Hello, SMHEC Supported Education Team!

A newsletter brought to you by the Illinois Tech Supported Education Working Group

This is a semi-regular update of the SMHEC initiative for supplemental services for college students with psychiatric illness.

NIDILRR Grant Proposal Meeting

On April 3rd 2018, SMHEC members gathered at St. Xavier University to discuss a grant opportunity with the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). We looked into expanding the Supported Education Program with the vision of enhancing success and supporting students with psychiatric disabilities in higher education and beyond. Six colleges signed letters of intent in joining as partners for the grant application.

The SMHEC-Supported Education team includes:

- Governor State University
- Joliet Junior College
- Kankakee Community College
- Prairie State College
- Saint Xavier University
- South Suburban College

Illinois Tech Pilot Project

A pilot project known as the Supported Education Career Development (SECD) program was launched at the Illinois Institute of Technology in September 2017. The working group (faculty, staff, and students) is committed to supporting the personal and professional growth of students with psychiatric disability and creating institutional change. This project is supported by Gerald Doyle (Vice Provost) and a recently awarded Faculty Innovation Grant (Principal Investigators: Patrick Corrigan & Lindsay Sheehan) (For more information, click here).

Supported Education & Career Development Program

The core component of this SECD program is a student navigator program that trains students to provide navigation and support to their peers with psychiatric disabilities. We believe that student navigators who have lived experience of mental health challenges are uniquely positioned to connect with and help their peers succeed in higher education and in their future careers. Navigation services will occur around campus or in the community, rather than in a counselor’s office. The navigator will accompany students to meetings, classes, or appointments, and support them in reaching their academic goals (to view manual, click here).
CBPR TEAM & QUALITATIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In Spring 2018, we convened a group of six Illinois Tech students with lived experience to form a Community Participatory Research Team (CBPR). With collaborative efforts of the Supported Education working group and CBPR team, we developed a SECD curriculum (to view manual, click here) based on information from 42 qualitative interviews/focus groups with Illinois Tech stakeholders (students, faculty and staff). Thus far, we have finished transcribing all interviews/focus groups and conducted qualitative data coding. The information revealed from this qualitative needs assessment will inform further development of the SECD program.

JOIN US FOR QUANTITATIVE STUDY

As a follow-up to the qualitative needs assessment, we would like to partner with the SMHEC – Supported Education team to do a larger quantitative needs assessment with faculty, staff, and students (with psychiatric disabilities) across remaining SMHEC schools. This will allow us to validate early findings and identify needs that might be unique to each site. Questions will be tailored to each stakeholder group (staff, faculty, students) and will include questions about classroom accommodation/academic needs, mental health serviced, and other supports. The survey will be entirely online. We will contact you hopefully in the fall.

For more information, please contact Sang Qin at sqin7@hawk.iit.edu