

### **Inclusive Classrooms and Peer Perception of Students with Disabilities**

The disabled population in the US is currently the largest minority group and continuing to grow due to medical advances improving the quality and length of life for people with medical conditions. However, only 3% of counseling psychology research seeks to understand the experiences of disabled individuals, making it studied not nearly as often as other marginalized identities such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation (Campbell, 2008). Because of this lack of inclusion, the disabled community is left with poor access to mental health practitioners and inadequate resources to evaluate their needs. To continue to create a larger space for the disabled population in counseling psychology, attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate the discriminative behavior against them must be identified and deconstructed.

For this study, both undergraduate and graduate students at Tennessee State University will be invited to complete 3 self-report surveys asking about their personal experiences facing discrimination as well as viewed instances of prejudice in the classroom to determine how these factors tie into a students' attitudes toward their disabled peers. The following analysis will seek to evaluate the collegiate level of discrimination, or ableist behaviors, toward disabled students by their academic community with the primary goal of assessing if college students regard the discrimination of disabled peers in the same way they do peers from other marginalized communities.