



DARN PRESENTS



Summary Report on Disability Experiences within Psychology



DARN Summary Report on Disability Experiences within Psychology

The Disability Advocacy and Research Network (DARN) conducted a Qualtrics survey on the experiences of disabled students, faculty, practitioners, and researchers in the field of psychology. Participants were recruited from DARN, the American Psychological Association Disability Mentoring Program, and snowball sampling. Data were collected in Fall, 2024. The final sample included 131 individuals, with current career status ranging from current undergraduate students to practicing clinicians and tenured faculty and administrators.

Results of Interest

- 77.1% reported more than one disability
- 66.1% reported multiple marginalized identities
- 56.8% reported using assistive devices
- 40.7% had only invisible disability/disabilities
- 73.7% requested reasonable accommodations
 - Only 42.4% received all requested accommodations
- 72.9% of students reported discrimination and/or microaggressions from faculty
- 64.4% knew a disabled student in their program
 - Only 3.4% knew of a disabled administrator
- 87.3% reported experiencing multiple barriers to inclusion in psychology
 - The most commonly reported barriers were difficulty obtaining official accommodations, lack of clear instructions or expectations, and lack of flexible time/deadlines
- Of those eligible, nearly two-thirds reported experiencing barriers during graduate school and employment

Results indicate that experiences of discrimination and barriers to access are far too common among individuals with disability in psychology fields. Work to expand inclusion and accommodation can help support disabled psychologists and increase rates of disabled participation in the field, particularly in higher levels, including administration and leadership.

Full percentages are available below.

Table 1: Demographics

Variable	Mean (SD)/%
Age	35.61 (12.15)
Gender	
Male	5.9%
Female	82.2%
Non-binary/third gender	8.5%
Genderfluid	2.5%
Other	0.8%
Race	
American Indian/First Nations/Indigenous	0.8%
Asian	13.6%
Black/African	4.2%
Hispanic/Latine	10.2%
Middle Eastern/North African	2.5%
White	78.0%
Other	3.4%
*Multiracial	13.6%
Minoritized Demographic	
Race or ethnicity	28.8%
Religion	22.9%
Disability	92.4%
Sexuality	46.6%
Trans or gender expansive	13.6%
National origin or immigrant status	8.5%
Other	11.0%
*Multiple minoritized	66.1%
Military	
Current	5.1%
Veteran	3.4%
Field of psychology	
Clinical/counseling	51.7%
Social	22.9%
Experimental	6.8%
Developmental	10.2%
School	2.5%
Neuropsych	7.6%
Cognitive	9.3%
Rehabilitation	5.9%
Health	22.9%
IO	2.5%
Personality	6.8%
Other	10.9%

Variable	%
Disability	
Chronic Illness	52.5%
Blind/low vision	5.1%
Deaf/HoH	4.2%
Autism	20.3%
ADHD	37.3%
Learning disability	11.9%
TBI	3.4%
Spinal cord injury	1.7%
Communication disability	5.1%
Limb difference	3.4%
Facial difference	2.5%
Anxiety	46.6%
Depression	32.2%
Eating disorder	4.2%
Substance use disorder	2.5%
Pain condition	32.2%
Muscular dystrophy	0.8%
Cerebral palsy	1.7%
Other	31.4%
*Multiple disabilities	77.1%
Assistive Devices	
Manual wheelchair	4.2%
Electric wheelchair	3.4%
Walker, crutches, cane	11.9%
Voice recognition software	12.7%
Braces	10.2%
Orthotics	10.2%
Screen reader	15.3%
Screen magnification	11.9%
White cane	0.8%
Hearing aids	4.2%
Service animal	5.1%
Other	23.7%
None	43.2%
Visible disabilities?	
Yes	11.9%
Depends on the context	36.4%
Some are visible, some not	7.6%
No	40.7%

Table 2: School/Career

Variable	%	
Highest Education		
Some college	5.9%	
Undergraduate degree	9.3%	
Some graduate school	9.3%	
Masters degree	28.0%	
Doctorate degree	22.9%	
Post-doctoral fellowship or internships	22.9%	
Career Stage		
Undergraduate student	4.2%	
Masters student	7.6%	
Doctoral student	33.1%	
Postdoctoral fellowship or internship	5.9%	
Untenured or pre-tenure faculty	11.9%	
Tenured faculty	13.6%	
Administrator	0.8%	
Clinician	7.6%	
Working outside academia	6.8%	
Other	8.5%	
Disclosed disability to –	Yes	Some, not all
Colleagues/classmates	34.7%	57.6%
Advisor	41.5%	17.8%
Instructor	18.6%	33.9%
Students you teach or advise	24.6%	26.3%
Staff	22.9%	27.1%
Disability services/ADA office	58.5%	8.5%
Non-disability office	24.6%	11.0%
Boss or supervisor	44.1%	22.0%
Other	6.8%	6.8%
Requested reasonable accommodations?		
Yes	73.7%	
No	22.9%	
Received requested accommodations?		
Yes	42.4%	
No	11.8%	
Some, but not all	45.9%	

Table 3: Barriers

Variable	%
Discrimination/microaggressions from:	
Staff	45.8%
Faculty	72.9%
Students	53.4%
Course materials	57.6%
Know a disabled person:	
A student in your program	64.4%
Faculty member in your program	33.9%
Staff member in your program	16.1%
Supervisor to you or your peers	11.0%
Administrator	3.4%
Barriers experienced	
Difficulty obtaining official accommodations	55.1%
Superiors refusing accommodations	42.4%
Physically inaccessible environment	33.9%
Lack of flexible timelines/deadlines	51.7%
Lack of clear instructions/expectations	52.5%
Difficulty obtaining accessible teaching/learning materials	21.2%
Other	28.0%
*Multiple barriers	87.3%
Barriers experienced during:	
Undergrad	38.9%
Grad school	64.0%
Practica or internship	28.9%
Job seeking, application process, or interviews	33.3%
Licensing	10.6%
Employment	63.6%
Promotion/advancement	34.4%

*Note: for “Barriers experienced during,” the percentages reflect the percentages of eligible participants (e.g., current undergraduates were not counted in the percentages of those who experienced barriers during graduate school)

Prepared by: Carolyn Shivers, Kathleen Bogart, Lisa Aspinwall, Katie Wang, and Rhoda Olkin