self-determination**
  - “It’s not enough to have ramps. It’s not enough to have length of the test extended. You know there are other kinds of things that have to be done.”
- **Added complexity**
  - “It’s one thing to have academic help, but everything that affects you in school affects you in your daily life too.”

**Discussion**

- The need for disability-related supports extend beyond the classroom into areas of medical and health, social, and daily life.
- SWD must simultaneously manage academics and health. Conditions resulting in disability are diagnosed and managed through the medical and health system. Navigation of both health and academic systems needed.
- Urgent need for disability training in matters unique to hidden disabilities.
- This research expands understanding of disability-related needs impacting matters of academic, social, and everyday life.

**Conclusion**

For post-secondary SWD, health management, self-advocacy, communication, and everyday life skills have an impact on academic performance and college participation. Findings have implications for OT interventions focusing on transition services for academically successful middle and high school students with disabilities.


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