

Public Abstract

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Title:SERVING STUDENTS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN MISSOURI: A STUDY OF CURRENT AND BEST PRACTICES

There are steadily increasing numbers of students attending college who have psychiatric disabilities, many of who begin their educational journey at community colleges. This mixed-methods study was conducted to determine practices being used at Missouri community colleges for serving students with psychiatric disabilities using a survey created from a compilation of best practices guidelines. Survey items were developed by reviewing over 40 expert sources on the subject of disability services. Descriptive statistics and thematic descriptions were used to analyze survey data. Additionally, current practices used at Missouri Community Colleges were compared with best practice guidelines in the survey using t-tests. The findings revealed significant differences between best practice guidelines and current practices used at Missouri community colleges. Successful strategies and common concerns related to serving students who have psychiatric disabilities were discovered. Further research is needed to strengthen the current findings and discover the efficacy of current and best practices for serving students who have mental illness problems.