



Disability in psychology training:

An exploration of the current state of disability-informed training and psychologists' attitudes toward working with persons with disability.

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Background

One in four noninstitutionalized adults in the United States report having a disability (Okoro et al., 2018). Further, 17.4 million adult people with disabilities (PWD) experience frequent mental distress, 4.6 times more than adults without disabilities (Cree et al., 2020). PWD also face systemic barriers to mental health care (e.g., biases from providers, lack of training), that have only worsened in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Manning et al., 2023). However, there is a current gap in the literature that explores the quality and effectiveness of training on disability in psychology doctoral programs. This study seeks to assess how and if doctoral psychology students and practicing psychologists are receiving education on working with PWD. Additionally, it is unknown whether have a desire to work with PWD or are willing to learn more about this population. We will do this by surveying doctoral students, early-career, mid-career, and late-career psychologists asking relevant questions to explore this topic as well as including measures of ableism, attitudes toward disability, and disability competence (Cheatham, Abell & Kim, 2015; Friedman & Aswumb, 2019; Strike et al., 2004). The goal of this research is to shed light on the areas of need in training for psychologists working with PWD and to provide recommendations for how programs can improve their training practices.

Purpose



PWD are often forgotten in research and advocacy efforts. This may also be the case in psychology doctoral training, despite disability training being a requirement for APA accreditation (APA, n.d.). PWD also often experience barriers and difficulties when seeking and/or receiving therapeutic services (Camm-Crosbie et al., 2019; Manning et al., 2023; Wolfner et al., 2023). Yet, no research has explored the quality and effectiveness of psychology doctoral programs' training for providing psychotherapy and/or assessment with PWD to date. The results of this research will shed light on the quantity, quality, and effectiveness of such training and inform how to improve training opportunities to best serve PWD.

Benefits

There is currently a gap in the literature pertaining to this specific topic. This contribution will provide more information on the training needs in psychology doctoral programs on providing therapy to PWD. It will also assess the current state of psychologists' perceptions towards people with disabilities. Participants recruited will add to the literature on disability informed training in psychology.

Society will benefit from an increased understanding of the state of disability training in psychology as it is such a vulnerable population that requires more specific training.

Doctoral programs may benefit by understanding what changes and/or additions should be made to their training opportunities and coursework to better produce multiculturally competent psychologists.

Methodology

Study Design

Selection Criteria

Must be a current psychologist who has earned either their PhD or PsyD.
Above the age of 18

Recruitment

Convenience sampling
Listervs
Social media
Word of mouth

Survey delivery method

Qualtrics

Procedure

- 1) Recruitment
- 2) Informed consent
- 3) Eligibility criteria
- 4) Quantitative measures assigned in random order
- 5) Demographics questionnaire
- 6) Debrief
- 7) Offer of participation in a gift card raffle

Materials

Quantitative Measures

- Counseling Clients with Disabilities Survey (CCDS; Strike Skovholt, & Hummel, 2004)
- Social Worker's Attitudes Toward Disability Scale (SWADS; Cheatham, Abell, & Kim, 2015)
- Multidimensional Cultural Humility Scale (MDCHS; Gonzalez, Sperandio, Mullen, & Tuazon, 2021)
- Multicultural Training and Education Questionnaire (MTEQ; Wilcox et al., 2022)
- Symbolic Ableism Scale (SAS; Friedman, 2019)

Delivery Method

- Qualtrics

Data Analysis

- SPSS

Theory and Relevant Data

Critical Disability Theory

Critical Disability Theory is an interdisciplinary framework aimed at comprehending disability through a critical examination of how society constructs it. It emphasizes the diverse cultural aspects of disability, including social, political, and medical dimensions. This theory challenges the traditional medical model of disability, which views disability as a medical condition to be treated or cured. Instead, it acknowledges systemic ableism and the societal practices that marginalize persons with disabilities (PWD), often labeling them as possessing "undesirable" traits and pushing them to the fringes of society (Pothier & Devlin, 2006).

What is Ableism?

The term ableism was developed during the disability rights movement in the United States and Britain as a parallel to sexism and racism to be used by those studying disability as a social construction (Nario-Redmond, 2020). Ableism is defined as "prejudice and discrimination towards individuals simply because they are classified as disabled, regardless of if their impairments are physical or mental, visible or invisible" (Nario-Redmond, 2020, p. 6).

Population Information

- 1.3 billion people with disabilities (PWD) worldwide (World Health Organization, 2022).
- In 2019, 7.2% of the 36% of homes with children in the United States had at least one child with a disability, which is an estimated 2.6 million households (Young, 2021).
- In the United States, The United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey reported that an estimated 44 million Americans or 13% of the noninstitutionalized population have a disability (United States Census Bureau, 2022).
- PWD face numerous vulnerabilities, including higher mortality rates, elevated risks of mental health disorders, and various healthcare inequities (Baynton, 2016; Fang et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2012; World Health Organization, 2022).

Participation Information



UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY
**DISABILITY IN
PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING
RESEARCH STUDY**

PROJECT SUMMARY

- Examine the current practice of disability-informed training in psychology doctoral programs
- Assess training opportunities in psychology doctoral programs and their influence on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes/beliefs that psychologists have related to disability
- This survey will take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete

IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

- You will be given the opportunity to enter a raffle for a 100% Amazon Giftcard
- Due to the required sample size, the probability percentage of being selected to win this gift card is approximately .5%

**TO QUALIFY FOR THIS
STUDY YOU MUST BE A
CURRENT
PSYCHOLOGIST WHO
HAS RECEIVED THEIR
PHD OR PSYD**

**LINK AND QR CODE TO
SURVEY!**



https://memphis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aFWxO6ZLzrVXXMQ

RESEARCH TEAM

- (PI) Mary Dillon, M.A.
- Kaylee Cook, B.A.
- Chrisann Schiro-Geist, Ph.D.
- Madeline Brodt, Ph.D. (Faculty Supervisor)
- All members of the research team are associated with the Counseling Psychology Doctoral Program at University of Memphis

PLEASE DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS TO:

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Further Information

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References available upon request.

Who are the researchers?

Mary Dillon, M.A., a PhD in Counseling Psychology student at the University of Memphis, Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Research is the principle investigator for the study. Her faculty advisor is Dr. Madeline Brodt, PhD. They are assisted by Kaylee Cook, B.A., another PhD student in the same department and Dr. Chrisann Schiro-Geist, PhD, a faculty member in the department.