“Can I actually do that?”

Experiences of Postsecondary Students with Physical Disabilities with Online Learning
Nursing students with disabilities?

1. Laws, regulations, and specific policies may be variable by state, institution, etc.

2. Students with disabilities deserve a place in schools and the workforce, and we have an ethical responsibility to ensure equitable educational and workforce opportunities.

3. My research included students studying more than just nursing courses. Much can be learned and shared regarding SWD and their experiences in the online spaces.

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Photo Source: Donna Maheady
SWD tend to:
• prefer the online environment
• excel in the online environment
• voice strong reasoning for utilizing online learning
Faculty and course designers often lack understanding and empathy of these students’ experiences, which leads to insufficient accommodations.
Research Question

How do postsecondary SWD experience the benefits and barriers of online learning?
Research Methods and Participants

8 self-selecting students with a physical disability as defined by the ADA, who had taken an online postsecondary course were extensively interviewed regarding their experiences.

The interviews were transcribed, visualized, and marked for themes/concepts. The interviews were broken out by responses into the individual’s story and cross-analyzed by question.
Data analysis

Barriers to SWD Success in Online Courses

- Minimizing of disability
- Overachieving/Overwhelming
- Knowledge of available resources
- Isolation

Benefits to SWD when Taking Online Courses

- Self-regulation/Self-pacing
- Stamina/Persistence
- Connections
- Advocacy
Recommendations for Practice

Future research: specific areas of accommodation, isolation, and advocacy

Isolation: more opportunities for face-to-face interaction and socialization in general

“buy-in” — convert your attitude to that of advocacy
THANK YOU! Questions?

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