

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Scholarly & Creative Works Conference

#10

Presenter: Sarah Gilchrist

Session & Time: Poster_I / 11:00 to 12:00pm

Room: Guzman Lecture Hall

Discipline: Psychology

Faculty Mentor: Benjamin Rosenberg

Digital Portfolio URL: https://sites.google.com/view/sarah-gilchrist/home

Title: Relationship Between Neurodiversity and Mental Health in University Students

Abstract:

In recent years, there has been an increasing understanding and awareness of neurodiversity. Universities have begun to recognize the value of neurodivergent students and their experiences. However, as the number of neurodivergent students attending college increases, there is a growing need to understand the mental health challenges in these individuals. Mental health is an important factor that can impact the success of college students. In Neurodivergent individuals, mental health factors can occur at significantly high rates. This research aims to understand the mental health differences between neurodivergent college students and neurotypical college students. In this study, I hypothesize that (1) neurodivergent students will have worse mental health than their neurotypical peers, (2) neurodivergent students will be more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition and (3) autistic students will have worse mental health than both their neurodivergent and neurotypical peers. Data is expected to be collected from 100 to 150 college students in the United States. Students will take part in a Qualtrics

questionnaire that will evaluate their levels of depression, stress, and anxiety over a given week using the DASS-21 scale. The responses from participants, who are diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental condition such as autism or ADHD will be compared to students without a diagnosed neurodevelopmental condition. Additionally, the responses from autistic individuals will be compared with the results from both the neurodivergent and neurotypical students.The Results are expected to show that neurodivergent students will have higher levels of depression, stress, and anxiety and be more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition. Autistic students are also expected to show higher levels of depression, stress, and anxiety than their neurodivergent and neurotypical peers. The results from this research will allow universities to better understand how the mental health challenges faced by neurodivergent students differ from their neurotypical peers. This will encourage universities to find better ways to support neurodivergent students and their mental health needs throughout their education. Having greater mental health awareness and support universities can significantly improve neurodivergent students' experiences in college and support their academic success.