

Creating an Inclusive Campus: Supporting health and human service students with disabilities

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Introduction

Labor market participation is **strongly associated with education**. This connection is even **stronger** for **people with disabilities**.

Although universities have developed support programs for **students with disabilities**, **low enrolment** and **high first-year dropout** persists. There is limited research on the **needs and experiences of students with disabilities** in health and human service educational programs.

Health and human service programs can facilitate students' transition into employment. There are, however, **unique challenges** related to **educational requirements and professional standards**, **client safety and comfort**, and the **complex contexts** associated with academic and clinical settings.

Lack of understanding and appropriate support may contribute to limited access and low representation of people with disabilities in this employment sector.

Objectives

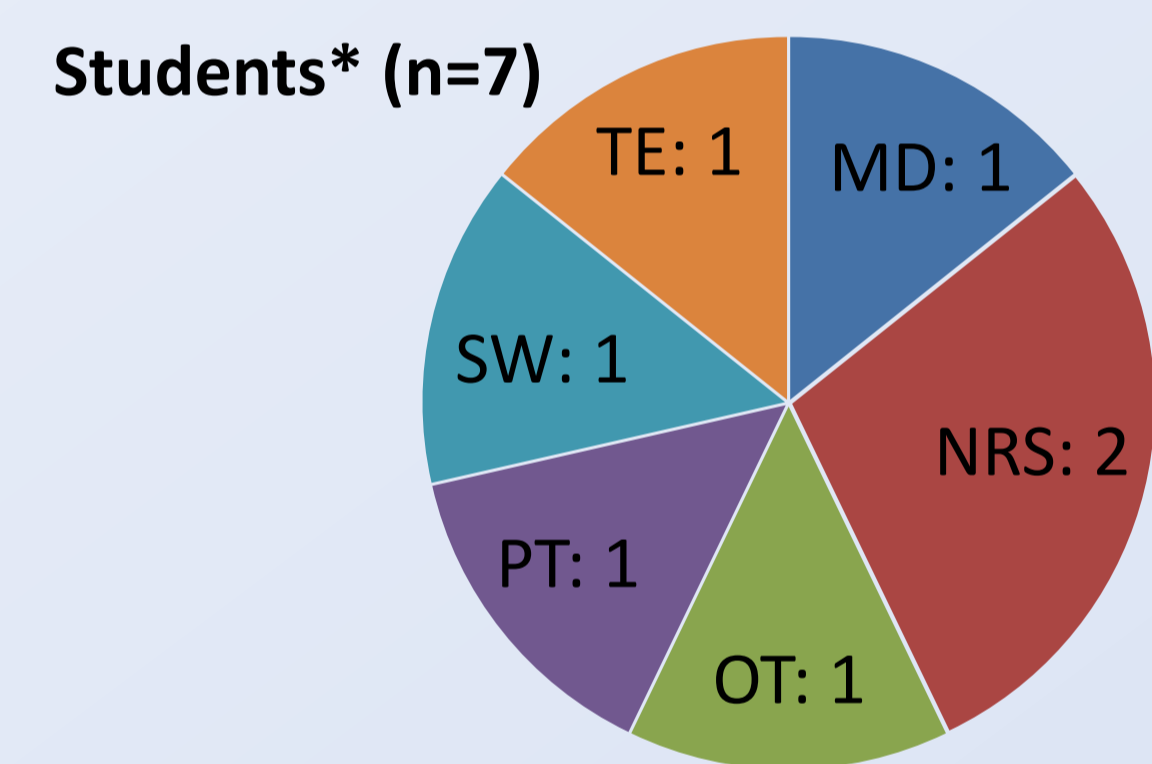
Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of an individualized support strategy called my Accessibility Plan (**myAP**).

Methods

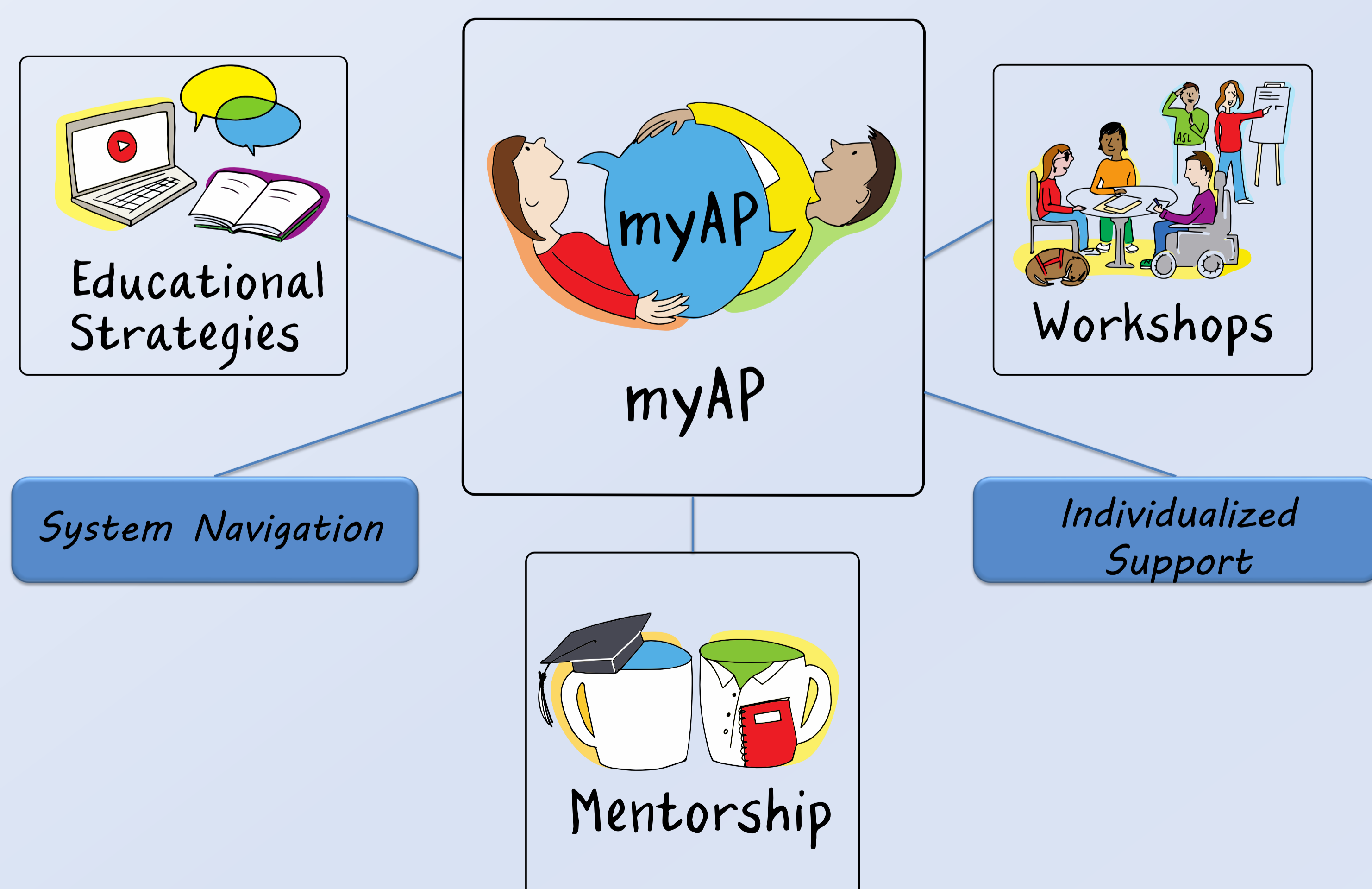
Participants: Students with disabilities from **medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, and teacher education**, at UBC-Vancouver and UBC-Okanagan; myAP N=7, workshop N=4.

Tools: myAP: Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (**COPM**) and Measure of Process of Care (**MPOC**); Disclosure Workshop: qualitative analysis of workshop transcripts.

Procedure: **6 month** implementation of the myAP with Pre-Post questionnaires

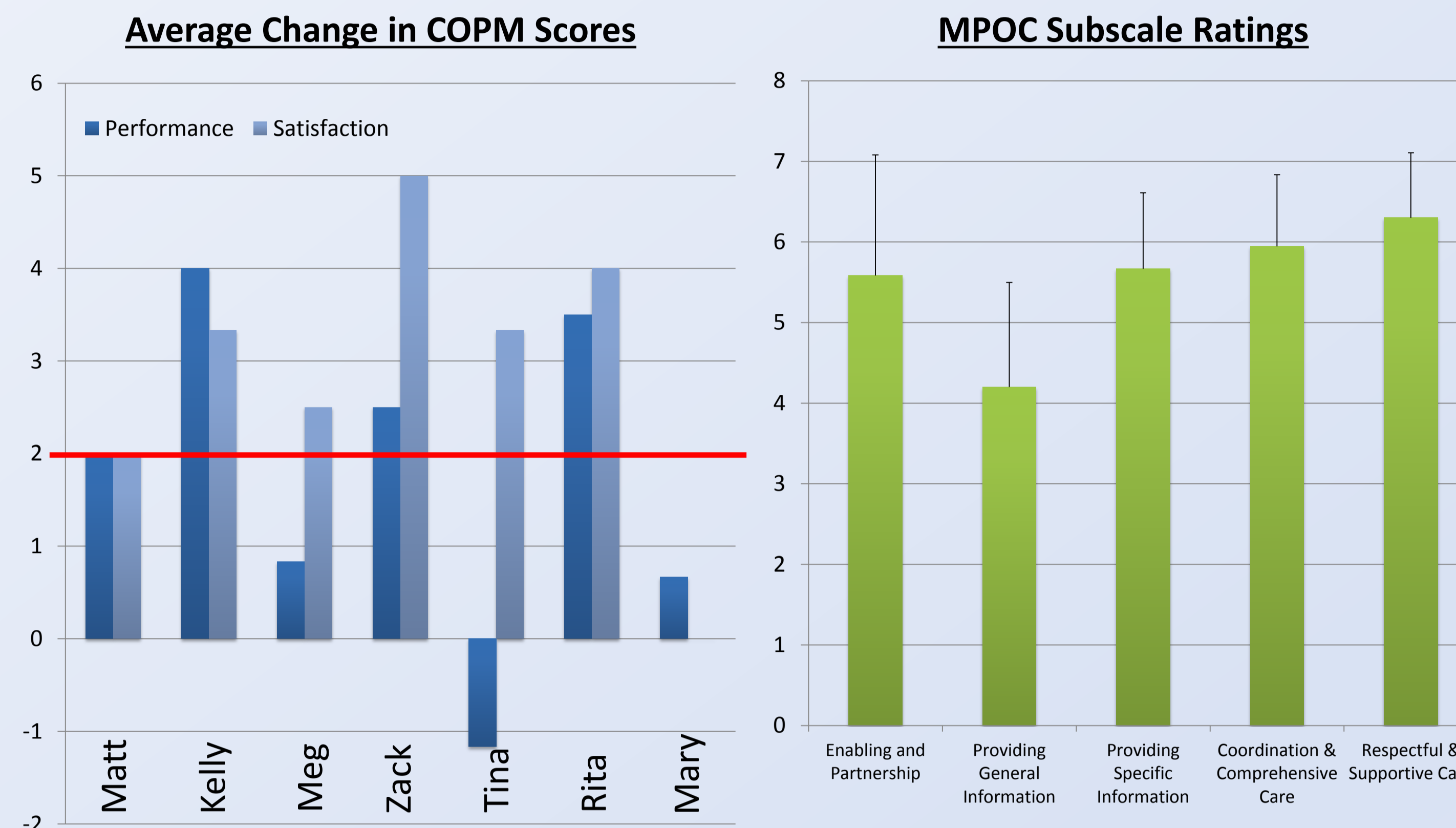


* MD: Medicine; NRS: Nursing; OT: Occupational Therapy; PT: Physical Therapy; SW: Social Work; TE: Teacher education.



Results

EVALUATION OF myAP:



Summary

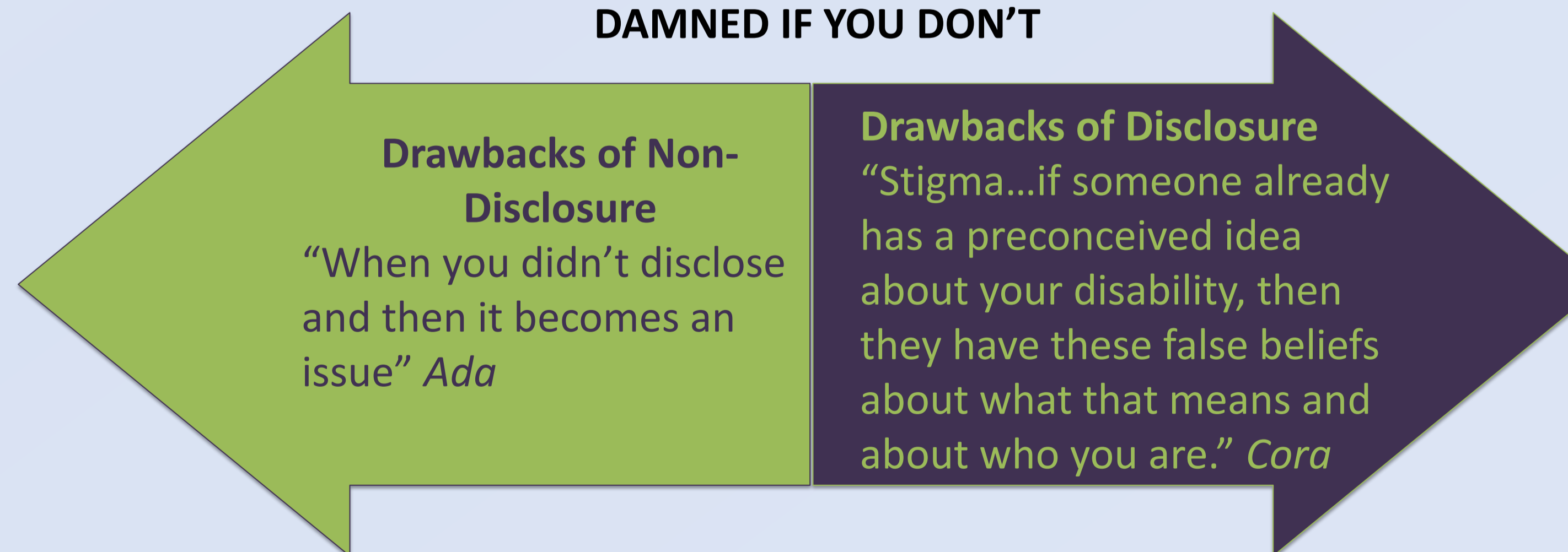
The average change score for the **COPM satisfaction scale** was **3.4**, which is above the clinically significant value of 2.

The average change score for the **COPM performance scale** was **1.9**, which is almost at the clinically significant value of 2.

MPOC scores indicate that **participants positively evaluated the service they received**, thus suggesting that the implementation of myAP was client-centered and supportive.

WORKSHOP THEMES:

Theme 1: DAMNED IF YOU DO, DAMNED IF YOU DON'T



Theme 2: THERE IS MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Barriers/Facilitators to Inclusive Experience: "[the response] was everything you would not expect to hear from someone who you just thought was supportive of the fact that we're different individuals, and **we all have different needs.**" *Cora*

Accommodations: "There's not a one-size-fits-all accommodation for things." *Bella*

"When you come to an institution like this... you would think that these people should be better than that. They are judging you... it totally **broke my heart**. I shouldn't have to deal with it **here of all places**" *Cora*

Gratefully acknowledging support from UBC's Teaching & Learning Enhancement Fund

Theme 3: COMING OUT OF THE DISABILITY CLOSET

Disclosure and Identity: "I didn't think this was a big deal until I started talking about it and realized that I **internalized** [my professor's negative views of me]" *Bella*

The Nature of Disclosure: "The process is **discouraging...**" *Ada*

External Factors: "especially if there's a **power differential**, I feel like I need to answer their questions...and then I get beyond what I would like to share" *Bella*

Summary

Individualized supports and **accommodations** are effective.

Students engage in a process of **identity management** related to their disability and disclosure.

Positive **faculty attitudes** facilitate inclusion while **power differentials** make inclusion more difficult.

Conclusions

To increase the participation of students with disabilities we must **address systemic institutional barriers**, **provide individualized support**, and **educate stakeholders regarding how to support inclusion in professional programs**.

The pilot test of **myAP** demonstrates that offering students support can **increase both their performance and satisfaction** related to educational goals.

The next phase of the project will focus on **further developing and evaluating myAP** as well as providing **support and education for faculty and students**.

Implications

Future Directions:

Educate faculty regarding disclosure, disability, and accommodation.

Develop a **safe community space** to share experiences and support other students with disabilities.

Continue developing and evaluating the **myAP**.

What can you do?

Start the **conversation** within your community.

Examine your practices and assumptions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Participate in education initiatives for faculty and staff.

Contact the Inclusive Campus team for more information and support.

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Diversifying health and human service professions

