

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

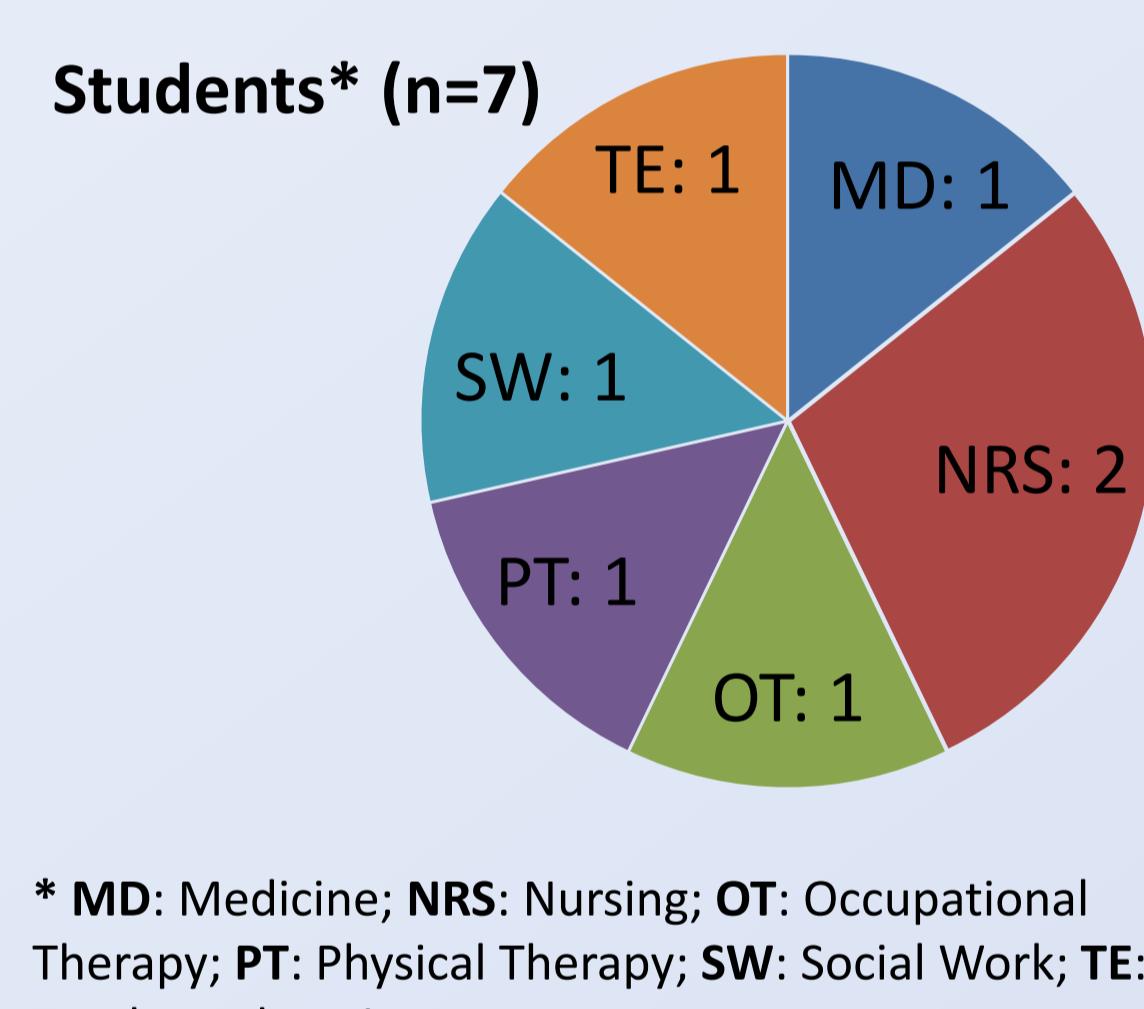
Evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of an individualized support strategy called my Accessibility Plan (**myAP**).

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.

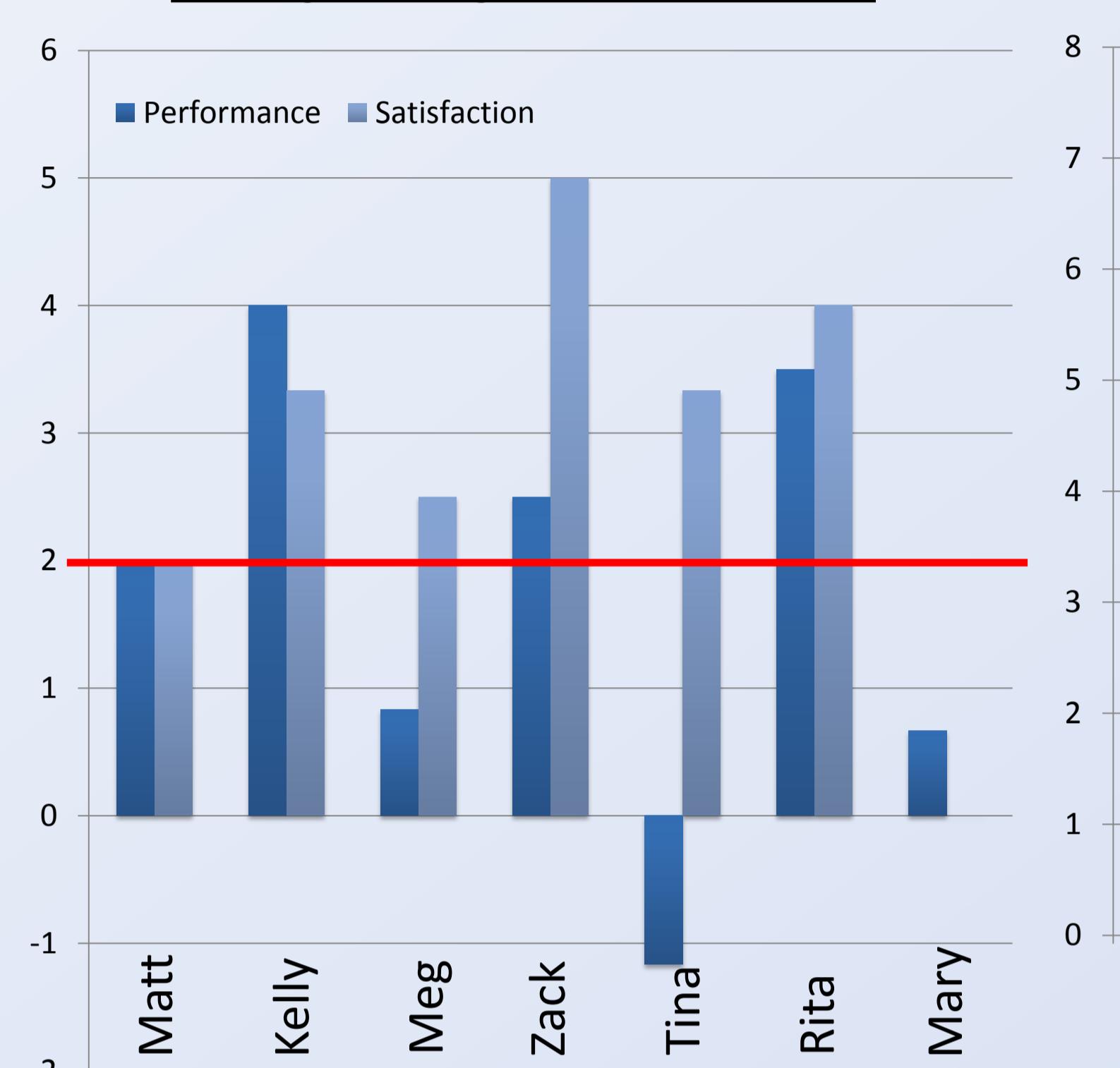
Procedure: 6 month implementation of the myAP with Pre-Post questionnaires



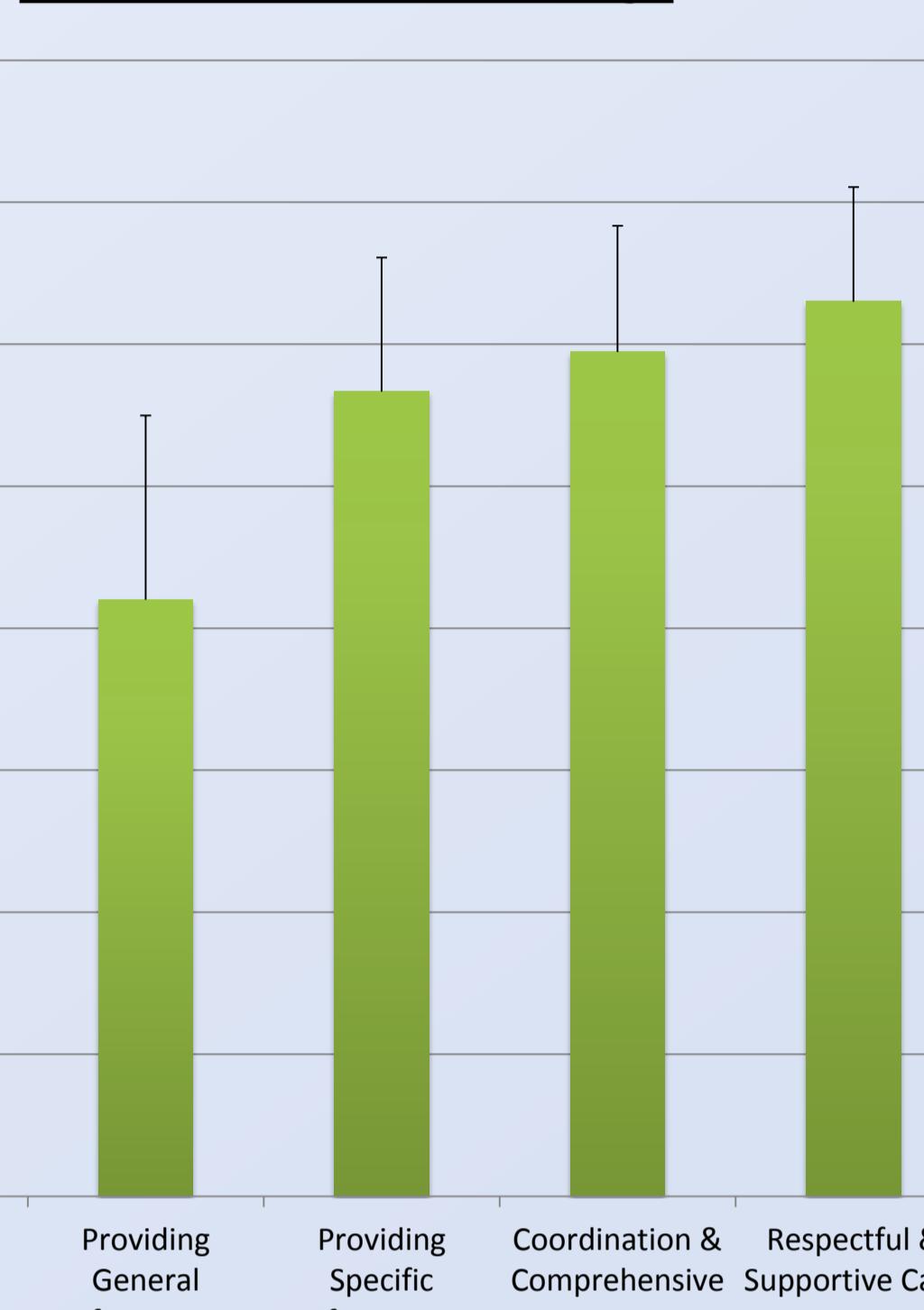
Results

EVALUATION OF myAP:

Average Change in COPM Scores



MPOC Subscale Ratings



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?

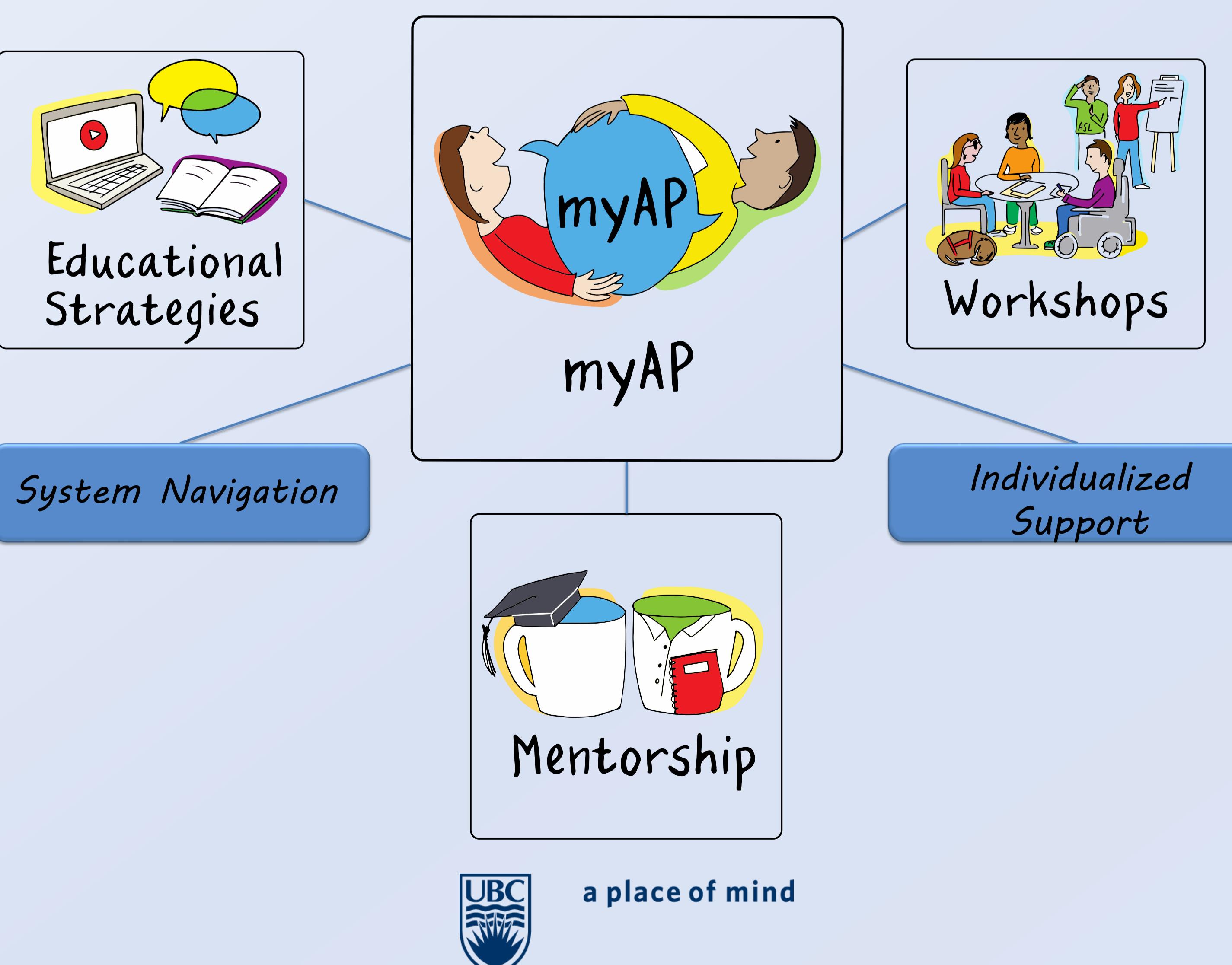
Start the conversation within your community.

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.

inclusive.campus@ubc.ca



"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