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Abstracts from Hebrew

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## **Accessibility of Higher Education For Students With Mental Health Disabilities**

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**Key Words:** Accessibility, Mental health disability, Higher education, Supported academic education

Higher education can predict gainful employment in meaningful occupations and open opportunities for career development, and hence, for quality of life. Thus, access to education is especially important for people with mental health disabilities (MHD). Education enables individuals in this population to achieve personal goals, promotes employment opportunities, economic independence and security, social opportunities and support and paves the way to a normative lifestyle (work, family, social). This paper present a study that examines accessibility options offered to students with MHD through the Supported Education Program carried out at University of Haifa and Hebrew University. The **research objectives** were: 1) to compare academic performance, student experiences, achievements, and satisfaction, between students with MHD, students with physical disabilities and students with no disabilities; 2) to reveal how students with MHD view their experiences in academic institutions and discover what these experiences mean to them. **Method:** This study employed a mixed methods design. It included 70 graduate students studying more than one semester at the Hebrew and Haifa universities, of which 22 students with MHD represented the research group. Five students from this group were chosen to participate in in-depth interviews. The control groups included 20 students with physical/sensory disabilities students and 28 students with no disabilities. Research tools included: Background questionnaire, College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ), Support and accessibility questionnaire, Short Form Health Survey (SF12), Activity of Daily living questionnaire and qualitative interviews. **Results** showed that students with MHD were accepted to universities to the same extent as any other student. However, their participation level, especially participation in social interactions, was lower than that of the control groups. In the analysis of the qualitative data, three themes were identified: "There was no other choice but academic studies", "Supported

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\*This article is based on a master's thesis study at the Department of Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Social Welfare & Health Sciences, University of Haifa.

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services? But I want to be like everybody else!", and "Compromising" between leading an independent life and the need for support. All students noted that their participation in the Supported Education Program, which they perceived as a "compromise" alternative, was not only beneficial, but vital in enabling them to acquire a higher education. **Conclusion:** Creating an accessible environment for students with MHD provides them with opportunities for educational advancement and with a normative academic environment. However, the notion of "academic accessibility" for this population is still developing, and many additional factors need to be considered to achieve the optimal environment that can enable people with MHD obtain a higher education through a natural and normative process.

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## **Self-Advocacy as a Tool for Implementing Service Accessibility Regulations**

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**Key Words:** Accessibility service regulations, Self-advocacy

On the eve of the enforcement of the regulations governing accessibility service adaptations, their effects on occupational therapy's domain and process must be examined. According to the regulations, some of the adaptations will be provided only when requested by a person with a disability. People with disabilities may need to learn how to execute such a request effectively in order to receive what they are entitled to. Occupational therapists can intervene to help achieve this goal through self-advocacy models. This article details the regulations that require a person with disabilities to request such adaptations and provides an example of a self-advocacy model.

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## **Better Accessibility for "Tzav Rishon" (the First Pre-Conscription Interview) in the Tel-Hashomer Conscription Bureau**

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**Key Words:** Bureau of conscription, Volunteers for military service, Disabled candidates for military service, Hearing disability, Learning and communication disability

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The procedure of "Tzav Rishon" in the conscription bureau is the first encounter of every Candidate for Military Service (Mal"shab) with the IDF: personal data is examined, including medical information and psycho-technical testing; it is then when his/her the military future is determined. The Equal Rights for People with Disabilities statute, determines that the disabled are entitled to an egalitarian, inclusive participation in any aspect of life, and the security service statute obliges every young man and woman to report to "Tzav Rishon" (with the exceptional cases excluded). This paper confronted the two statutes. We effectively surveyed the accessibility issue in the Tel-Hashomer conscription bureau, focusing on accessibility of information and testing procedure. A focus group comprised of young persons with hearing loss, and young persons who have learning and communication disability characterized the obstacles and difficulties during "Tzav Rishon", and suggested accessibility solutions for them. The accessibility survey revealed that there is a lot to be done in order to provide accessibility for disabled youth in their first encounter with the military world, and we chose to present several accessibility operations such as: signing system change, adaptation of procedures, hands on human presence, technological aids, and more. All this derives from the view that the principle of accessibility during "Tzav Rishon" should be egalitarian and inclusive.

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