

A new look at Systems Approach to Placement for persons with intellectual disabilities

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ABSTRACT

The Systems Approach to Placement (SAP) model, a cornerstone of our proposal, was not only created but also meticulously refined in the 1980s and 1990s. This period saw significant strides in the instrument's reliability, system condensing, and protocol translation into six other languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian), expanding its reach beyond the USA (2013 and 2015). The work on this model has persisted, shaping our research landscape. In 2008, the USA Higher Education Act ushered in what we now know as Inclusive Higher Education (IHE). This transformative movement invited young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, to university campuses. The aim was to enhance their socialization skills and equip them to seek competitive employment. Today, this movement is not confined to the United States. Still, it has spread its wings, finding acceptance at over 300 universities and colleges in the United States, numerous European countries, and other parts of the world. The investigators spearheading this proposal are not mere observers but active participants in evolving SAP's theoretical and philosophical focus. Their expertise is also instrumental in adapting the protocol currently used in these IHE programs and standardizing the instrument for use with the IHE population. This hands-on approach ensures that the SAP model is tailored to the specific needs of the IHE population. The initial data collection will be conducted at the IHE program, TigerLIFE, at the University of Memphis and then shared with other programs for refinement and reliability assessment, underlining our commitment to thoroughness and excellence. The IHE program at the University of Memphis Institute on Disability (UMID) has based its conceptual programming on the Systems Approach to Placement (SAP) since its inception in 2013. During that period, it provided services to 336 young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The success of this program is evident in its competitive integrated employment rate, which stands at an impressive 70-76%, significantly higher than the US Department of Labor's estimate of 15-20% for this population over the last decade. This and future studies will further enhance the effectiveness of the SAP model for special populations.