

Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution

Student Academic Meetings

Teka Lumumba-Nkrumah
Healthcare Studies

Introduction

"The disability services at Salem State University are committed to helping and accommodating students with disabilities and making sure they have access to all the university resources, activities and programs on campus". "Their goal is to offer all the resources possible to make sure each student reaches their educational potential. The staff at disability services make sure all accommodations are, met so that all students have an equal opportunity in the classroom and throughout campus."

(Disability Services, 2019, para 4)

"Because each semester brings new courses, every semester each student must meet with disability services to ensure they are getting all of the accommodations that they need. New students must fill out an intake form along with providing documentation of their disability". (Disability Services, 2019, para, 5)

Because of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Colleges in the United States had to make accommodations for students with disabilities that were either physical or a learning disability. The activism of Judy Heumann who is known as the "Mother of the Disability Rights movement" along with other students who attended Camp Jened catapulted disability rights into the forefront of American society.

Section 504

The Law & Its Impact on Postsecondary Education

"Colleges and Universities receiving federal financial assistance must not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, or treatment, of students." Students with documented disabilities may request modifications, accommodations, or auxiliary aids, which will enable them to participate in and benefit from all postsecondary educational programs and activities." Postsecondary institutions make such changes, when appropriate, to ensure that the greatest extent possible by all students with disabilities."

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

What Can Colleges And Universities Do To Implement Program Modifications?

"College students with disabilities, academic adjustments may include adaptations in the way specific courses are conducted, the use of auxiliary equipment and support staff, and modifications with academic requirements. A college or university has the flexibility to select the specific aid or service it provides, as long as it is effective. Such aids or services should be selected in consultation with the student who will use them."

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

Internship Project Objectives

Create an educational event to educate the campus community about the disability rights movement. Increase awareness of the independent living movement in the United States.



Materials & Methods

"**Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution**". This documentary, which is based on a true story, shows us a painful world that segregates disabled people from the non-disabled. The film poses a series of specific pains that disabled people experience and how they deal with it on an everyday basis. In the film a camp became an antidote to the painful world these individuals had to experience. Through this event I attempted to educate more students about how these young individuals at Camp Jened became a springboard for the disability rights movement and independent living movement in the United States.

How I measured increased awareness and collected feedback

- Social media- Reviewed and counted the website traffic on SSU events handle, including how many likes, shares and comments were made.
- Verbal feedback was collected from students who viewed the film during class

Students responded back with regard to the methods used to spread awareness mainly by feedback during class discussions. After the showing of the film one student expressed how profound of an impact the film had on her.

I created this event to coincide with Disability History Month with the focus being on scaffolding the basics of disability and intersectionality as well as destigmatizing disability in all its forms, with a focus on the non-physical. I wanted to educate students and others on campus and get feedback on how individuals felt after watching this documentary and how they could start applying this to their everyday experiences.

Results

I wanted to educate students and others on campus about the disability rights movement. I was also interested in feedback on how individuals felt after watching this documentary, and how they could consider applying this to their everyday experiences. A few of the students who attended the event stated that this documentary opened their eyes to the abuses and mistreatment of persons with disabilities. Most students never heard the name Judi Heumann and the accomplishments she achieved as an activist for the disability movement. Another interesting piece of history that most students were not aware of was how integral the Black Panthers were to the disability rights movement. Students were also very shocked to see how persons with disabilities were denied basic rights such as access to a public restroom, entering a building, or having such things as an elevator or ramp available to them so that they were able to traverse both inside and outside of any building.



Observations

During my internship at Disability Services, I was able to see how important Student Academic Meetings (SAM) and all other services provided here are to students. Students that came in for their SAM meetings, along with testing, had a very positive experience. There were a few students who were so comfortable, they literally came by just to hang out on the couch at the office in between classes. I was able to sit in on a SAM along with my site supervisor so that I could get a feel for what was discussed. These meetings included conversations regarding how the student was doing in their classes overall and if they were having issues, how they would solve them.

Here are some comments from some of the students about SAM:

"Because of S.A.M. , I already had answers and plans when I walked into each meeting. I learned to hold myself accountable, but knew that I had someone to check in with, which led to my best semester in college." (Disability Services, n.d.)

"S.A.M. has helped me manage my time and keep track of my assignments." (Disability Services, n.d.)

Conclusion

Creating this event to educate the campus community about disability rights as well as independent living in the United States ended up teaching me a lot as well. It was a great experience planning the catering and marketing materials for the event on my own which included creating and ordering the Tyvek signs for the event that were displayed around campus. Overall, it appears that the students who attended the event thought it was an impactful experience that had them walking away with lessons they applied to their everyday lives.

References

Salem State University. (2019). Disability Services (pg.2-5)
disability-services@salemstate.edu

Lebrecht, J. ,Newnham, N. (Director). (2020). Crip Camp [film] Rusted Spoke Productions

Rehabilitation Act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. 702 et seq. Section 504 (1974)

Acknowledgements

Mass General Brigham Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative Award

Lisa Bibeau (internship supervisor)

I would like to thank Professor Lisa Bibeau for allowing me to intern at disability services I would also like to acknowledge all the other staff members I worked alongside at disability services. They were welcoming, kind, helpful, and supportive in making my internship a great experience. I feel like I'm a part of the disabilities service staff now.