

Improving the lives of post-secondary students with disabilities: Breaking down barriers one step at a time



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BACKGROUND

Students with disabilities face unique challenges in post-secondary institutions. My research explores ways that universities such as Simon Fraser University can implement changes on both an institutional level and individual level to better support this population of learners.

METHODS

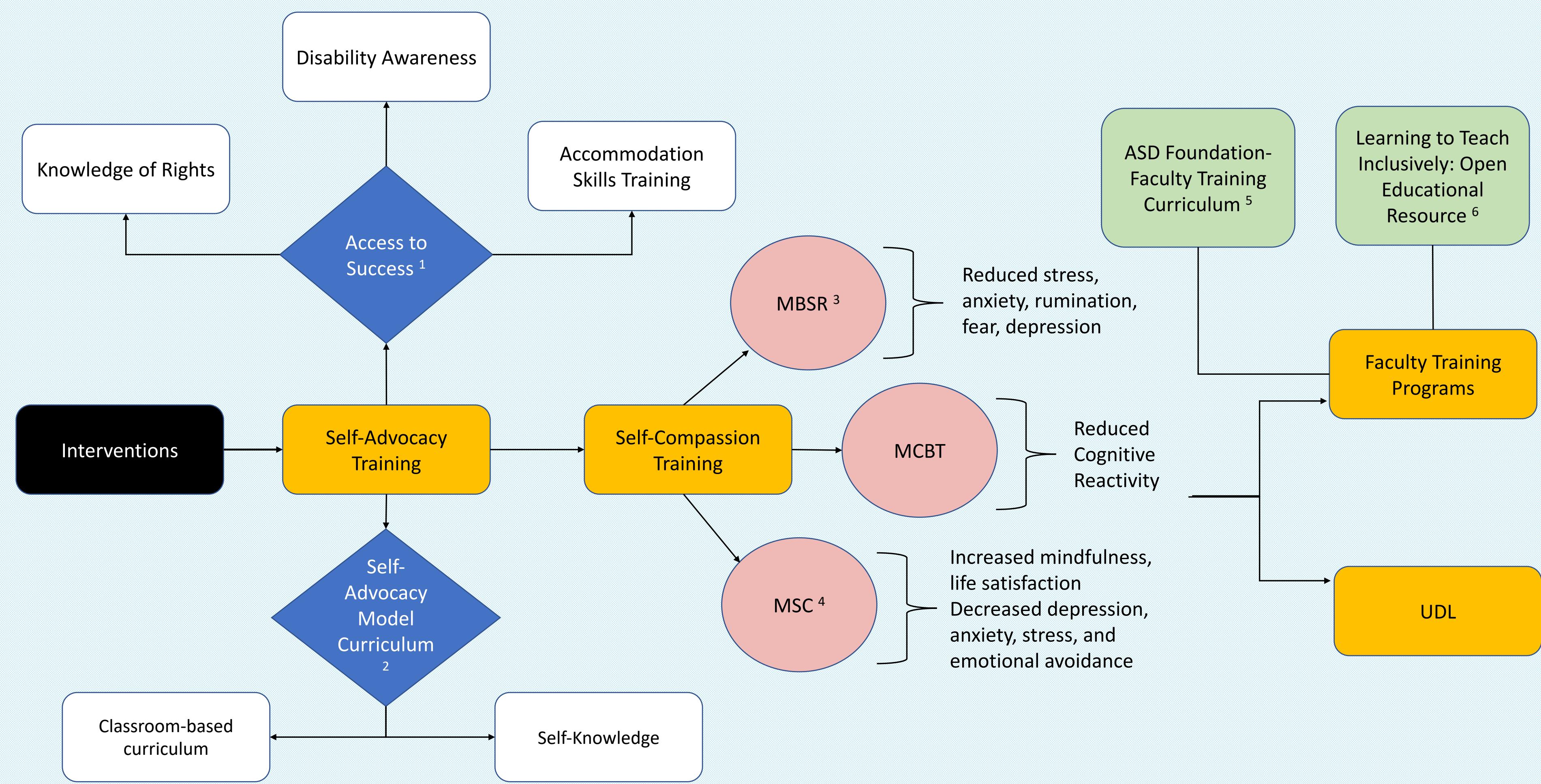
1. Conducted a literature review exploring barriers that students with disabilities face and possible interventions that can help improve health and educational outcomes for this population.
2. Focused on self-advocacy, self-compassion, mandatory Universal Designs for Learning (UDL), and faculty sensitivity training.
3. **Key words:** UDL, inclusivity, self-advocacy, accessibility, self-compassion, awareness, stigma, stress-based reduction, mindfulness self-compassion (MCB), university students

FINDINGS

Barriers	Recommendations
Attitudinal	Sensitivity training, disability awareness
Learning	UDL paradigms, accessible formats
Policy	Inclusivity in decision-making
Exclusion	Self-compassion/self-advocacy training
Psychological/Emotional	Self-compassion training
Accommodations	Self-advocacy training, self-knowledge



Self-compassion, self-advocacy, faculty training programs, and UDL can improve quality of lives of students with disabilities.



DISCUSSION

- Long-term institutional policy changes are necessary for dismantling barriers alongside short-term individual changes to help students cope
- Recognizing barriers and problems should not fall on the students
- Lived experiences and inclusivity must guide policy changes
- Accessible formats are necessary
- Gap in mental health and advocacy supports must be addressed
- Pandemic-related concerns cannot be ignored of

CONSIDERATIONS

- Barriers to self-advocacy
- UDL/Attitudinal barriers/Time/Cost
- Broad scope of research: need further refinement and focus on sub-population(s) of disabled students, qualitative research, lived experiences



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