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Disabled IDF Veterans in Israeli Higher Education:

Disability Identity and Use of Support

A Dissertation by

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Chapman University

Orange, CA

Attallah College of Educational Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

May 2022

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Carlos Lopez, Ph.D.

April 2022

Disabled IDF Veterans in Israeli Higher Education:
Disability Identity and Use of Support

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Good people in the middle of the road

אנשים טובים באמצע הדרך

Very good people

אנשים טובים מאוד

Good people know the way

אנשים טובים יודעים את הדרך

And you can walk with them.

ואיתם אפשר לצעוד.

Anashim Tovim - Good people / lyrics and melody: Naomi Shemer

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ABSTRACT

Disabled IDF Veterans in Israeli Higher Education:

Disability Identity and Use of Support

by Einat Ben-Dov

Even though military service in Israel is mandatory and common among the state population, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) veterans with disabilities are rarely represented in the literature regarding their experience in Israeli higher education (HE). This study aimed to fill this gap by investigating the experiences of disabled IDF (DIDF) veteran students, their experiences as students, identities, challenges, and utilization of support resources on their campuses. The relevant fields of Disability Studies, Veteran Studies, and the use of disability support services on campus are discussed in this study, focusing on the implementation of accessibility regulations and practices in the Israeli HE system concerning the target population of DIDF veterans. This dissertation study aimed to understand the perceptions, needs for disability services, and experiences of DIDF-veteran students within the general student population in Israeli HE. This study applied a qualitative method with a small quantitative component. Participants were recruited to respond to an online survey and then were offered to participate in in-depth interviews. The qualitative sample included 13 participants who had a range of disabilities and attended different HE institutions including colleges and universities. They had varied military service backgrounds and educational experiences during undergraduate and graduate studies. All participants were officially recognized as DIDF veterans by the MoD, having a single or multiple disabilities. This population mainly receives rehabilitation and support services from the Israeli Ministry of Defense (MoD), but not necessarily in HE. The

interview transcripts were analyzed using an inductive approach. The findings revealed that many of the participants had learning disabilities (LDs) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other impairments or medical conditions on top of their military disability that impacted their ability to function as students. The study findings were displayed first by the four (sub) research questions and then were organized into three major themes: Disability as a Complex Category, Negotiating Disability, Choice of Support. In conclusion, my study calls for a greater awareness of this unique population and its needs in HE, which has the potential to serve as a rehabilitation site for many of them.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
ADHD	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CDS	Critical Disability Studies
CDT	Critical Disability Theory
CHE	The Council for Higher Education (<i>MLAG</i>)
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DS	Disability Studies
DSC	Disability Support Center (Israel)
DSS	Disability Support Services (USA)
DIDF	Disabled IDF
EFA	Education For All
GI Bill	The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (USA)
HE	Higher Education
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LDs	Learning Disabilities
MGIB	The Montgomery GI Bill (USA)
MoD	The Ministry of Defense

NII	National Insurance Institute (Israel)
OECD	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBC	The Planning and Budgeting Committee (VATAT)
Post-9/11 GI Bill	The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (USA)
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SEL	Special Education Law
SWD	Students with Disabilities
SVWD	Students Veteran with Disabilities
TBIs	Traumatic Brain Injuries
UNESCO Q	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
VCT	Veteran Critical Theory
WWII	World War II
ZDVO	Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

As a woman with hearing loss, who is a former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) veteran, and an international Ph.D. student in disability studies in the United States, I was impressed by the care given to American veterans in their transition into higher education (HE). My academic practice, professional career, and self-identity are all woven together by my interest in disability studies and this topic. In terms of my dissertation topic, I felt like I was in a unique position to investigate the experiences of Israeli veterans with disabilities or disabled IDF veterans (DIDF veterans) as they are called in Hebrew, in HE in Israel. I reviewed the literature because I felt this topic is essential, I observed lack of representation and attention in Israeli HE institutions about students who are recognized as DIDF veterans. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the life experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE system. Through my research, I sought to gain insight into the experiences of DIDF-veteran students and to draw attention to their voices within the broader student population in the Israeli HE system. I believe that documenting the narratives of this research sample will do more than witnessing their experiences because it will allow others to track their progress from their military injuries through their time as HE students.

This study examined, gathered data on, and described the experiences of Israeli veterans with disabilities who were pursuing HE to raise awareness of their needs and to recommend ways to improve the support resources available to them. The study uncovered key themes and common elements that can help those engaging with prospective Israeli veteran students with impairments, as well as those servicing them at HE institutions.

This Chapter presents an overview of the background, the research problem, theoretical framework, purpose, research questions, and design of the study. The Chapter ends with the

significance of this study, definitions of key terminology used, and an overview of the organization of this dissertation.

Background and Context

The Israeli HE system has undergone a revolutionary change, with major growth since the state's establishment in 1948, and it has gone through further growth since the beginning of the 1990s with the establishment of the academic colleges (*miclalot*). This expansion is aligned with the global trend of expansion in postsecondary education (Ayalon & Yogev, 2005; Ayalon et al., 2008; Cohen & Davidovitch, 2015). With the increase in HE institutions, the number of students with disabilities studying in different HE settings has steadily risen (Almog, 2018a; Almog, 2018b; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). At the same time, there has been an increase in the availability of disability support services on Israeli campuses as well (Almog, 2018b; Sachs, Shreuer, Spiegelman, et al., 2020). The trend of integrating students with disabilities has expanded with the enactment of the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law, 1998 and the Special Education Law, 1988, and its amendment in 2002 ("Integration Law") which earlier encouraged the integration of students with disabilities into the regular education system and in HE institutions (Barlev et al., 2017). In addition, Israel ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2012, and accessibility regulations were implemented, with their practice expanding since. Specifically, the regulations regarding accessibility in HE institutions were enacted in September 2016 and were scheduled to take full effect by the end of 2018. However, the process of regulation and application is still ongoing, and was postponed by the Ministry of Education to November 2021 (Almog, 2018a; Melin, 2019). Despite of this, even with the increase in the number of students with disabilities in the Israeli HE system, the policy of the system regarding students with disabilities has hardly been studied, nor has it received

research or public attention (Almog, 2018b). Almog claimed that the lack of reference and attention to the different groups of students with disabilities refers to the disability policy in Israel, and the distribution of resources between various organizations. This topic of concern is an essential part of the conversation about disability identity, service utilization in general, and the presence of DIDF veterans in Israeli HE institutions in particular.

Military service is a significant milestone in the lives of many young adults in Israel. Nearly half of Israeli adults begin undergraduate academic education between the ages of 20 and 24 every year (Klein-Avishai et al., 2016). This includes Israelis who served in the IDF, as well as those who served in national service or did no service at all, religious or secular, Jews and those who are members of non-Jewish minorities (Rosman, 2020). It is important to note that men enter HE later than women since they are required to serve a minimum of three years in contrast to most women's roles, which need two years of service (Baum et al., 2013; Shavit et al., 2007; *The Israel Defense Forces*, 2022).

The IDF is a civilian-military force in which (almost) everyone serves. It relies on a broad social base, and is a state organization with no political affiliation (Ben-Eliezer, 2001). The Security Service Law (1949) rules that all Israeli citizens (with some exceptions), both male and female, must serve a compulsory term in the military and be available for reserve duty (Ben-Eliezer, 2001; Cohen, 2009; Livio, 2012). The new version of this law was applied in 1986, and it expanded and updated the Security Service Act, of 1949 and 1959 (Cohen, 2009; Cohen & Cohen, 2012). This compulsory service model is a cornerstone of the "People's Army" (Israeli people's army) ethos on which the IDF has relied since it was formed in 1948, after the establishment of the State of Israel. The presence of the IDF as the "People's Army" is very important and noticeable in Israeli society compared to the presence of armed forces in other

Western democracies (Malchi, 2021). The ethos of the "People's Army" gave it a foothold in the reality in which the State of Israel was founded and developed, alongside the background of the real security threat, significant civilian challenges and nationhood promotion (Ben-Eliezer, 2001; Drory, 2005; 2009; Malchi, 2021).

Since its establishment, the State of Israel has been deeply committed, and ethically and legally obligated to care for veterans with disabilities, who were injured during the course of their service in the IDF (Araten-Bergman et al., 2015). This obligation and willingness to integrate veterans with disabilities into Israeli society is expressed by disability policy and a legislation process that began with the "Disability Law (Remuneration and Rehabilitation)," which was first enacted in 1949 and later amended in 1959, to define the rights of IDF veterans with disabilities for medical treatment, financial aid, and rehabilitation. This law shapes disabled veterans' re-integration into society, while focusing on preparing them for employment (Araten-Bergman et al., 2015; Segev & Schiff, 2019).

The increase in the number of students with disabilities and the practice of services resulted from policy changes that broadened access to HE and from legislative processes promoting and ensuring the rights of people with disabilities in many Western countries (Tinklin et al., 2004, 2005; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). A lack of sufficient support is one of the most significant barriers to students with disabilities successfully integrating into academic studies and graduating. HE institutions use disability support services to provide equal access to the HE experience and to assist students with disabilities during their academic journey (Hadley, 2011; Meltzer & Dahan, 2016; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Sachs et al., 2020).

In Israel, with the increase in the number of students with learning disabilities (LDs) in HE settings, disability support centers (DSCs) were established, following disabilities support

services (DSS) offices in other countries such as the USA, UK, and Australia (Meltzer & Dahan, 2016). Furthermore, in 2010, The Israeli National Insurance Institute (NII) decided to launch the "Revolution in Higher Education" project through its funding division. This project aimed to increase the number of students with disabilities who acquire academic education and later integrate into Israeli workplaces. As part of the "Revolution in Higher Education" project, the National Insurance Institute assisted in the physical establishment, operation, and development of disability support centers within academic institutions to provide support services to students with disabilities in collaboration with the NII rehabilitation departments. A total of 36 support centers (out of a total of 55 centers) were established and operated in 31 different institutions under this project (Sachs et al., 2020). During the years of this project and under its influence, the regulations for accessibility in HE (2016) were enacted, which currently require every academic institution to operate a support center for students with disabilities (Sachs et al., 2020). The success of the DSCs has led to an increase in the number of students with LDs in HE institutions in Israel (Meltzer & Dahan, 2016; Sachs et al., 2020). Despite the growth in participation of students with disabilities in HE, there is still limited data regarding their presence, and especially regarding veterans with disabilities in academic and national statistics.

Statement of the Problem

There are powerful and pragmatic reasons for conducting this study with the increasing need for inclusion of students with disabilities in the Israeli HE system. While there is evidence of large numbers of students with disabilities in HE in Israel, there are no national statistical data available about all students with disabilities by group affiliation (Almog, 2018b; Dangur, 2013; Fichten et al., 2016). Almog (2018b) argued that there is an exclusion of this population from the available data published on the general student population in the Israeli HE system. Almog

claimed that there is a lack of information regarding the number of students with disabilities in HE:

Analysis of the documents shows that there are no reliable data regarding the proportion of students with disabilities in the HE system. This is since there is no organized registration of these students and no systematic policy of monitoring this group and documenting data such as demographic variables, type of disability, fields of study, dropout rates, percentage of graduates, percentage of academic staff, and more. (Almog 2018b, p. 42)

Most of the Israeli academic studies dealing with students with disabilities in HE refer to students with LD and their experiences (Almog, 2018a; Al-Yagon & Margalit, 2016; Gumpel & Sharoni, 2007; Heiman & Precel, 2003; Heiman & Olenik Shemesh, 2012; Lipka et al., 2020). In addition, there is limited research on sensory disabilities such as vision and hearing (Almog, 2011; 2018; Almog, & Godder, 2006; Faraj, 2005) or psychiatric disabilities (Sachs et al., 2013) in regard to students with disabilities in Israeli HE. Regarding research documentation about students with disabilities in Israel, Almog (2018b) claimed that students with disabilities remain unrecorded in government records and national statistics that have been published in recent years. This fact contrasts with the rich data and work programs that deal with the promotion of other marginalized groups of the Council for Higher Education in Israel, such as women, ultra-Orthodox Jews, Arabs, new immigrants, and residents of the periphery area in Israel (Almog, 2018b).

The only national statistics that were published in recent years regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in Israeli HE referred to students with LD. According to Weininger (2016), in the academic year 2014–2015, 18,300 students were diagnosed as students with LD in

the HE institutions that are funded by the Israeli government. This constitutes 10% of all students who study for undergraduate and Master's degrees in these HE institutions (Ben-Simon et al., 2019). To estimate the number of students with disabilities in HE, Almog (2018b) collected data from three government bodies that provide funds for students with disabilities: The NII, the MoD, and the Ministry of Health. According to Almog's study, in the 2017 academic year, there were 542 veteran-students with disabilities who received funding from the MoD, which was also the same year that my study was underway.

Since its establishment, Israeli veterans with disabilities have continued to enroll in programs at colleges and universities in Israel, however there is a gap in the literature that addresses how veterans' disabilities affect their academic experiences, specifically their disability needs and strategies of support. Beyond Almog's claim and the dearth of statistical evidence, there is an overall lack of research regarding how veterans with disabilities manage their disability identity or what disability support services they use during their academic journey. During this study, additional demographic information about veteran-students with disabilities in the Israeli HE system. The relevant data were collected after sending a petition to the MoD under the Freedom of Information Law in Israel. This specific data will be presented later in this research paper when describing the study population. This research aimed to explore and describe the experiences of Israeli veteran students with disabilities entering HE, to increase awareness of their needs and to improve support resources available for them. As a result, this study aims to increase awareness in higher education about the perception, self-identification, challenges, and experiences of Israeli veteran students with disabilities.

Theoretical Framework

This study is an exploratory, qualitative study rooted in the disability studies disciplinary field. Disability is a multidimensional phenomenon that is both subjective and objective, changing throughout human life. Three decades ago, Irving Zola (1989) indicated that “disability is not a minority issue, rather it is the universal experience of humanity” (as cited in Shakespeare, 2006, p. 203). While this idea was new at that time, today this approach is more accepted. According to Siebers (2001) disability is an unavoidable condition of biological existence since people go during their life cycle, from being disabled at birth to temporarily abled during parts of their lives, and then back to being disabled as they get older. While “the human ego does not easily accept the disabled body” (p.742). The term 'temporarily able bodied' has become widely used in disability discourse to communicate this concept (Shildrick, 2012). Similarly, Bickenbach (2012) defined disability “as a universal human condition that most people experience throughout their life course” (as cited in Lid & Solvang, 2016, p. 183).

In recent years, Disability Studies scholars view disability according to a social model of disability (Gabel & Miskovic, 2014). Furthermore, the Disability Studies perspective is centered on the assumption that disability is a social construction, and it focuses on how disability is defined and represented in society (Taylor, 2006). Disability studies uses an interdisciplinary inquiry of disability in a society that includes analyses of disability from different viewpoints such as social, political, and cultural to provide a broader understanding of society and human variance experience (Linton, 1998). Disability studies applies social, cultural, historical, and philosophical perspectives to the study of disability in society. These studies lead the investigation of the phenomenon of inclusive HE in general and, specifically, the use of disability support DSCs by Israeli student-veterans with disabilities and their experiences.

Following disability studies in educational theory and the social model of disability, this research has developed from the viewpoint that society has the responsibility to embed and support using the best means, services, and technologies to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in daily life, promoting citizenship, and equality (Oliver, 1996).

Disability studies provides foundational knowledge for promoting positive social change in HE institutions. Viewing the HE environment and its challenges, there is “an intimate relationship between establishing disability studies as an important form of critical knowledge production within the university, and creating accessible learning environments where teachers and students, learning communities, can thrive” (Titchkosky, 2008, p. 38). From this perspective, this study focuses on the experiences of DIDF veterans in different Israeli HE institutions (universities/colleges). *Linguistic Note*. Scholars in Disability Studies use different language terms to refer to the people at the center of this research. Therefore, before embarking on such a complex subject as disability, and specifically with disabilities, there is a need to consider the use of language. Disability Studies scholars more often use the terms “disabled person,” “person with a disability,” and “people-first language” to convey the idea that having a disability is secondary to the people’s identity as human beings (Blaska, 1993; Ware, 2001). As a researcher on Disability Studies, I appreciate the common reasoning to use people-first language to highlight the fact that people/individuals are not defined by their disability or their status as disabled people as: “Disability is not a characteristic that exists in the person so defined, but a construct that finds its meaning in social and cultural context” (Language Guide, Disability Cultural Center, Syracuse University, n.d., para. 2).

Barne (2016) explained and argued the choice to use the term *disabled people* rather than *people with disabilities*:

Because the term ‘disabled people’ mirrors our use of other terms which pick out other minority social groups ... Saying that someone is a disabled person doesn’t mean that disability defines who they are any more than saying that someone is a gay person means that sexuality defines who they are. (Barnes, 2016, p. 6)

Following this perspective, I agree with Barnes that the term “disabled person” no more defines an individual than the term “gay person” or any other minority. Accordingly, along with this study, I use the phrases “Israeli student-veterans with disabilities,” “disabled veterans,” or “DIDF veterans” to draw attention to the centrality of disability due to army service in an individual’s identity.

In recent years, Disability Studies has become a flourishing new field of inquiry in many Western countries, and in Israel as well. Garland-Thomson (2002; 2005) located Disability Studies as a new field within the critical genre of Identity Studies. This view of Disability Studies as an academic field focuses on how disability is defined and represented in society. Moreover, disability involves bringing identities into consideration, while one of the strengths of the social model used in these studies is that it can be used in conjunction with other theories such as feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, and veterans’ theories to examine the intersectionality among disabled people and, specifically, disabled student-veterans (Cory et al., 2010; Goodley, 2017; Garland-Thomson, 2002; Phillips & Lincoln, 2017; Phillips, 2014). As Thomson (2000) stated: “Disability studies theory interrogates the positions that people with disabilities occupy, and have historically been forced to occupy, in political, social, legal, and economic relationships” (as cited in Cory et al., 2010. p. 30).

This research explores the life experiences of Israeli disabled veterans in Israeli higher education by employing a variety of models and theories, including those from the field of

veteran studies, with an emphasis on American student-veterans and their transition to higher education (Diamond, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Phillips, 2014; Phillips & Lincoln, 2017; Schlossberg, 1981; Tinto, 1975, 1993; Vacchi, 2011; 2013). Craig (2015) discussed the significance of Veteran Studies as a new field, as it is central for theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that can advance a clearer understanding of student-veteran experiences. Regarding this study, I also chose to include Veteran Studies literature, with a focus on Vacchi's Model of Student Veteran Support (2011, 2013) to better understand the real-life experiences of DIDF veterans in HE settings. There are four cornerstones in Vacchi's model: (1) services, (2) transition support, (3) support, and (4) academic interactions (Vacchin & Berger, 2014). Vacchi developed this model to understand the student-veteran's transitional experience and support needs throughout the entire college experience from a holistic approach (Vacchin & Berger, 2014; Vacchi et al., 2017). Disability Studies, Vacchi's model, and the data collection used in this study will provide a better vision of the needs of DIDF-veteran students, and the role of the support services in contributing to enhancing better inclusion in HE in Israel. This study is grounded in the literature regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in HE, veterans, and specific veterans with disabilities.

Significance of the Study

Service in the IDF is compulsory for permanent residents of Israel (secular and religious Jews and non-Jews) according to the Defense Service Law (1949, 1986, 2014) and is perceived as a privilege following Israeli norms (Cohen, 1995; 2009; Segev, 2016). One of the important issues in Israeli society is the interaction between the army and Israeli society, the implications of this situation on soldiers during and after military service, and the implications on Israeli society as a whole and how it has been shaped through the years (Segev, 2016).

From its early days, the State of Israel has recognized its moral responsibility to ensure the welfare of wounded veterans and their families. David Ben-Gurion, who was the first Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the State of Israel, insisted that the treatment of victims and their families be given to the MoD's Rehabilitation Department since its establishment in 1948 (Nadav, 2008). Ben-Gurion expressed the collective commitment to DIDF veterans when he introduced the 1949 Invalid Law, the first social security plan in Israel, which is still in effect today (Mor, 2006; Shnoor, 2016).

According to the Disabled Veterans Regulations of Compensation and Rehabilitation (1987, 2014, 2020), DIDF veterans who are interested in vocational training, or a bachelor's degree from a HE institution, may apply to the Rehabilitation Division of the MoD for assistance in financing their studies. Following the state's commitment to DIDF veterans and regulations, there is a need to learn more about the experiences of these veterans, and to ensure their access to HE, retention, and academic success.

Most of the research available in Israel about DIDF veterans and their transition to civilian life has focused on disability policy, rehabilitation, social adjustments, and employment (Araten-Bergman et al., 2015; Avrahami & Lerner, 2003; Paran et al., 2017; Segev & Schiff, 2019; Tal-Katz et al., 2011). Other publications refer to aging (Shnoor et al., 2017; Rimmerman, 2020) and gender (Harel-Shalev & Daphna-Tekoah, 2021; Koren et al., 2015). Considerable research has been done about veterans with post-trauma (PTSD) in various aspects of their life by different Israeli scholars (Ginzburg et al., 2009; Ritov & Barnetz, 2014 ; Solomon et al., 2018). The lack of awareness of attention to the population of DIDF veterans in HE was also reflected in a follow-up study that was conducted over four years (2018–2014) to evaluate the success of the "Revolution in Higher Education" project. As shown in this report, which was

published in July 2020, most of the population assisted by the DSC were students with an LD or difficulties with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Sachs et al., 2020). However, there is no reference to DIDF-veteran students as a group and their use of support services. Another recently published relevant study by Seale et al. (2021) studied the use of assistive technologies by students with various disabilities in Israel and other countries (the US, the UK, Germany, Israel, and Canada). In their study, they discussed the use of several support sources that students use within their campuses (faculty support, disability support services, peer support), but there is no reference at all to external support resources (support organizations, MoD, or other available support services in Israel), and there is no reference to students with disabilities due to military injury.

The absence of presence of this population in current Israeli academic research is in contradiction to the importance of military service in Israel and public respect and appreciation for DIDF veterans. Disability policies and distribution of resources between different organizations are related to support activities, funding resources available on campuses, and specific benefits in accordance with all of the different disability groups in Israel (Almog, 2018b). Additionally, DIDF veterans (Nachi Tzahal) are perceived to be at the top hierarchy of the Israeli welfare system, which may influence the distribution of support resources for this community in higher education (Mor, 2006; 2008). Despite these circumstances, and since in the U.S., there is a growing body of literature that designates students from military service backgrounds as a unique student population that can benefit from higher education and additional support services (Arminio et al., 2014; Coll & Weiss, 2015; DiRamio et al., 2008; Hamrick & Rumann, 2013; Kelly et al., 2013; Olsen et al., 2014; Osborne, 2014), I found it important to study this population of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE. Moreover, HE is

generally perceived as “the gateway to the acquisition of a wide variety of marketable skills” (Dutta et al., 2009, p. 10) and can serve as a predictor of meaningful employment, career development opportunities, and quality of life (Sachas & Schreuer, 2011). Recognizing the importance of acquiring academic education, Segev and Schiff (2019) recently studied the integration of DIDF veterans into the workforce in Israel. In their study, these researchers showed that workforce integration of participants with HE was better than among those with a lower level of education. This finding emphasizes and highlights the importance of the inclusion of DIDF veterans in HE after their injury. In addition, this finding highlights the importance of research on the experiences of DIDF veterans in Israeli HE settings.

The significance of this study is to give a voice to DIDF veterans who are currently students or have recently been students in Israeli HE institutions, and it provides Israeli colleges and universities with insights that may enable them to improve their services for this population. Finally, this study offers benefits for future DIDF veterans and administrators and can serve as a tool to increase awareness of the needs of this specific group and the importance of offices that provide support services for students with disabilities on campus. By studying this group, I had the opportunity to gain a better sense of this populations’ perceptions, self-identification, challenges, and support experiences. This study investigated the participants’ needs in all forms of accommodations, assistive technologies, and other support opportunities that were available for them or that they were aware of. By conducting this research, my hope is to contribute to Disability Studies research in Israel, raise awareness, and open a gateway for best practices for this specific group of students in the Israeli HE system. This study is unique in its attempts to investigate the transition of DIDF veterans to HE, their disability identity, challenges, and use of supportive resources.

Research Questions

The primary research question of this study was: What are the experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE? This fundamental question regarding DIDF veterans' experience was addressed through four sub-questions:

1. How do DIDF-veteran students identify themselves on their campuses?
2. What challenges do DIDF-veteran students encounter during their HE studies?
3. How do DIDF veterans negotiate their disability identity?
4. What are the sources of support used by DIDF-veteran students during their time of study?

The importance of examining the integration of DIDF veterans' experiences in Israeli HE arises from this review of the literature and from the significance of acquiring HE at the personal, social, and state level (Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Segev & Schiff, 2019). This study seeks to expand the current literature and gain a better understanding of how DIDF veterans: (a) identify themselves in Israeli HE settings; (b) describe their lived experiences and challenges; and (c) experience support on their campuses.

Research Design

This study sought to explore the experiences of Israeli student-veterans with disabilities in Israeli HE institutions. This research employed a phenomenological qualitative study to describe and analyze the meaning of events and interactions of Israeli student-veterans with disabilities as ordinary people in particular situations on their campuses (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) and to make sense of their experiences directly (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Patton, 2015; Seidman, 2013).

This study presents the stories of 13 Israeli student-veterans with disabilities who at the time of data collection were students at various colleges and universities (more than 10), studying different disciplines for different degrees or who had graduated during the past two years. The study reveals the experiences, challenges, and barriers of veteran students with disabilities in Israel and how they handled their academic life to succeed in their studies. This investigation can contribute to a wider body of knowledge about students with disabilities in Israeli HE in general and, specifically, on the impact of military service injury on the functionality and needs of Israeli veterans with disabilities as they enter HE.

This study explores and communicates what has been experienced by the research participants during the time of their studies in Israeli HE settings. As was recommended by Kitchin (2000), I approached this study from a “disability friendly” point of view to “give voice” to Israeli student-veterans with disabilities, to enable them to share their experiences, to make their experiences more visible, and to help facilitate inclusion of these students as a valued element in Israeli HE institutions. This dissertation blends techniques of three established forms of qualitative methodology: (1) hermeneutic phenomenology, to capture the life experiences of the DIDF-veteran students; (2) thematic analysis; and (3) poetic inquiry, to reveal the themes and patterns that those experiences in Israeli HE present. This qualitative research design aimed to explore, investigate, and understand the disability identity of DIDF veterans in Israeli HE institutions, the support services opportunities they have, and their experiences on their campuses. For this purpose, the study participants were encouraged to share their disability perceptions and their self-identity at the Israeli universities and colleges, as well as their support experiences on campus or outside of their campus.

The 13 DIDF-veteran students selected for this study represent a purposive, non-random sample. All the participants in this study are officially recognized by the Israeli MoD and were either students in Israeli HE settings or they had graduated within the previous two years. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions and experiences of DIDF veterans who were currently pursuing academic degrees in Israeli HE institutions. The research sample was first created through an online survey and later focused on a small group of participants who were interviewed in semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The data collection combined the DIDF-veteran students' characteristics and their shared narratives of their experiences. During the interview sessions, conducted during the academic year of 2018–2019, after I returned to Israel in the summer of 2018, the research participants graciously shared their experiences, revealing their challenges so that others might better understand their self-experiences as DIDF-veteran students.

Phenomenological research in general focuses on the interaction between the human subject and the human world as the object, that is, the lived experiences in everyday life (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Phenomenological methodology identifies the essence of human experiences concerning a specific phenomenon in our world, as described by a study participant, and makes sense of it directly (Creswell, 2003; Crotty, 2003; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Patton, 2015; Seidman, 2013). It is acknowledged that merely describing veterans with disabilities' experiences and challenges in Israeli HE is not enough to fully understand how these experiences shape their decisions about how, to whom, and when to self-disclose their identity for applying for support resources. Therefore, I decided to specifically choose hermeneutic phenomenology to guide this study as it is “interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels”

(Laverty, 2003, p. 28). The hermeneutic phenomenology approach provides a useful and legitimate way to study, understand, and value human consciousness and action. It is a powerful tool for investigating subjective experiences and is particularly useful for examining the experiences of marginalized people such as disabled people. Moreover, the hermeneutic phenomenological approach begins from the experiences of a group rather than beginning from theory (Kavanagh, 2018).

For this research, these DIDF veterans were asked to recount their experiences following their military service and military injury, in their terms, giving their unique perspectives of self-identity, and descriptions of their experiences in the years of their academic studies. All participants signed consent forms (Appendix A), giving their permission for the interviews to be recorded, with the assurance that every effort was made to protect their identity and to keep their participation in this study confidential. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and later I crafted a poetic form of the participants' narratives as a way of organizing the data for display (Gee, 1991; Mears, 2005; 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Richardson, 1994; Woodley, 2004; Wu, 2021). In the last stage, I analyzed the participants' narratives, answered the research questions, and reported findings (superordinated themes) through practices adapted from disability studies in education theory (Gabel, 2005) and Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support (Vacchi, 2012; 2013). The data were analyzed through these major themes: self-identity, disability identity, disability needs, disability disclosure, and support experiences of DIDF veterans who are currently enrolled in Israeli HE institutions.

The participants reviewed the data in their poetic form to ensure accuracy and completeness. The use of phenomenology, and specifically hermeneutic phenomenology, enabled me to explore the research participants' experiences with further abstraction and

interpret them based on my own theoretical and personal experiences and knowledge. Focusing on disabled IDF veteran-students' experiences and perspectives, this study attempts to contribute to the research by exploring the disability identity of DIDF veterans, their disability needs, and their support experiences on their campuses. Due to the disability policy in Israel, DIDF veterans in Israeli society on many occasions are treated as privileged and as a minority group. This situation was examined and is considered later in this study. Generally, insights from this study may expand the understanding of disability identity, disability needs, and support perspectives across universities and colleges in Israel, and challenge the dominant narrative of disability support and practices in Israeli HE. I believe that a deeper knowledge of the experiences of this population in Israeli HE is necessary to fully support their inclusion in these institutions.

Definitions of Key Terms

In this section, several definitions that are relevant to this study are provided so that readers are clear about how these terms/concepts are used throughout this study. Specifically, definitions and contextual information are provided for the following terms and concepts: (a) postsecondary education; (b) disability support services in American HE; (c) Disability Support Centers in Israeli HE; (d) The Israel Defense Forces (IDF); (e) veteran; (f) student-veteran; (g) Israeli Disabled Veteran (DIDF veteran); and (h) Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization.

Postsecondary education

Any education beyond the high school level. Postsecondary institutions include vocational schools, community colleges, and public or private four-year colleges and universities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Higher education and postsecondary education are terms used in parallel in academic research especially in the U.S. In the relevant literature these terms refer to a wide range of educational settings including academic, vocational, career

or technical, or other continuing professional education programs following high school. In the context of this research the term is used only in the context of higher education institutions that provide academic degree only.

Disability Support Services in American Higher Education

For students enrolled at their HE institutions, disability support services (DSS) provides necessary educational accommodations. The DSS interprets and applies federal laws and policies (ADA and Section 504) for students with disabilities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Evans et al., 2017). The organization and structure of DSS offices vary by campus; they have different names (Disability Support Services, Disability Services, Academic Services Office, ADA Office, etc.), and the level and types of the support services offered to students with disabilities vary greatly (Burgstahler, 2009; Eisenman & Mancini, 2010).

Disability Support Centers in Israeli Higher Education

The Disability Support Services offices in Israeli HE institutions are usually called Offices of Disability Support Centers (DSCs) – *Merchazi Temicha*. Support centers are typically subordinate to the dean's office; however, their location on campus varies per institution. There is also a lack of consistency in the titles of the various institutions' support center offices, while specifically many of them use the title “Support Center for Students with Learning Disabilities” (Meltzer & Dahan, 2016).

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF)

The IDF (in Hebrew: לְיִשְׂרָאֵל–צֶה"ל –Tzhal –*Tsva ha-Hagana le-Yisra'el*, which means “The Army of Defense for Israel”) was established in 1948, two weeks after the termination of the British Mandate in Palestine and Israel's declaration of independence (Barak & Tsur, 2012). The IDF is the only military wing of the Israeli security forces and is considered

by most Israeli as “the People’s Army,” the citizens' army (Cohen, 1995; Cohen, & Bagno, 2001). The use of this phrase refers to the recruitment model type that in use in Israel, while the recruitment for the service in Israel is compulsory for the entire population with few exceptions (Levi, 2010, 2020). This model is currently unique to Israel since, after World War II, most Western countries abandoned this model and moved to voluntarily recruit systems (Cohen, 2009).

The IDF has had a major role in Israeli society over the years, and the interaction between the army and the State has implications on the soldiers during and after military service, and on state design and development (Cohen, 1995; Segev, 2016). From its early days, IDF functions were not defined in narrow military terms, as the IDF has also served as an instrument of modern Jewish “nation-building” (Cohen, 1995).

Veteran

In general, the term *veteran* refers to a person (man or woman) who has completed their tenure and active role in the military (Barry, 2015). In this study, the term is used to refer to Americans and Israelis who served in the army or other defense forces. To be more precise, here are the formal definitions by each location:

American Veteran

A person “who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable” (Veterans’ Benefits Title, 38 § 101. (2011), Section 2).

Israeli Veteran

The army service is mandatory for all Israeli citizens or permanent residents (men and women), and most of the Israeli population serves as a duty from age 18 to 21 (The Defense Service Law,

1986). The definition of military veteran (*Yotze Tzava*) refers to those Israeli citizens or permanent residents, men, and women, aged 18 and over who have served in the IDF, whether for regular or reserve service, or in any other defense forces such as the border police, the Israel prison service, or the Israel police (The Defense Service Law, 1986).

Student-Veteran

The term student-veteran refers to students in HE “who have completed their tenure and active role in the military” (Barry, 2015, p. 415). This definition has broad use in the American academic literature, and, in some cases, student service members/veterans is used. The term student-veteran has been adopted and employed in this study in its broad meaning, referring both to the term as it is used in the American literature and in the Israeli literature referring to student-veterans with disabilities. Because in Israel most of the population serves in the army, the general context is not relevant.

Israeli Disabled Veteran

Israeli disabled veteran (in Hebrew: נכה צה"ל – *Neché Tzhal*; plural – *Nechéi Zahal*) or disabled IDF veteran (DIDF veteran) refers to a person whose health was damaged due to military service or service in another body of the Israeli security forces such in the police, the Israel Prison Service, or in the Israeli Parliament (*Knesset*) and civil security (*Mishmar Ezrahi*), (Mor, 2006). The Israeli act for disabled veterans was adopted in 1949 after the State's independence (Cohen, 2009; Cohen & Cohen, 2012).

Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization (ZDVO)

The ZDVO (in Hebrew: ארגון נכי צה"ל – *Irgon Nechei Zahal*) is a registered non-profit organization that was established in the wake of the War of Independence (1949) to provide the 6,000 disabled veterans from this war all their needs in the long process of their rehabilitation. It

is the only organization legally responsible for representing veterans wounded and disabled while serving in defense of the State of Israel. Over the years, the organization has developed an internal system of social services for the benefit of its members in centers in Israel which are called in Hebrew *Beit Halochem* centers (meaning “the fighter’s home”). Beit Halochem centers are designed as club-like sports complexes and gathering places for disabled veterans in major cities around Israel (Mor, 2006). These centers are located in five major cities in Israel: Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Nahariya, and Beer-Sheva. The organization initiates many activities for members during the year, including tours, cultural performances, overseas delegations, and more. As part of the organization’s activities, its members can receive financial aid from a mutual aid fund and scholarships for members who wish to study in HE institutions. The ZDVO also offers scholarships for athletes and artists (The “Zahal” Disabled Veterans Organization, n.d.).

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six Chapters. Chapter One introduces the purpose of the research and considers the significance of this topic of investigation. Chapter Two presents a review of the relevant literature in the field of HE expansion, Disability Studies, and inclusion of students with disabilities (U.S./Israel), disability policy and support services in higher education (U.S./Israel), veteran studies and transfer to HE (U.S.), and DIDF-veteran students (Israel) and challenges and importance of support in their academic journey. Chapter Three describes the methodology, sampling, data collection and analysis procedures, and participant protection procedures. Chapter Four presents the profile of each participant in the study and their unique characteristics. Chapter Five presents a summary of the findings, answering the four sub-questions in preparation for evaluating and interpreting the participants’ experiences. Chapter Six explores the themes that extend the findings beyond this study, discussing the findings,

implications for future research, and study limitations, concluding with a call to action for universities, policymakers, service providers, and disabled veterans.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review will focus on the following major areas: (a) people with disabilities; (b) identity and disability identity; (c) theoretical frameworks in the context of disability and veteran students: Disability studies, models of disability and Critical Disability Theory (CDT), Critical Veteran Theory (CVT), and Vacchi's Conceptual Model of Student Veteran Support; (d) the experience of veteran students with the HE system in the United States (US); (e) and the Israeli case: Israeli society's social attitudes and values, military duty, and disabled IDF veterans, the development of Israeli HE, inclusive education, and disability support centers.

Despite the extensive interest, academic understanding, and practical literature available on the topic of HE and the transitioning of American veterans in the US, there is no reference to Israeli veterans with disabilities in the Israeli HE system. In particular, there is a scarcity of research focusing on Israeli wounded veterans' experiences, challenges, and utilization of support throughout their academic studies in Israeli HE settings. In this Chapter, I describe why my research was needed and how it fits into theoretical frameworks and current research initiatives. My research goal was to provide insight into the experiences of DIDF veterans during their academic path, as well as their disability identification and utilization of support during that period.

People with Disabilities in Contemporary Society

Various terminologies and meanings have been assigned to the term disability and individuals with disabilities over the years in various places around the world. In many cases, "official definitions of disability reflect the organizational requirements of governments, their institutions and key welfare professionals" (Goodley, 2011, p. 5). Disability definitions are used

to determine who is eligible for assistance and to group people in ways that are most beneficial to society. Local concepts, definitions, structures, and practices about disability have been articulated in several ways that connect to people, communities, and the society we live in today (Devliger,1999; Kanter, 2003). In many societies, disability is perceived as a personal tragedy that requires treatment, rehabilitation, or cure, depending on state and professional intervention. This perception reflects the moral perspective of disability as a sin, as a punishment from God, and the medical perspective of disability as pathology (physical, sensory, or cognitive). As a result, people with disabilities find themselves in a marginalized place, socially and economically (Goodley, 2011; Linton, 2006).

Across the world, the number of disabled people is constantly on the rise. According to The World Bank (2022), one billion people, or around 15% of the world's population, are disabled, and the frequency of disability is higher in developing countries. “One-fifth of the estimated global total, or between 110 million and 190 million people, encounter significant disabilities” (The World Bank, 2022, para 1). It is essential to remember that every human being can be temporarily able-bodied at any point throughout their lives. The global awareness of the needs of individuals with disabilities and their integration into society is influenced by the growing number of this population in society. Through films, periodicals, and social media, the majority of the general public is aware of the needs of people with disabilities. People with impairments are sometimes portrayed as pitiful, dependent, and unattractive (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Kniepmann, 2005). The information and the images that are presented reflect social biases and restricted life possibilities (Kniepmann, 2005).

Disability identity is significant since it is linked to personal stories, differences, major characteristics, and experiences that contribute to the disability. People with disabilities build

political coalitions, not based on natural identification, but based on their needs such as healthcare, information, and support groups (Shakespeare, 1996; Siebers, 2001; 2017). Over the years, different perspectives, theories, and models have been developed to define and discuss disability and disability identity. Evans and Herriot (2009) argued that “the goals of a social justice approach to disability include the elimination of ableism and critique, redefinition, or expansion of what is considered normal so that all types of physical, mental, and sensory differences are accepted and appreciated” (as cited in Evans et al., 2017, p. 2). This approach recognizes and opposes ableism in individuals, institutions, and society as a whole.

Identity and Disability Identify

In the academic literature, the term "identity" has taken on many distinct definitions and implications from various fields and worldviews, such as psychology, sociology, and political science (Putnam, 2005). As Riddell et al., (2005) pointed out, there is great interest in how people build and control their sense of self throughout their lives in the social sciences. In the past, classical social sciences saw the issue of identity as being stable, and shaped by an individual's position within wider economic and social structures. More modernist theories (such as feminism, anti-racism, nationalism) have “questioned the notion of an essential self, emphasizing instead the self as a social construct, constantly defined and redefined in different social contexts” (Riddell et al., 2005, p. 16). Following this view, Oyserman et al., (2012) defined identities as:

Traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is. Identities can be focused on the past—what used to be true of one, the present—what is true of one now, or the future—the person one expects or wishes to

become, the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person fears one may become. (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 69)

Moreover, Oyserman (2009) indicated that identities “emerge in a dynamic interaction with context, cued identities are consequential for subsequent meaning-making, including which cognitive procedures are brought to bear and which actions are taken” (p. 253).

Therefore, identity is defined by a combination of elements that typically answer the question, “Who am I?” Identity tends to guide individual experiences, perceptions, and decisions.

Identities help people make sense of different and distinct parts of their self-concepts (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013). Therefore, as individuals continue to make meaning with social and personal identities, they tend to belong and identify with multiple identities (Abes et al., 2007).

Students in HE often have to deal with a variety of changing identities and expectations (e.g., to be a good friend, to be charismatic and respected, to make their families proud, to be a model student, and to be successful). While students with disabilities in general confront the same demands as their peers, as they must also account for ways of knowing, learning, and being in the world that are different from their peers (Wood, 2017). Davis (2013) added and highlighted this point, claiming that, like other categories connected to individual identity components such as ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, “disability is a relatively new category” (p. 263). Even though this category has existed for a long time, its current shape as a political and cultural formation dates from the 1970s, and it has gained more attention since the late 1980s with the development of Disability Studies as a political and academic movement (Davis, 2013).

One of the inevitable consequences of identifying an individual as disabled is that difference is emphasized (distinction from the norm). These individuals have been viewed as

being able to make a limited contribution to society, especially in education and employment (Cunnah, 2015). This view was very common before the social model of disability which focuses on the claim that disabled people are and have been excluded from participation in social life and should be accepted as part of human diversity. As (Davis, 2014) argued: “diversity is the new normality” (p. 1). Moreover, Davis (2014) claimed that diversity is “ a much more democratic concept than normality since diversity applies to the broad range of the population unlike normality, which of course eschews the abnormal” (p. 3).

Shakespeare (1996) linked the two main approaches to identifying people with disabilities as a group: the physical or medical understanding (impairment) and the socio-political understanding (disability). As he asserted, the process of disability identity arises in three areas: (1) the political, as in disability activism; (2) the cultural, as in artwork and music; and (3) the personal, as in understanding one’s own disability experience. Shakespeare called for a more dynamic model to understand disability that goes beyond these dichotomies. The social model acknowledged, that people may or may not identify as disabled, and “that aspect of their experience is only one facet of their identity...” (Moeller, 2019, p. 457). Dunn and Burcaw (2013) have stated that disability identity refers to the control of a positive sense of self and connection to, and unity with, the disability community. Dunn and Burcaw (2013) argued that “disability identity should guide people with disabilities toward what to do, what to value, and how to act in various circumstances in which their disability is a salient quality” (p. 149). Furthermore, explicit disability identity is believed to help individuals adapt to a disability, social stresses, and daily hassles (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013). Putnam (2005) asserted that:

People with disabilities are not a homogeneous group and do not experience the same levels of internalized oppression. The experience of disability is different for each person

depending on his or her unique impairment and disability experiences. Thus, for many individuals, disability is not a primary identity but is incorporated into their overall sense of self. (Putnam, 2005, p. 192)

In recent years, disability identity, like other identities, has been viewed as complex and fluid, not singular nor static (Elmore et al., 2018).

Theoretical Frameworks and Models

Disability Studies and Models of Disability

Disability Studies is a new interdisciplinary academic area that investigates the meaning, nature, and consequences of disability. Disability Studies, as a theory, aims to explain and characterize the phenomena of disability in terms of the social construction of disability, rather than by the traditional medical view (Yuknis & Bernstein, 2017). Disability Studies examines disability as a phenomenon from a variety of perspectives, including social, political, and cultural, and provide a more comprehensive knowledge of society and human variation (Linton, 1998). Furthermore, Disability Studies is seen as an academic discipline dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities have a voice in academic activity. It involves a continuous effort to define the rhetoric, language, methods, and dedication of academic work concerning the personal and societal experience of disability (C. Barnes et al., 2004; Mankoff et al., 2010). These aspects include economic structures, societal structures, and disability representations in curricula and other cultural artifacts. All of this has an impact on disabled people's social status and interactions with non-disabled people, as well as the perception of disabled people being inferior to non-disabled people.

This research in the field of Disability Studies inspired me to look at the experiences of disabled veteran-students in Israeli HE, using different perceptions and models of disability.

Since the concepts of disability studies and the social model were presented in recent years, the field of Disability Studies as an academic and practical approach has grown in Israel, where Disability Studies as a field of study is expanding, but it is still in its infancy. As of 2022, there are academic events and academic courses in the field of Disability Studies in Israeli HE, but no academic degree program with an emphasis on Disability Studies is offered in any of the universities or colleges as in other Western countries (Almog, 2018b).

The Medical Model

Historically, society has viewed people with disabilities from a medical model perspective as a product of biology, and in a pathological sense, “concentrated on the deficit, defect, and illness, focusing on the person’s body and its limitations” (Myers et al., 2014, p. 101). Furthermore, people with disabilities have been viewed negatively or as having a deficit and seeking a cure for their disabilities, to be made normal. This historical oppression and exclusion perspective places the responsibility for the social dimensions of the impairment (e.g., poverty and exclusion) on the self, viewing this social placement as an unavoidable outcome of one’s functional sociological detentions (Oliver, 1990).

The medical model views disability as “an individual, physiological condition which can somehow be treated and cured” (Imrie, 1997, p. 263). Accordingly, disabled individuals are viewed as people who need support and assistance, passive victims, patients, invalids, or sufferers who must depend on others for assistance and follow the medical or rehabilitation plans laid out by medical providers (Fine & Asch, 1988). In other words, the medical paradigm is based on ableist beliefs that persons with disabilities may be fixed, treated, or made to conform to a more able-normative world (Brown et al., 2019). The ableist worldview or ableism is viewed as discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities. Ableism characterizes

individuals as defined by their disabilities and as inferior to non-disabled people in society. On this basis, people are assigned or denied certain perceived abilities, skills, or character orientations (Linton, 1998b). The medical approach was dominant until the social model was coined by the disabled people's movement in Britain in the early 1970s, marking a disability paradigm shift and resistance to the medical model (Gabel, 2005).

The Social Model

The social model of disability developed in response to the limitations of the medical model of disability, which failed to recognize that disability is caused by social factors as well. Thus, the social model views disability as a socially-created problem and “focuses on disability as a relationship between people with impairment and a discriminatory society” (Shakespeare, 1996, p. 96). In this context, *impairment* is defined as a functional limitation within the individual (e.g., missing a hand or leg or part of them, or missing functionality of hand or leg) and *disability* is the way society attaches to the presence of impairment and an embodied experience shaped by the culture (any limitation in the activity which is caused by the social construction) (Chappell et al., 2001; Goodley, 2011; Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare & others, 2006).

Hence, disability is defined as the outcome of disability barriers forced by policy and economic factors, as well as physical-environmental obstacles (Brown et al., 2019; Shakespeare, 1996; Shakespeare et al., 2006). Development of the social model was parallel to a new social movement, whereby people with disabilities could gather and challenge their experiences of oppression through political activism (Linton, 1998b). Additionally, the British activism movement of people with disabilities began to re-define disability as a social issue, rather than an individual and self-issue by the distinction between impairment and disability (Oliver, 1990).

Historically, Disability Studies as a multidisciplinary academic approach and the social model of disability find their origins in 1972 in the British disabled people's movement, "Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation" – (UPIAS). Historically, the term "social model" of disability was coined by Mike Oliver in 1983 (Shakespeare, 2013). Until that time, academic interest in this field was limited to conventional individualistic explanations linked to medicine and medical concerns (C. Barnes et al., 2004; Goodley, 2011). The disability studies approach using the social model has been used by many Disability Studies scholars especially in the US since 1982 (Gabel, 2005; Gabel & Miskovic, 2014; Goodley, 2014).

Critical Disability Theory

Critical Disability Theory (CDT) or Critical Disability Studies (CDS) is a collection of interdisciplinary theoretical approaches to disability. CDT examines disability as a cultural, historical, relative, social, and political phenomena (Hall, 2019). Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) stated several factors that led to the development of the critical approach to disability: (1) a call to get out of the binary thinking that makes a distinction between social/medical and impairment/disability; (2) understanding that the struggle for social justice and diversity extends beyond concepts such as social, economic, or political justice, but also encompasses other levels such as the psychological, cultural, discursive, and carnal. It is important to note that CDT does not reject the social model of disability, but rather advocates for it to be examined in new and increasingly complex ways; (3) a call for the applied disciplines to more fully integrate criticism of disabling structures in applied disciplines. Accordingly, CDT represents a distancing from those who have joined Disability Studies for the simple purposes of normalization; and (4) identification with other critical theories (critical race theory, critical legal theory, critical criminology, and critical queer studies).

The CDT considers the contributions of impairment, personal responses to impairment, and the barriers imposed by the social environment to the concept of disability. It represents the developments in recent years in the field of Disability Studies, in which researchers and activists seek to explore and critique cultural and social systems of oppression in further complex ways (Peña et al., 2016). The CDT aims to broaden people's perspectives on disability, while also addressing the problematic intersectionality of other social identities. Though intersectionality was just brought into the critical disability field in the 1980s (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009) it has now become a popular concept. Additionally, Peña, et al. (2016) claim that only very recently has the CDT entered the HE and Student Affairs literature. This statement reinforces the importance of CDT theory for this study.

Reading vast academic literature led me to the understanding that the CDT is complex and multifaceted. In this study, I decided to concentrate on the following four essential components: 1) "slippery, fluid, [and] heterogeneous" impairment (Shildrick, 2009, p. 4). This vision "allows disability to change over time and be intersectional; that is, it is shaped by other aspects of social identity, meaning" (Evans et al., 2017, p. 67). Shildrick (2009) claimed that "a particular form of disability experienced by an Asian American may differ from how that disability is experienced by an African American" (as cited in Evans et al., 2017, p. 67). Furthermore, in the perspective of HE, it encourages disability support services staff, faculty, and other specific service providers on campus to take an intersectional approach and understand why some students may not identify as disabled even though they may have an impairment. 2) "local knowledge as a method of understanding the lived experiences of people with disabilities" (as cited by Evans et al., 2017, p. 67). The value of emancipation with a focus on human rights and social justice. In this case, different HE service personnel usually assume that

important social justice topics for disabled students primarily relate to employment, education, and physical access. Additionally, according to Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009), the “CDT goes beyond the political focus of other theoretical frameworks by bringing social justice into areas that are meaningful for disabled people, such as culture and gender” (as cited in Evans et al., 2017, p. 68). In this context, following military service in Israel, some of the DIDF-veteran students may be combat women with military-related injuries or DIDF-veteran students with other gender-related categorizations. and 4) the last principle of CDT refers to the social model and the distinction between disability and impairment; however, “the CDT framework theorizes that both impairment and environment are important and that a relational discourse occurs between embodiment and disability,” and there is an essential relationship between impairment and disability (as cited in Evans et al., 2017, p. 68). Moreover, as Goodley (2013) stated, “Critical disability studies start with a disability but never end with it: disability is the space from which to think through a host of political, theoretical, and practical issues that are relevant to all” (p. 632).

The above principles emphasize that to theorize disability as a public issue, and as a continuum phenomenon, it must become as visible as other human classifications such as race, class, and gender (Peña et al., 2016). Overall, the CDT examines disability more broadly with other related issues such as bodily experiences, identity, ethics of care, difference, power, and globalization, as it holds the understanding that “we are living in a time of complex identity politics” (Goodley, 2013, p. 632).

The CDT refers to lived experiences and attempts to transform the circumstances under which oppressed subjects live through critical, intersectional analysis (Peña et al., 2016; Sims, 2019). Consequently, it rejects a vision of the social sciences modeled on the natural sciences

(quantitative research), rather it fits qualitative research as “it views the working of society and culture as much more dynamic than what can be captured quantitatively” (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009, p. 52). This claim reinforces the integration of this theory in the research methodology chosen for this study (phenomenological–hermeneutic research).

Finally, the CDT grew out of several other theoretical interdisciplinary fields such as feminism and ethnic studies to examine the social construction of disability (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). The CDT seeks to incorporate theories, models, and frameworks from several disciplines and fields, such as feminism, queer theory, critical racial studies, and critical legal theory (Yoshizaki-Gibbons, 2019). Overall, the social model and, especially, the CDT guided me to ascertain and understand DIDF-veteran students’ academic and social experiences and the institutional and personal factors that impact their academic journey and use of support services.

Veterans Studies

The unique experiences of DIDF-veterans in Israeli HE necessitated the application of established theoretical models of student development based on American knowledge to investigate the participants' relevant experiences in this study. Over the past decade, the amount of research and academic teaching concerning veterans has thrived in the US in a field known as Veteran Studies (Craig, 2015). This is a new interdisciplinary field in American academic programs, as well as a new field of theories and research. This academic program provides students (veterans and non-veterans) with a foundation of understanding regarding American military structure, culture, combat, and the psychological and physical changes that result from military service (Kelley et al., 2013).

In recent years, American researchers have studied the support policies, academic programs, and services that are available in American HE and that assist veterans in their transition to HE (“veteran friendly” campuses). Some of these researchers began to investigate what veteran-friendly services are used by service member students or veteran students. They described the gaps in these policies and services across American HE settings including suggesting better practices, models, and theories (Ackerman et al., 2009; Glover-Graf et al., 2010; Hammond, 2016; Mobley et al., 2019; Selber, 2015). Specifically, since the increasing number of veteran students, following new legislation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, several models have been offered to identify and develop a better understanding of the unique needs of veteran students in American HE institutions. Veteran Studies as a new research field focuses on theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that can advance an understanding of student-veterans experiences (Craig, 2015; Mobley et al., 2019).

Some of the models that were developed in recent years emphasize the transition of American veterans into college/university communities, moving from combat soldiers to students, through the university as student veterans, and later on their transition from HE to employment. A few of the theoretical frameworks that were developed such as DiRamio et al.'s (2008) model were based on an inside–out model which was designed at a specific college or university following development of their academic program and viewing their veteran students' service needs (Selber, 2015). Craig (2015) points toward the significance of Veterans Studies as a new field, as it is central for theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that can advance a better understanding of student-veteran experiences. Specifically, there is an important need to build inclusive “military friendly” and “disability friendly” communities that provide services that can support veteran students’ needs.

According to Vacchi (2013) and (Vacchi et al., 2017), the earlier literature on student-veterans (e.g., DiRamio et al., 2008; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010) linked traditional models and theories such as Schlossberg's 4S Model (1981) (situation, self, support, and strategies) or Tinto's interactionalist theory (Tinto, 1975; 1993), neither of which were specifically designed for the veteran-student population. Rather, Schlossberg's 4S Model (1981) was used for counseling adults in mid-career transitions, and Tinto's interactionalist theory (Tinto, 1975, 1993) focused only on the students' social indications as an important component to avoid departure. An important starting point for building a relevant theory according to Vacchi and Berger (2013) was Livingston et al.'s (2011) research, which adapted Schlossberg's theory (1981) as a theoretical framework for understanding student-veterans in their study that explored veteran re-enrollment experiences in college. However, while their tailored model provided a starting point for investigating this specific population, the results of the study were not so likely to develop a more comprehensive approach to learn about veteran-student experiences. Overall, Vacchi and Berger (2014) indicated that the drawbacks of former studies "are that they primarily focus on transitions out of the military and offer limited exploration of transitions into college while ignoring strategies for successful navigation of college life" (p. 117).

Following the need for a new and more suitable theory to explore the transition experiences of veterans, Phillips (2014) in his dissertation research, fulfilled this need and introduced a "veteran critical theory as a new way for researchers to critically examine qualitative and quantitative veteran data" (Phillips, 2014, p. 239). In the following sections, I will review two theories that I believe assisted me in understanding some of the local experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE settings. The specific theories that I present in the next sections are based on the ideas and concepts that were developed and presented in the

research papers of two doctoral students who studied at two distinct HE institutions in the US: Phillips (2014) and Vacchi (2018). In particular, the lack of information regarding DIDF-veteran students led me to explore other models or theories as an initial examination in the US. However, the US and Israel have clear cultural differences, and a related legislated approach may not be applied comparably; therefore, some parts of these theories will not fully correspond to the experiences of DIDF veterans in Israel.

Veteran Critical Theory (VCT)

The first theory, driven from veteran studies, that is important to consider for enhanced understanding of Israeli student veterans and their educational paths is the Veteran Critical Theory (VCT). This theory was proposed by Phillips (2014) as -

An effort to conduct a critical theory that acknowledges the ways that systems may disadvantage, exclude, or otherwise harm veterans. Philips looked at five critical theories that are valuable according to their popularity of use or suitability to the population of student veterans: the feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory. (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017, p. 658)

The theory views structures and systems that affect veterans through a critical lens to better understand the veteran population by challenging the perceptions largely held by non-veterans in different life situations including HE. The VCT, at its core, was designed “to allow veterans to construct their own identities and stories within and beyond the classroom, privilege the veteran voice, and fight civilian constructions that describe or define student veterans as deviant“ (Phillips, 2014, p. 216).

The VCT approach has 11 main tenets, as follows:

- Structures, policies, and processes privilege civilians over veterans. Drawing from feminist theory (of a male-dominated and male-privileged world), disability studies (“abled” bodies are particularly privileged), queer theory (the privilege of heterosexuality). VCT (Phillips, 2014; Phillips & Lincoln, 2017) argues that society must recognize the innate privilege of being a civilian. Moreover, the VCT asserts that the first step in identifying civilian privilege is by understanding that most post-secondary institutions are indeed civilian institutions which are “often led by civilians, taught by civilians, and paradigmatically run with a traditional-aged civilian student in mind” (Phillips, 2014, p. 198).
- Veterans experience various forms of oppression and marginalization, including microaggressions. The second tenet of the VCT draws attention to the microaggressions, the “hidden messages,” as stated by Sue (2010) that, may invalidate the group or identity of the experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest that they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment (as cited in Phillips, 2014, p. 200). Phillips drew his ideas from Sue's (2010) research on microaggressions or perceived microaggressions experienced by Black undergraduates, Latinos, Asian-Americans, LGBTQ people, religious groups, and people with disabilities. As a result, Phillip identified four ways in which microaggressions can be experienced by student veterans: (1) denial of privacy or the assumption that an institution should have free access to a student veteran's story via eligibility-required documentation; (2) a spread effect or the assumption that one disability implies multiple disabilities; (3) secondary gain, or the emotional or social gain that can come from treating someone with a disability or perceived disability with respect. and (4) helplessness, or the assumption that all student veterans need constant care and support (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017).
- Veterans are victims of deficit-thinking in higher education. The VCT also recognizes within the theory that student veterans are often told that they experience deficits when it is more likely that these deficits can be argued to be a direct result of using civilian measures – “civilian-oriented and civilian-privileging” (Phillips, 2014, p. 203) structures within post-secondary education institutions.
- Veterans occupy a third space on the border of multiple conflicting and interacting power structures, languages, and systems. The VCT celebrates a third space where student-veterans are students, veterans, and the unique mesh of the two identities. The VCT draws from Anzaldua’s (1987) work by describing that student-veterans may no longer be seen as fully military or fully civilian, but yet are a unique combination of both, which may lead many student-veterans to obey different cultural influences in the effort to assimilate to the civilian-structured college classroom.
- The VCT values narratives and counternarratives of veterans. The VCT borrowed from Anzaldua’s (1987) work on border theory by describing that student-veterans may no longer be seen as fully military or fully civilian, but yet are a unique combination of both. “VCT celebrates a third space where student veterans are students, veterans, and the unique mesh of the two identities” (Phillips, 2014, p. 207). This may lead many student-veterans to follow different cultural influences (power, privilege, or prestige) to

gain the association with each culture for assimilating into the civilian structured-college classroom.

- Veterans experience multiple identities at once. “A hallmark of critical theories is the recognition that a member of one disadvantaged group may identify as a member of multiple groups” (Phillips, 2014, p. 211). Consistent with this view, the VCT prides the voice of the marginalized. This not only has the potential to clarify the experiences of student-veterans but can also offer a counter-narrative to the assumed experiences they supposedly share. Moreover: “Student veterans are not a homogeneous group that experiences only veteran status differently. Student veterans are diverse in age, class, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, military branch, rank, deployment history, and combat service” (Phillips, 2014, p. 211). Therefore, the VCT directs under the belief that student-veterans all experience things differently, and the perception of one veteran may be very different from another. The VCT values both the individual expression of student-veterans’ characteristics, but also recognizes that these identities interact with one another and are drawn to the forefront or background in different contexts.
- Veterans are constructed (written) by civilians, often as deviant characters. The seventh tenet draws from queer theory, which recognizes that homosexuals are often written by a heterosexual pen, which has historically defined what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, and normal and strange. Phillips (2014) subsequently argued that much of what has been written concerning student veterans is being done by a civilian pen. This leads the VCT to challenge their authority in the same respect as queer theory.
- Veterans are more appropriately positioned to inform policy and practice regarding veterans. Following queer theory and Disability Studies, the VCT recognizes that while this may not always be possible, it does maintain a strong conviction that veterans should have a direct hand in any creation of policy that affects their population. “VCT sees much of what is ‘known’ about veterans as written by a civilian pen and subsequently questions the authority of the author. If so, I may be out of a job. Instead, this tenet concerns the ways veterans are written inside and outside of academia” (Phillips, 2014, p. 215).
- Some services advertised to serve veterans ultimately serve civilian interests. The VCT also borrowed from Bell’s (1980) idea of “interest convergence,” arguing that many services available to student-veterans, mainly those used for recruitment, are created to market a product to a potential consumer rather than serving the student-veterans’ unique interests.
- Veterans cannot be essentialized or completely knowable. The VCT also argues that in the same way that feminist studies claim that women are unknowable, it recognizes that veterans are also unknowable. This tenet acknowledges that student veterans inhabit a continuum of unique differences, and it challenges the act of essentializing. This tenet gives much weight to the ways in which military experience can define a person. Phillips, (2014) expresses his belief that “recognizing veterans as a ‘unknowable population’ may create a slippery slope of generalization, scholarly assumption, and the idea of a static veteran.” (p. 663)
- Veteran culture is built on a culture of respect, honor, and trust. The final tenet calls attention to how veterans have socially learned values of respect, honor, and trust,

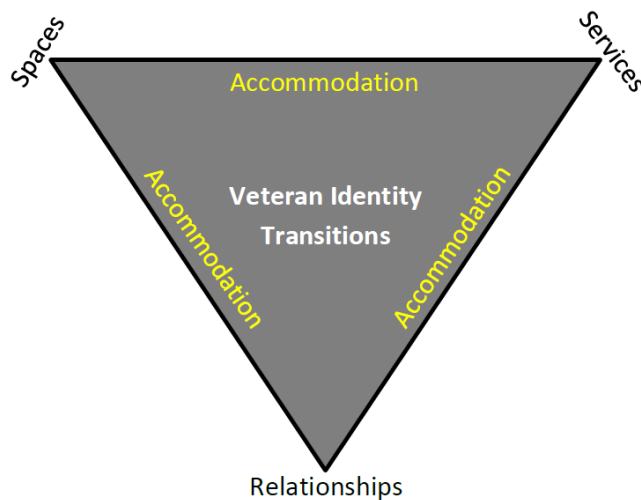
which are said to have the potential of being assaulted in civilian spaces. Phillips (2014) described this tenet as a way of recognizing the actions of civilian-run institutions in civilian-dominated spaces that could run counter to some of the foundational values within a veteran culture. The VCT prompts researchers and student affairs professionals to recognize how they may capitalize on veteran culture rather than undermine it by labeling it and stigmatizing it. (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017)

Theory of Veteran Friendliness and Vacchi’s Model of Student-Veteran Support

Following the need to find a better model or theory to examine the transition experiences from the perspective of student-veterans, in 2013, Vacchi explored in his pilot study the question of what veteran friendliness was. Using qualitative data analysis and a grounded theory for the his analysis, Vacchi created a first framework and named it the “Theory of veteran friendliness” (2018, p. 22), as described in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Vacchi’s First Framework - “Theory of Veteran Friendliness” (2018)



The strongest finding in Vacchi’s study was the particular importance of the timeliness and accuracy of educational benefits processing. Vacchi (2013) acknowledged that “education benefits are an entitlement earned by student veterans in order pay for college to reduce, or eliminate, the financial obstacle that can exist in higher education” (as cited in Vacchi, 2018, p.

23). In his earlier study, Vacchi (2013) also presented two important matters regarding spaces on campus and their veteran-friendly extent: (1) the existence of a veterans' center or lounge, and (2) spaces that were politically neutral and were conducive to academic productivity. Other spaces that were openly hostile to veterans, or to their core beliefs, were avoided by participants of the study, and overshadowed the benefits of other veteran-friendly spaces.

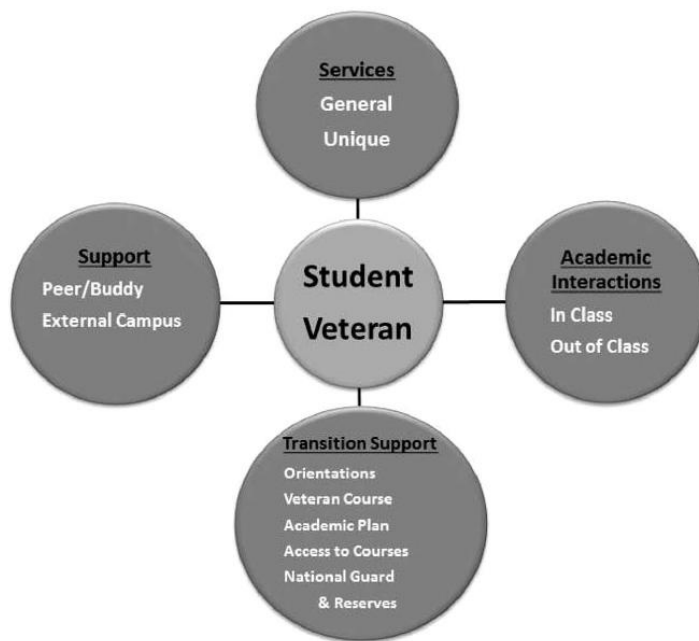
Vacchi (2013) suggested that “seeking veteran neutral spaced may be the real goal of academic institutions” (as cited in Vacchi, 2018, p. 23). Vacchi also viewed that veterans' relationships were considered to be an important component, meaning that veterans “find the common bond with other veterans to be reassuring and even validating” (2018, p. 23). Vacchi (2013) found that negative relationships with some faculty and most traditional-aged students were another major theme in the data. He also found in his pilot study that veterans appeared to struggle with immaturity, disrespect for faculty, and a lack of focus in academic work (Vacchi, 2018).

Based on his prior academic work and reviewing other models [such as Bean and Metzner's conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition (1985) and Weidman's conceptual model of undergraduate socialization (1989)], Vacchi and colleagues (2017) designed a new model to conceptualize the experiences of student veterans more holistically. Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support emphasizes the importance of an individual's interactions with others, at different times, and across different environmental contexts (Vacchi & Berger, 2014). Therefore, his support model focused on the individual student-veteran, rather than a “linear institutional paradigm” by applying “veteran-friendly propositions” and suggesting four types of support (Vacchi et al., 2017, p. 34). Vacchi et al., (2017) argued that past research poses a “significant knowledge gap in conceptualizing the holistic experiences of student veterans” (p. 35), while the strength of his model is in adding a

significant dimension related to the academic and social experiences of student-veterans during their academic studies. Vacchi’s model (2018) emphasizes four key areas of support that researchers can focus on in exploring the impact of college on student-veterans' success: (1) services; (2) transition support; (3) academic interactions; and (4) support relationships (see Figure 2). From the start, Vacchi's aim (2013) was to develop a model to understand the transitional experience of student-veterans and to support their needs throughout the entire college experience from a holistic approach (Vacchi & Berger, 2014; Vacchi et al., 2017; Vacchi, 2018).

Figure 2

Vacchi’s Conceptual Model of Student-Veteran Support (2013).



Vacchi’s framework views “student veterans as the focus of programmatic consideration rather than as generic students moving through a linear institutional cycle” (Vacchi, 2018, p. 52). A summary of the four key areas of support military to HE is provided below:

1. *Services* – refers to the HE institution’s responsibility to provide services (general services, as well as unique services) to meet all student needs. Especially, refers to the unique needs of student-veterans and the campus' responsibility to provide better accommodation services for them. Overall, services are frequently discussed throughout the literature as one of ways in which campuses can support student-veterans (Vacchi et al., 2017).
 2. *Transition Support* – Veteran students need support specially to overcome the transition stage. Vacchi’s recommendation is to set up transition programming or courses designed specifically for student-veterans.
 3. *Academic Interactions* – Academic interactions as a key principle emerged from Weidman’s (1989) recommendations that students need frequency and intimacy when interacting with faculty and peers. This can include contact with faculty and peers inside and outside of the classroom.
 4. *Support* – Personal support of this model comes in two forms: peer mentorships and external campus support systems (Vacchi et al., 2017). Vacchi also discussed the importance of personal support-like peer advising and peer mentorship (formal and informal mechanisms) on-campus as well as off-campus.
- Following the Disability Studies perspective, as well as the Veteran Studies theoretical

frameworks, which were presented in this section, I searched for themes related to these concepts and key areas during the course of data analysis of the personal experiences shared by the DIDF-veteran students. Specifically, familiarity with the VCT theory and Vacchi’s model assisted me to view and study the experiences of DIDF-veteran students to expand my understanding of the availability and their use of support resources during their academic studies. Overall, using the Veteran Studies perspective helped me as a researcher to understand this phenomenon and contribute to the literature on the experiences of DIDF veterans as students in Israeli HE. Most importantly, in this study, I used only several tenets and concepts of the reviewed theoretical frameworks during the data analysis and interpretation, as will be presented in the Discussion Chapter.

The USA Experience

Student Veterans in American Higher Education

Since its early days, American social policy has responded to the needs of war veterans. The social policy in the 19th century after the Civil War, and later in the 20th century after World War II (WWII) opened up HE opportunities to American veterans. US social policy adopted a model to compensate soldiers and their families for their military contributions and sacrifice right after these long wars. Since then, with the efforts that have been given to veterans with physical disabilities after the war (The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944), opportunities for American student-veterans with disabilities have increased significantly (Caspers & Ackerman, 2013; Molina et al., 2015; Shalev & Gal, 2018). "By 1950 more than 6 million veterans had enrolled in college using these benefits, changing the face of higher education" (Kelley et al., 2013, p. 3). The Act of 1944 later became known as the GI Bill, revised on August 1st, 2009, and re-named The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill). The Post-9/11 GI Bill originated with the concept that those who have served since the 9/11 attacks in 2001 should have the same educational opportunities as those who served during WWII (Hammond, 2016; Kelley et al., 2013; Steele et al., 2010). Following the increased number of American veterans who have come back from military service in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Post-9/11 GI Bill has led to an increased rate in the number of veteran who are enrolling in postsecondary education (Hammond, 2016; Kelley et al., 2013).

Veteran Educational Benefits

Although the GI Bill includes several other provisions for American veterans, the educational benefits has had a meaningful impact on HE, especially after WWII. During the last decades, the GI Bill's new legislation has come to provide a better response in light of difficulties

faced by military veterans such as economic difficulties in light of rising living expenses and the high costs of HE in the United States. Starting with the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) of 1984 that replaced the original Servicemen Readjustment Act of 1944, and the most recent update of the GI Bill, the Post-9/11 GI Bill (2009). The MGIB educational assistance program provides up to 36 months of educational benefits to those who have served on active duty, including veterans who served in reserve units, and they can use these benefits up to 15 years from the date of their release. The Post-9/11 GI Bill offers an educational package that benefits the National Guard and Reservists, as well as active-duty service members for up to 36 months as well. It includes payment of tuition and fees for various educational programs (undergraduate, graduate, vocational, or job training), as well as a monthly housing allowance, and a scholarship for textbooks and other school supplies. These benefits also expire after 15 years from the date of their release (Caspers & Ackerman, 2013; Molina et al., 2015).

Overall, the Post-9/11 GI Bill expanded the educational benefits so they can be transferred to a spouse, a child under specific conditions, or both family members (Kelly, Smith & Fox, 2013; Molina et al., 2015). It is important to note that the amount of money available to veterans under the current educational benefits of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is less than the cost of tuition at a private HE institution, which may prevent veterans from studying in such settings. For veterans who wish to enroll in private HE institutions or veterans who were considered out-of-state students, the Yellow Ribbon Program was developed (Molina et al., 2015). To be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, veterans must have served at least 90 days of active duty after September 10, 2011, or 30 continuous days of active duty since that date and be honorably discharged with a service-connected disability (Bailey et al., 2019; Caspers & Ackerman, 2013).

Student Veterans and Disability Experiences

Many American veterans who returned from recent conflicts have disabilities that impact their ability to succeed in HE institutions (DiRamio & Spires, 2009; Madaus et al., 2009). In the US military, veterans are eligible for disability compensation for conditions that were either caused or aggravated by their military service. The largest American disability programs are administered by the federal government through the Social Security Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA disability application process is known to be complicated, long, time-consuming, and stressful (Sayer et al., 2004).

Mobley et al. (2019) reviewed former research and highlighted the fact that many scholars have focused on the difficulties that American veterans face as they transition out of the military to HE settings. Furthermore, Brawner et al. (2016) listed some of the challenges of American student veterans such as “coping with psychological distress and service-related disabilities; struggling to meet academic expectations; managing the competing demands of school, work, and family obligations; and relating to civilian students” (as cited in Mobley et. al., 2019, p. 1212).

Relative to disability experiences among student veterans, some of them may have been unaware or did not use the traditional service forms on campus, especially disability support services. Moreover, many of them may have had hidden or untreated medical conditions and chose not to self-disclose as they might have felt uncomfortable identifying themselves as “disabled” during their transition and integration into their campus (Burnett & Segoria, 2009; Church, 2009). Some of the student-veterans may have chosen not to apply for disability services or treatment following their shame or fear of associated stigma, fear of losing a future military career, or not considering themselves disabled or eligible for accommodations (Burnett &

Segoria, 2009; Kraus & Rattray, 2013). Mikelson (2014) indicated that student-veterans prefer not to disclose their needs “because military culture places a high-risk value on self-reliance; veterans who are beginning post-secondary education might find it difficult to engage in the accommodation process” (p. 91).

Glover-Graf et al. (2010) addressed specific characteristics of military veterans in recent years such as a high rate of hidden or invisible injuries including PTSD, traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), and other cognitive or mental effects of military service that might have an impact on their HE experiences. Veterans with hidden disabilities, especially those with psychological disabilities, must negotiate how and when to disclose to faculty, staff, and friends on campus. Other disabilities highly common in recent years among student-veterans include mobility, hearing, and vision impairments. In some cases, how veterans become injured or disabled impacts their disability disclosure, as not all of them have combat-connected injuries and feel that they do not deserve special attention or services (Kraus & Rattray, 2013).

In addition, student-veterans might have psychological or LDs that were undiagnosed or diagnosed before joining the army that either emerged or intensified during or after military service (Kraus & Rattray, 2013; Myers et al., 2014). Moreover, Mikelson (2014) found that veterans often do not understand their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and mistakenly assume that if the Veteran’s Center at their College (VA) does not find them eligible for disability benefits, they are not eligible for educational accommodations. Therefore, it should be emphasized that “veteran students can independently document disabilities and receive an academic adjustment in a postsecondary setting” (Mikelson, 2014, p. 86).

Higher Education Expansion

The first universities were established in the 11th century. Historically, universities functioned as “ivory towers,” as education was limited only to a few and intended to train social

and political elites (Guri-Rosenblit, 2000). The growing demand to widen access and open HE institutions to other population groups began only after WWII. The social and political global developments after this war led to the expansion of HE and the shift from elite education to mass and universal HE (Altbach et al., 2011; Ayalon & Yogev, 2005; Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007; Harris, 2013). At that time, universities that were elite institutions became more open and democratic, and they welcomed students of diverse social strata, with different intellectual abilities to enroll in their institutions. The social and political developments that influenced the expansion of the HE system included the need to compensate the soldiers who returned home after the war and to include them in the labor market by offering them HE or vocational education (Harris, 2013; Madaus et al., 2009; Schofer & Meyer, 2005; Trow, 2007). “HE expansion” refers to concepts such as diversity, inclusion, equality, and equality in HE, including students with disabilities, and it has been conceptualized differently around the globe (Riddell et al., 2005; Riddell & Weedon, 2014; Tinklin et al., 2005).

The Importance of Higher Education for People with Disabilities

Nowadays, it is known that high school graduation is not enough to prepare for adult life, and HE is part of adult education with a major role in today’s society (Bergman, 2020; Guri-Rosenblit, 1996; Kasworm et al., 2000; L. A. Newman et al., 2020). Acquisition of HE assists adults to gain knowledge and skills, and has a positive effect on individuals’ lifetime experiences, which is important, especially for people with disabilities. In general, HE is “the gateway to the acquisition of a wide variety of marketable skills” (Dutta et al., 2009, p. 10) and can serve as a predictor of meaningful employment, career development opportunities, and quality of life (Sachas & Schreuer, 2011).

The US Department of Commerce (2002) stated that “over the course of a lifetime, an individual with a college degree will earn \$1 million more on average than a worker with only a high school diploma” (as cited by Newman et al., 2011, p. 15). This statement illuminates the importance of the acquirement of HE as a key to well-being, individual development, and success. People with disabilities, who have acquired HE, are more likely to be employed, earn a higher wage, and have a higher quality of life than people without a post-secondary education (Dowrick et al., 2005; Frieden, 2004; National Council on Disability, 2015; Newman et al., 2011; Shaw et al., 2010; Singh, 2019). However, annual reports and academic studies show that people with disabilities still have lower employment rates than the rest of the population. The Disability Statistics Annual Report of 2015 illuminates the importance of the acquirement of HE as a key to well-being and success.

Brucker and Houtenville, (2015) stated that “According to a recent compilation of published disability statistics for the USA people with disabilities still lag significantly behind their peers without disabilities in terms of employment and earnings” (p.771). More recent data provided by the US Department of Labor (2018) indicates that a large gap still exists as “an estimated 21% of non-institutionalized, adults with a disability and 69% of non-disabled adults are employed in the United States” (as cited by Singh, 2019, p. 249). In the USA according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017):

About 16 percent of 25- to 64-year-olds who had not completed high school had one or more disabilities in 2015, compared to 11% of those who had completed high school, 10% of those who had completed some college, 8% of those who had completed an associate degree, 4% of those who had completed a bachelor’s degree, and 3% of those who had completed a master’s or higher degree. Differences in the employment and not-

in-labor force percentages between persons with and without disabilities were substantial, amounting to about 50 percentage points each. Among those who had obtained higher levels of education, the differences were smaller. (McFarland et al., 2017, p. xxxiii)

Global Trends and Changes

Over the last few decades, there has been a dramatic shift in the recognition of human rights for people with disabilities around the world, and many countries have strengthened domestic disability policies based on the human rights model of disability (Devlieger, 2015; Kanter, 2003). Since the 1960s, human rights organizations and activists of the disability movement have called for the implementation of human rights for people with disabilities as part of a general change in social policy (Harry, 2019; Rimmerman & Araten-Bergman, 2005). During that time, the United Nations (UN) was the first international organization to recognize the human rights of people with disabilities and declared their right to full and active participation in all areas of life. These initiatives became increasingly formalized over time and were reflected in international policy (Rimmerman & Araten-Bergman, 2005). In most Western countries, including Israel, people with disabilities were viewed not as citizens with legal rights, but as objects of welfare, health, and charity programs (Rimmerman et al., 2005). Changes range from legislation that emphasizes eligibility for benefits based on disability medical checks, to the enactment of international conventions, and legislative acts that express the principles of equality, prevention of discrimination, and human rights (Rimmerman & Araten-Bergman, 2005).

Another significant event that has had a global impact was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed by President George H. W. Bush in 1990. By signing this law, the US created a legal mechanism to apply equal rights to people with disabilities. The ADA

addresses discrimination against individuals with disabilities and ensures that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in everyday life in the US (Kanter, 2003; Keenan et al., 2019; W. H. Kim & Lee, 2016; Rimmerman, 2013; Rimmerman et al., 2005; Shaw et al., 2010; Tinklin et al., 2005). The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation which has influenced many other countries' disability policies and altered the boundaries of legal discourse. Furthermore, since the ADA's passage in 1990, approximately 40 countries have implemented disability discrimination statutes (Kanter, 2003). The ADA's clear message is that all people with disabilities deserve social equality, awareness, and full inclusion in society (Powers et al., 2002; Vilchinsky & Findler, 2004). This shift in approach from social welfare to a human rights perspective has been reflected in international influence (Kanter, 2003; Mor, 2006; Rimmerman et al., 2005).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which was created and enacted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006, is a relatively recent significant international policy. The CRPD is an international disability treaty that protects and promotes the human rights of people with disabilities worldwide (Degener, 2016; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disability, 184 countries have ratified the CRPD, and 164 countries have signed it (United Nations, 2022).

Disability and Education

The globalization of disability and the attention to education as a human right began in 1990 with the Education For All (EFA) movement led by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This global commitment is intended to give all children, youth, and adults a high-quality basic education. Then, in 1994, during the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, the importance of educating

children with disabilities was highlighted. Inclusion was defined in the Salamanca Action Framework as a change that encourages and welcomes diversity among all students in regular schools (Ainscow et al., 2019; Gabel & Danforth, 2008). It was a cornerstone for the concept of inclusive education, one of the greatest challenges facing educational systems all over the world. The Salamanca conference reaffirmed the right to education of every individual. Representatives of 92 governments (including Israel) and 25 international organizations took an active part in this important event (Hunt, 2011; Shani & Koss, 2015).

Historically, the Salamanca Statement indicated a turning point in the world orientation for persons with disabilities, promoting integration as social and educational inclusion. Inclusive education was also influenced by the human rights movement operating in the US during the 1970s and 1980s. Specifically, the Educational for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was enacted, later amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and amended again in 1997 and 2004 (Hunt, 2011; Rimmerman, 2013; Russo, 2019).

In recent decades, educational systems around the world have experienced changes and challenges. One of these challenges is the implementation of the inclusive education concept (Leyser et al., 2011; Shani & Koss, 2015; Vogel et al., 2016). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) defined inclusion as a “restructuring of mainstream schooling that every school can accommodate every child irrespective of disability (‘accommodation’ rather than ‘assimilation’) and ensures that all learners belong to a community” (p. 131). The implementation of inclusion is perceived as a phenomenon for foremost social justice action, by providing equal educational opportunities to an increasing number of students with disabilities in general education settings (Ainscow et al., 2019; Leyser et al., 2011; Shani & Koss, 2015; Vogel et al., 2016). Israel, like other Western countries such as the UK, Sweden, and Australia, has passed anti-discrimination

laws following international laws, and the ADA to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in Israeli society in general and in the education system in particular (Kanter, 2003; Kelley et al., 2013; Leyser et al., 2011; Mor, 2006; Rimmerman, 2013; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Shani & Koss, 2015).

Disability Support Services Offices in American Higher Education

Disability support services (DSS) are an important component of the success of students with disabilities (Dowrick et al., 2005; Fichten et al., 2020; Fichten et al., 2014; Hamblet, 2009; Lechtenberger et al., 2012). Specifically, disability support services in HE institutions are responsible for providing appropriate educational accommodations for students enrolled in the institution who have disclosed their disabilities (Evans et al., 2017; Madaus, 2011; Singh, 2019). Policies within the American HE system “ensure the availability of disability support services to assist students in coursework and within their institutional community” (Aquino & Bittinger, 2019, p. 6).

Disability support services provision gives appropriate educational accommodations for students enrolled at HE institutions, interpreting and applying federal laws and policies (ADA and Section 504) for students with disabilities (Evans et al., 2017; Keenan et al., 2019; Madaus, 2011; Shaw et al., 2010). The organization and structure of DSS offices in the US vary by campus, have different names (Disability Support Services, Disability Services offices, Academic Services Office and ADA Office, etc.), and the level and types of support services offered to students with disabilities vary greatly (Burgstahler, 2009; Eisenman & Mancini, 2010). There are two major types of academic accommodations: exam accommodations and course accommodations. Exam accommodations include services such as extended time or schedules, modification of materials, and physical location. Course accommodations include

services such as assignment accommodations, consideration of absences, note-taking assistance, physical environments such as classroom seating arrangements, and alternative forms of course materials (Kim & Lee, 2016).

Adjusting to an HE environment presents challenges for all students, while for students with disabilities, these challenges can be greater. Students with disabilities are responsible for requesting support and services. The process for accessing reasonable accommodations begins with two main factors: the student self-identifying and requesting accommodations (self-disclosure), and the student providing documentation of his/her disability. Additionally, along with their academic coursework, students must interact with faculty to implement their support (Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Shackelford, 2009). For student-veterans with disabilities, the process and procedures seem to be even much harder. According to Shackelford (2009), student-veterans failed to identify disability and accommodation needs until after they had serious academic or other issues.

The Israeli Case

Social Attitudes and Values in Israeli Society

People with disabilities have always existed in society even though they have not always been recognized as part of it. Kudlick (2003) stated that we can use disability as a historical category, while claiming that disability is “crucial for understanding how Western cultures determine hierarchies and maintain social order as well as how they define progress” (Kudlick, 2003, p. 765). According to Admon-Rick (2016), very few types of research have shown unique links between disability and the history of Israel. When we examine the state of disability in a local context, it is important to view it as a social and cultural phenomenon and in a specific socio-historical context. Therefore, I will present and discuss some of the main cultural

characteristics in Israeli society: Judaism, Zionist ideology, and the hierarchy of Israeli social welfare concerning people with disabilities and DIDF veterans in Israel.

Trends and Changes in Disability Policy

Weisbrod (1991) put forth the view that law is part of the local culture, as he stated, “a law is a cultural product and an arena for constructing social reality” (as cited in Rimmerman et al., 2015, p. 47). Examination of a set of laws in its social context reveals links between the social phenomenon, legislation, and the social reaction to that phenomenon. Based on this view, Rimmerman et al. (2015) conducted a very significant study on disability policy in Israel. According to this study, from 1948 until 2014, Israeli disability policy included 55 laws and 124 regulations (and their amendments). The study included a qualitative content analysis of the policy that systematically mapped all of the Israeli disability-related laws by categorizing them as either bio-medical policy or rights-based policy. The finding of the research showed that Israeli legislation regarding disability has reflected a bio-medical approach and had been slow to align with a social model of disability even after enactment of the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law of 1998 (Rimmerman et al., 2015). Israel is still in the process of implementing the laws and making the anticipated changes, as Blanck et al. (2011) argued: “Israel is in a transitional stage” regarding disability policy and disability rights discourse in the social inclusion of people with disabilities in Israel (as cited in Rimmerman et al., 2015, p. 56).

Over the years, the State of Israel has developed a broad and complex set of laws and regulations relating to the needs of people with disabilities (Mor, 2008). There are “18 distinct legal arrangements that regulate different categories of disability according to the circumstances of the injury or disease that led to disability” (Mor, 2008, p. 107). Moreover, besides the anti-discriminating regulations that have been set in recent years, there is a social welfare mechanism

and a medical (bio-medical) approach based on the Disabled Veterans Act –The “Invalids Law (Benefits and Rehabilitation)” from 1949. This law specifically defined the Israeli program allowance for disabled war veterans. The law was adopted right after the Israeli War of Independence, and was the first disability law in the new State of Israel (Gal & Bar, 2000; Gilad & Rimmerman, 2014; Mor, 2008; Rimmerman et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is a public perception that the law has “created the hierarchy of disability in Israeli policy and society” (Ben-Moshe, 2016, p. 52).

Following this view, the Israeli social welfare mechanism has established a hierarchy among people with disabilities by setting three spheres of disability policy and support programs based on the causes of disability divided into workers, veterans, and general disability (Gal, 2001; Gal & Bar, 2000; Mor, 2011; Rimmerman & Araten-Bergman, 2005). The general disability program and the work injury program are the responsibility of the NII (e.g., Social Security Institute), which was founded in 1954 based on the National Insurance Law (Mor, 2005; Mor, 2008). While the disabled veterans’ program is under the auspices of the MoD, which was established in the mid-1950s, the Rehabilitation Department (Mor, 2005). This social welfare policy based on disability allowances (compensation and benefits) differs from other Western countries such as the US and OECD countries (Gal, 2001; Mor, 2011; Swirski, n.d).

The historical perspective is very important in the context of the current state of people with disabilities in Israel regarding their rights according to the social policy, social welfare, and the services they deserve in society in general, and in the HE system in particular. As was already mentioned, the social policy and anti-discriminatory legislation in Israel were influenced by the enactment of the Americans with Disability Act in the USA in 1990. In 1998, the Israeli Knesset passed the first three sections of the new Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law

(ERPWD), which was initiated by the non-government organization *Bizchut* in 1995. These three sections referred to employment, public accommodations in public transportation, and the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As part of this new law, the Israeli disability legislative process included the establishment of this commission under the Israeli Ministry of Justice in the year 2000. The commission acts on behalf of the Israeli Ministry of Justice as a central body to prevent discrimination and promote the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in Israeli society (Rimmerman & Araten-Bergman, 2005; Rimmerman et al., 2015; Vilchinsky & Findler, 2004). In the following years, other laws were adopted by the Israeli parliament concerning the accessibility of public places and services, with the most recent amendment on accessibility in HE institutions from March 2016 (Rimmerman et al., 2015).

A historical review of the Israeli disability laws reveals that these rules are based on a differential system with large gaps between laws concerning various disabled groups. The laws are based on different allocation principles (compensation, insurance, necessity) and determine the extent of the right to compensation and services according to the cause of the injury (general disability, acts of terrorism, accident at work, or in service in the defense forces). This may reflect social attitudes and values that exist in Israeli society toward various disabled groups, as social attitude toward people with disabilities derives from how people perceive the causes of disability with specific norms governing society (Rimmerman & Araten-Bergman, 2005). The three major pieces of legislation for people with disabilities that define the disability programs are The Veterans with Disabilities Law of 1949, which set the disability program on compensatory principles; the Work-Related Disability Law of 1954, which set the disability program on insurance and compensation; and the General Disabilities Law of 1975, which set the disability program solely on a needs principle. These laws reflect the social welfare ideology,

providing cases and benefits based on proven eligibility and focusing on the individual (Gal, 2001; Rimmerman et al., 2015).

These laws and the available benefits programs divide the adult population of people with disabilities in Israel into three main groups. At the end of 2015, the population of the General Disability program was the largest group with 231,165 men and women of working age (18–65), the second-largest group was disabled veterans with approximately 50,000 people disabled because of military or other defense forces service, as well as victims of terror attacks, and the third group is the Work Injury program that includes 47,336 people disabled as a result of accidents within or linked to the workplace (Gal, 2001; Gitelson, 2017; Pinto, 2016; Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization, n.d).

A significant action took place a few years ago when the State of Israel decided to adopt the UN CRPD policy. In 2007, Israel signed the convention, and on September 10th 2012, the government ratified it. Since this time, the Commission for Equal Rights for People with Disabilities in Israel has led the implementation of the convention and made adjustments to Israeli law according to its principles (Commission for Equal Rights for People with Disabilities, Israeli Ministry of Justice, 2014). Following this Act, in recent years, there have been many changes in regulations regarding disability and accessibility policy. These changes are expressed in different areas of life such as in employment, housing, and inclusion in education and the community. This value of this Act has also been demonstrated in public awareness, activism, and media exposure. Despite these changes, recent national reports on the status of people with disabilities in Israel reported that there are no significant changes in the condition of people in this population, and gaps remain between them and people with no disabilities in various aspects of life (Barlev et al., 2015; Ben Moshe et al., 2009). In addition, earlier academic studies that

examined the state of disability policy and people with disabilities in Israel have come to several hard conclusions as well. As stated by Mor (2006), a prominent Israeli researcher, “though Israel sees itself as a society that takes care of its disabled, it has neglected, excluded and marginalized people with disabilities” (p. 64). This statement mainly refers to the fact that of all three disability support programs, the General Disability Program has the lowest disability allotment (Gal, 2001; Mor, 2006). Israelis with disabilities who are recognized under the General Disability law have been calling out and protesting against the low disability allotment they currently receive. Their protest started mainly at the end of the 1990s, and it is still part of the Israeli communication and social media discourse revolving around the issues of employment and the minimum wage.

According to the 2017 statistical report of the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities, over 1.4 million persons with disabilities live in Israel. This specific population constitutes about 17% of the general population; 50% (about 784,500) are adults of working age (18–65), and 17% (about 269,900) are children under the age of 17. As the incidence rate of disability increases with age, 33% (about 511,700) are aged 65 and over. There is currently no comprehensive and up-to-date national information that makes it possible to know the exact number of people with disabilities by each type of disability (Barlev et al., 2021).

Following globalization of the disability process, local concepts of disability have been expressed in a variety of ideas, definitions, structures, and practices that relate to persons, communities, and the world we live in today (Albrecht & Devlieger, 1999; Kanter, 2003). In all existing welfare states, specific groups of people are eligible for benefits from a society based on allocative principles (Gal, 2001; Mor, 2006). In Israel, some Israeli scholars have tried to explain the structure of the Israeli welfare system and the hierarchy of benefits that were set in

the early years of the State of Israel by the values and images created in Zionist ideology and the outcome of the War of Independence in the early years of the State. Recently, Rimmerman et al. (2015) tried to explain their study findings that emphasized that “the bio-medical model constitutes the center of Israeli disability legislation” (p. 54). These researchers examined their findings in the Israeli socio-culture context, looking in the context of religion and Zionism, and at the fact that Israel is a Jewish and democratic state in which Jewish law is embedded in its social law. They were aware of the difference between the bio-medical model of disability and Judaism’s moral model, while they expressed their critical view on both beliefs which observe disability “as physical inferiority, and deviation from the norm” (Rimmerman et al., 2015, p. 55). This study draws on earlier research conducted by Mor who deeply investigated Israeli culture, the historical roots of disability social policy in Israel, and the legacy of Zionism. Mor (2006) claimed that “the hierarchies of welfare benefits reflect national values and collective imageries, but at the same time reinforce and re-constitute those values and modes of imagination” (p. 64). Mor's study was written following the general strike of disabled people who demanded improvement in their benefits and rights. Mor argued that the hierarchic and segregated Israeli disability policy was built on the Zionist ideology, which was based on the idea that labor, hard work, and productivity are essential for designing new life in their homeland.

Jewish Law and Perception of Disability

According to the biblical story, a man stands in the center of the world's creation, when he was created in the image of God. Accordingly, the perception is that we all were created from one source, and therefore we are entitled to equal attitude and treatment. From early times, Judaism has recognized people with disabilities and referred to their role in Jewish life and in Jewish sources. In the bible, there are references to people with disabilities and how we should

behave towards them. Jewish law reveals deep ambivalence on the issue of the meaning of disability. On one hand, it perceives disability according to a moral model (as a sin, God's punishment) and disqualifies the disabled from religious duties. On the other hand, the law refers to the value of human dignity, society's responsibility, and attitude toward the disabled (their need for mercy and protection) based on the Jewish tradition of mutual responsibility and providing support for weak individuals or groups in the community (Nadav, 2008; Rimmerman et al., 2015; Schulstein, 2012). Today, public conversation on the subject of inclusion of people with disabilities in Jewish society opens a window to how Jewish law and the Jewish community as a whole deal with the unique needs of individuals with disabilities within it (Schulstein, 2012; 2015).

Zionist Ideology, Heroism, and Sacrifice Perception

The fundamental principle of Zionism for “new Jewish” immigrants in the early days of Jewish settlement in Israel was a contrast to the “old Jewish” image, i.e., the anti-Semitic images in Europe (Mor, 2006; 2008). Mor argued that “disability stood in total contradiction to the language and images employed by the Zionist vision, as it was “a reminder of the Jew’s ‘crippled’ condition in pre-Israel times” (Mor, 2006, p. 101). These two cultural identities (the strong vs. the weak Jew) are linked to the way disability is perceived in Israel today and in the past, and to the way Israeli society views veterans with disabilities as well.

Along with the Zionist ideology of the pioneer, the “new Jew,” the *Tsabar* who was born in Israel and has a healthy and strong body (Rimmerman et al., 2015; Weiss, 2002), there is a collective awareness of the importance of the Israeli army (IDF) in the nation-building (Ben-Eliezer, 1994). The importance of the Israeli army was expressed years ago by David Ben-Gurion (the first Prime Minister of Israel), who stated “... We do not have hundreds of years, and

without the instrument of the army ... we will not soon be a nation...” (as cited in Ben-Eliezer, 1994, p. 51).

The IDF has a unique place in Israeli political and social life culture. Moreover, through the years, the Israeli army has taken part in many civil functions such as helping new immigrants, teaching the Hebrew language, and educating about social responsibility to know and appreciate the country. Israel is conceptualized as a “Nation in Arms,” or an "uninformed nation" (אומה במדים) since its beginning (Ben-Eliezer, 1994). The new Israeli identity was developed with a different view from the Jewish prototype in exile. Ben-Eliezer (2012) stated that “the ‘new Israeli’ perceives himself as a recruit in the mission of the nation-state and is even willing to sacrifice his life for it” (as cited in Kabilo, 2020, p. 99).

In this unique situation, “the army disabled veterans represent the ideal of the total heroic sacrifice for the good of the nation, and as such do not always succumb to the devaluation and stigma associated with a disability” (Ben-Moshe, 2016, p. 51). Heroism and sacrifice perception of the disabled veterans in Israel has been part of the rhetoric of Israeli leaders since the first time Ben-Gurion expressed the collective commitment to DIDF veterans when he introduced the 1949 Invalid Law (Mor, 2006; Nadav, 2008). This perception is held by State institutions and the general public in Israel, and it is reflected in disability and rehabilitation policies (Paran et al., 2017). This approach and its effect on the status of people with disabilities in HE in Israel will be discussed in more detail in this dissertation.

The Ethos of Disabled IDF Veterans

The structure of the welfare system and the hierarchy of benefits as they were set in the beginning of the State were based on values and images created in Zionism. Gilad & Rimmerman (2014) argued that the government preference can be seen in the two early disability

laws: the Disabled Veterans Act (1949) and the Work Accidents Act (1954). The Disabled Veterans Act (1949) expressed the “priority for disability related to defense and security” (Gilad & Rimmerman, 2014, p. 230). The state has a “moral commitment” to those who sacrificed their bodies for the country. Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel stated, “the concern for the disabled soldier is the State's matter only” (Nadav, 2008, p. 25); while the Work Accidents Act (1954) expressed the Zionist spirit “as based on values of labor and productivity” (Gilad & Rimmerman, 2014, p. 230).

The ethos in Israeli society today is that the State of Israel does its best to reward those who have sacrificed their lives and souls for the protection of the State and that the State values the DIDF veterans and prioritizes them over other Israeli disabled groups.

Academic studies and journal articles dealing with the social welfare of people with disabilities in Israel refer to the rights of DIDF veterans, showing that these rights are the spearhead/at the head of the pyramid of social rights in Israel (Gilad & Rimmerman, 2014; Mor, 2006; Tal-Katz et al., 2011). Gold-Gazit (2019; 2021) disagrees with this claim and clarified its inaccuracy. In her recent publications, she discussed the gaps that carry away the ethos of the People's Army and the ethos of the DIDF veterans' rights in a manner that may badly affect the motivation for military service. Gold-Gazit (2019; 2021) argued that reality links up with the ethos only partially and gives examples that illustrate that reality is not always as the public perceives it. For example, a soldier who suffers a leg injury during operational activity and is recognized with a 20% disability will receive a lower payment than his friend who is a citizen or was soldier in regular service who received a similar injury on his way to work. Gold-Gazit (2021) also indicated that there are situations in which the rights of DIDF veterans will be superior, as in the case of veterans with more severe injuries who have been recognized with higher disability rates.

Disability and Hebrew Terminology

In the context of this study, exploring the way the Hebrew language structures disability seems important. By looking at the Hebrew terminology that has been used over the years, we can view the changes in values and social policy through the years. This includes terms like *invalid* from the 1930s, *disability* in the 1940s and 1950s to use of current terms such as *people with disabilities*, *people with special needs*, *people with impairments* (Admon-Rick, 2016). Today, there is a strong politically correct tendency to regard this term in Hebrew (“people with disabilities” – *anashim im mugbalut*). Until recently, people from all levels of Israeli society including policymakers and professionals used the Hebrew term *anashim balie mugbalut*, which can be translated as *people who are owners of disabilities*. Unfortunately, you still find many people using the old term who are corrected to use the phrase *people with disabilities* or *disabled people*. This may be viewed as unimportant by some people, while others will consider it important as it represents a shift in social awareness and a transitional stage in disability policy and social inclusion of people with disabilities in Israel.

The social attitudes and values that are part of Israeli society are embedded in the disability policy and public awareness. Rimmerman et al. (2015) questioned the strong approach of the medical (bio-medical) model in Israeli disability policy that they found in their research, despite the new disability regulations based on the social model. To answer these findings, Rimmerman et al. (2015) brought reasonable explanations and evidence from previous studies that showed that, in Israel, the disability rights movement failed to establish, and some disability advocates continued to support the bio-medical view and approach. Following Rimmerman et al., findings and evidence, the disability policy and disability discourse in Israel should be re-

investigated following the new regulations enacted in recent years, along with the ratification of the UN CRPD in 2012 by the Israeli government.

The Israeli Education System

In the United States, the term “Inclusive Education” is common, while in Europe, the terms “Widening Access” and “Widening Participation” are commonly found (Riddell & Weedon, 2014; Tinklin et al., 2005). In Israel, policies and procedures that promote the inclusion of students with disabilities were developed earlier in the twenty-first century by following the lead of other Western countries. Some of the relevant changes that have occurred in K-12 education involve new policies in special education and inclusion in the general Israeli education system.

From Special Education to Inclusive Education.

Following the passage of the Special Education Law (SEL) in 1988 and its implementation in the early 1990s, the issue of integration and inclusion in Israel received attention, and a large number of children who had previously received assistance in segregated settings began to attend general education institutions (Ari-Am & Gumpel, 2014; Gavish, 2017). Social and legal developments in the US in the 1970s and 1980s fueled this process in Israel. American legal advances inspired Israeli parents of disabled children enrolled in special education programs, and encouraged them to demand their children's right to equality before the law (Gavish & Shimoni, 2006). The implementation of the concept of inclusion in the Israeli education system is primarily a social justice action phenomenon bringing to the surface essential and practical issues in the field of general and special education (Tuval & Orr, 2009). In Israel, “Inclusion has become the most common term to refer to practices that integrate students with and without disabilities in general education” (Shapiro & Baglieri, 2012, p. 12).

Until recently, the Hebrew word *shiluv* was commonly used to represent inclusion practices without a clear distinction in meaning, while referring to English terms such as “mainstreaming,” “integration,” and “inclusion,” as the implementation of the inclusion concept was very slow in Israel. In many contexts, the Hebrew language alternates between these two important principles of integration and inclusion. Overall, there is a continuum in special education frameworks, ranging from special schools to partial or full integration in regular classrooms (Gavish, 2017). Following the implementation of the new Special Education Reform (the 11th Amendment to the Special Education Law), addressing student placement processes, announced by the Ministry of Education in the summer of 2018, the term “inclusive education” has taken on a new meaning (Uziely, 2018). This amendment anchored promotion of the transition of students from special education to general education settings. The regulation was passed in response to a rise in the number of special education students and their prevalence among all pupils in the educational system in recent years. This new reform has been met with strong opposition in Israeli society; disability organizations, parents, teachers, and researchers have claimed that there is a disconnect between the declaration of intent and the actual budgeting of a student with a disability attending a conventional school (Weisblai, 2020). In light of the current reform, “Inclusive Education” has been translated into Hebrew, and new terms such as *Hinuch Machil*, *Hinuch Machlil*, and *Hinuch Kollalani* have lately become popular (Halamish Eisenman & Jezreelev, 2019).

Finally, it is vital to stress that there is no systematic database of children with disabilities in Israel – their number, distribution by type of disability, functional disability, services offered to them, and responses are all lacking. According to a December 2017 estimate, around 200,000 disabled children are now living in Israel (Monikandam-Givon, 2019). According to

Monikandam-Givon's (2019) report, the most common disabilities among all pupils in the special education system are LDs (50%), followed by developmental and language delays (18%), and behavioral and mental problems (14%). Data on students integrated into the regular education system suggests that children with hearing and vision disabilities have the highest rates of inclusion (77%), followed by those with LDs (74%), borderline IQ and suspicion of developmental mental retardation (68%), developmental and verbal delays (66%), and physical disabilities and rare syndromes (66%).

Following these findings regarding the percentage of students with LDs in the Israeli educational system, a recent report (Sachs, Shruener, Spiegelman, et al., 2020) reveals that "the majority of the students who receive services from the disability support centers are students with LDs and/or difficulties with attention and concentration. Additionally, many of them reported multiple disabilities" (p. 3). Previous studies have provided similar data on the number of students with learning difficulties in HE. In 2008, about 17,500 students with LD studied at HE institutions, comprising 5.6% of all students in institutions of post-secondary education (Finkelstein & Tabakman, 2008). According to more recent data from the Council for Higher Education (CHE), in the 2015–2014 school year, approximately 18,300 students were recognized as having LD by institutions of HE by the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) – approximately 10.5% of all undergraduate and graduate students in these institutions. The statistics do not include students with LDs studying at the Open University in Israel (Weininger, 2016). These findings are comparable to the proportion of students with LDs in HE institutions in the US (Heiman & Olenik Shemesh, 2012).

Military Service in Israel

About three years after the victory day of the Allies in World War II in Europe, the State of Israel was established on May 14, 1948. Israel, as a Jewish state, was born after the British rule over Palestine was ended. The president of the US at that time, President Harry S. Truman, was one of the first international leaders to recognize the new state, minutes after its establishment was announced (Lorch, 1996).

David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister and the first defense minister of the State of Israel laid the foundations for the establishment of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) (Drory, 2009). The IDF is well known as the “People’s Army” (Cohen, 2009; Lomsky-Feder, 2017), and it has a central place in the social and cultural life among Israeli citizens and is a source of pride for Jewish people all over the world (Lissak, 1969; Segev & Schiff, 2019; Sheffer & Barak, 2010). In addition to its military security mission, Ben-Gurion assigned the army a major role in the building of the Israeli State and society, and the rebirth of the Jewish people in Israel (Cohen, 2009; Drory, 2009).

Army service in the IDF is compulsory for all citizens or permanent residents (men and women) by the Defense Service Law, 1949. (S. Cohen, 2009; Drory, 2009; Sasson-Levy & Lomsky-Feder, 2018; Sheffer & Barak, 2010). Military service is a requirement from ages 18 to 21, and it is central to secular Jewish Israeli society and is the core of full citizenship (Weiss, 2002). On July 1st, 2015, a change was made in the length of service, and nowadays, Israeli men serve 32 months (instead of 36 months), with up to one month of reserve service per year until age 45, while women continue to serve 24 months (Baum et al., 2013; *The Israel Defense Forces*, 2022).

Overall, the recruitment rate among the Israeli public was recently published under the Freedom of Information Law by the IDF Spokesperson's unit. This report shows that, in the last decade, the proportion of men who enlisted in the IDF ranged from 70–75%, and the proportion of women was 55–58% of the general public in Israel. While most of the youth who enlist come from the secular sector (about 75% of men, and around 90% of women), the rest come from the national-religious sector (men ~19% and women 8%) and the religious-ultra-Orthodox sector (men 3% and very few women), (Silverman, 2021). Recruiting members of the ultra-Orthodox Jews who study in religious institutions (yeshivot) is widely debated, and the mandatory recruitment law does not apply to them. According to the August 2018 Knesset Report, only 7,250 ultra-Orthodox soldiers have served in the IDF (Elmasi, 2018).

In the IDF, there are several minority populations: The first includes Druze and Circassians, who have been taking part in the compulsory service since 1956. Bedouin, Arabs, Muslims, and Christians serve in the IDF under volunteer service (Orgad, 2005; Reich, 2007; E. Weiss, 2012). In general, Arab citizens of Israel are not called to serve in the military, and most ultra-Orthodox Jews enjoy the same privilege (Bagno-Moldavski, 2015). However, in recent years, there has been an increase in both recruitment of ultra-Orthodox Jews and of Israeli Arabs. Hermann et al. (2017) stated that there has been an increase in the proportion of young Arab Christians who wish to join the IDF, and that there is an increase in the proportion of young Christians interested in enlisting. Moreover, they found that “the Christians are more interested in integrating into Jewish society and feel more comfortable than Muslims and even Druze (for example, they are less afraid to speak Arabic in Jewish public space)” (p. 31).

Some soldiers are recognized as volunteers – young men, and women who have arrived in Israel from other countries (mostly Jewish or former Israeli youth) who come to Israel for the

purpose of joining the IDF. Another group of volunteers is the population with disabilities, who enlist for certain positions and under dedicated programs. In general, people with different disabilities need to volunteer for military service. Despite the importance of this service in Israel, until recently, people with disabilities and, especially people with intellectual disabilities, were excluded from serving in the IDF because of their medical and cognitive conditions. “Equal in Uniform,” developed in 2007, is one of the unique programs that exists today for people with intellectual disabilities (Werner & Hochman, 2019). Another unique program is the “See Far” program (*Roim-Rachok*) (<https://www.roim-rachok.org/>) which is designed to train and accompany those with autism in the IDF.

Regarding compulsory service in the Israeli military forces, “Military service in Israel affects international comparisons of the enrolment rate of young adults. In Israel, 70% of young people leave education between the ages of 18 and 24, the highest rate across OECD countries. Among OECD countries, Israel spends one of the highest shares of its gross domestic product (GDP) on primary, secondary, and post-secondary non-tertiary education” (*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, 2019).

The People's Army

In Israel, the compulsory service model is a cornerstone of the "People's Army" ethos on which it rests IDF since its inception. The IDF's presence as a "people's army" in society Israel is very prominent and tangible compared to the military presence in society in other Western democracies. In light of the heavy national missions (security and settlement) and according to the leadership of the early days of the state, this concept was well integrated into the collectivist ideological values of the Zionist movement which devoted great importance to pioneering and settlement fulfillment through meaningful military service (Malchi, 2021).

The duty of army service in the IDF was seen for many years as a great privilege and there was a high motivation among the youth to draft into the IDF (Orbach, 2009; Sherer, 1998). The status of the IDF in Israeli society is high. Thus, the belief that the IDF has a key role in the existence of the State of Israel is a cornerstone in the Israeli collective consciousness and the conscience of Israeli society (S. A. Cohen, 2013; Malchi, 2021). The IDF initially relied on the nation's model in uniform (*Uma BeMadim*), based on an ethos of equal recruitment without class, party, or ethnic identification in the Israeli society. While the army is designed to represent the good and unifying of Israeli society. This model was very dominant in Israeli society until the end of the 1970s (Malchi, 2021). However, over the recent decades, there has been a gradual and consistent decline in the proportion of young Jewish recruits to the IDF. According to recent press releases, in December 2019 the IDF recruited 61.9% men and 38.1% women, whose average age was 18 and 9 months (*Data on IDF recruits - the Numbers Behind the New Enlistment Cycle*, 2019).

Recruiting members of the ultra-Orthodox Jews who study in religious institutions (*Yeshivot*) is part of a wide public debate in recent and the mandatory recruitment law does not apply to them today. From the first years of the State of Israel, an arrangement has been in place that allows ultra-Orthodox young people to postpone their enlistment in the IDF if they choose to study Torah (Stern, & Zicherman, 2013). In 1998, the Supreme Court ruled that the growing number of denials of service necessitated the regulation of denial of service in primary legislation. Twenty years ago, the Knesset enacted the Tal Law, which was intended to open the door to the enlistment of ultra-Orthodox, but in 2012 this law was overturned by the Supreme Court because the law had not achieved its goals (Elmasi, 2018; Stern, & Zicherman, 2013). In general, and following the permanent arrangement in the Security Service Law 1986, yeshiva

students may be denied a service or exempted from service following compliance with the conditions specified in the law. According to the August 2018 Knesset Report, only 7,250 ultra-Orthodox soldiers served in the IDF. Of the 7,250 ultra-Orthodox who serve in the IDF in August 2018, approximately 19 percent (1,350) served in the IDF general framework, and not in the unique service lanes for the ultra-Orthodox (there is no definition or data on the number of former ultra-Orthodox in the IDF), (Elmasi, 2018).

Some people see the recruitment of many ultra-Orthodox to the IDF as an important matter in the context of the relationship between the state, the ultra-Orthodox, and the general population (Stern, & Zicherman, 2013). The issue of ultra-Orthodox recruitment is one of the issues raised in the Israeli society in recent years regarding the continuing decline in enlistment rates to the IDF and the recruitment policy (Goldstein, 2014). Other considerations are related to technological development and thinking about reducing the IDF's military forces (Malchi, 2021).

Despite different opinions in Israeli society, seventy years after the establishment of the state and unlike most other countries' armies, the IDF was and still is the "Army of the People", a public institution of unique status in Israeli society (Eran-Jona & Padan, 2018)

Given the IDF compulsory service and the security situation in Israel and the Middle East, the Israeli army is an ever-present feature of daily life, and soldiers are seen as part of daily life in Israeli society.

Gender and Military Service in Israel

One of the issues investigated in the context of the IDF recruitment model and its perception as the "People's Army" is the positioning of gender equality. Israel is currently the only country in the world where about a third of the compulsory military units comprise women" (Sasson-Levy & Lomsky-Feder, 2018, p. 20). The IDF is based on the principle of civilian

militarism based on mandatory conscription of both men and women (Lomsky-Feder, 2017). After its formation, a decision was made to recruit women as well. (Amram-Katz, 2018; Grisero, 2010). David Ben-Gurion stated that women should be drafted into the army for two main reasons: First was the value of equality, as a State that does not demand from its women the same obligations that it demands from men is a State that has no intention of giving women equal rights. The second reason was the security situation at that time and the need for everyone to help in defending the new State (Grisero, 2010).

Historically, women served in the defense and combat forces before Israel's establishment in the Jewish undergrounds and women's corps of the British army. However, right after the establishment of the IDF, and until a few years ago, a striking distinction was made between women's and men's positions (Amram-Katz, 2018; Grisero, 2010). The amendment to the Israeli Defense law in 1952 defined professions that were not intended for women in the following categories: combat roles, harsh environmental conditions, and professions that require a great deal of physical strength (Rimalt, 2007). In 1986, this law was updated, and many sections were added to it, but it has not yet led to a change in the roles of women in the IDF. Given this reality, Amram-Katz, (2018) discussed the masculinity principle as a central perception of any army, and the view that a man is perceived as the preferred force. This view is based on the identity of the battle world on the one hand and the common perception of aggressive male identity on the other. Hence, seemingly, women have no place in this world because the stereotypical female image is an antithesis of the basic components of the world of warfare.

A shift in this situation happened in 1994 when a lawsuit was filed in the Supreme Court by Alice Miller, a young girl who was interested in enlisting into the pilot course in the Israeli

Air Force (Amram-Katz, 2018; Lomsky-Feder, 2017; Moshe, 2013). Overall, the Miller Supreme Court case was the final reason that discrimination against women in a significant place made its way into the public discourse, and eventually led to the opening of combat roles for women as well (Eran-Jona & Padan, 2018; Moshe, 2013; Rimalt, 2007). However, significant changes in the gender structure of the IDF only began in 1995, while men and women soldiers started to participate in courses together, from training to an officer's course, with women taking on combat positions during their compulsory service (Lomsky-Feder & Sasson-Levy, 2018; Moshe, 2013). At the same time, the Women's Corps was revoked, and in its place, an advisory unit was established for the Chief of Staff for Women's Affairs (*Yohalan* – יוהל"ן) which was intended to provide information and recommendations on the integration of women in the army. Recently, this unit was renamed the Chief of Staff's Advisor to the Gender Affairs Unit, (*Yohalam* – יוהל"ם), (Lomsky-Feder & Sasson-Levy, 2018).

In recent years, the number of combat woman soldiers has been increasing, but the overall rate remains marginal (Eran-Jona & Padan, 2018). In 2004, the first mixed infantry battalion (*Karkel*) was established, and since then “the rate of military professions open to women has been on a steady rise: in the 1980s, 55% of IDF positions were open to women, in 1995 their rate was about 73%” (Moshe, 2013, p. 5) and since 2012, about 86% of the units in the IDF have been open to women (Shafran-Gittleman, 2018). Most combat professions require female combat soldiers to have 38 months of voluntary service and reserve service under conditions similar to combatant conditions (Moshe, 2013).

Until recently, little has been written about combat women and their experiences in operational situations. This is because for many years women in Israel, as in many other places in the world, were not part of combat units (Harel-Shalev & Daphna-Tekoah, 2021). This study

recently published by (Harel-Shalev & Daphna-Tekoah, 2020, 2021) sought to bring out, for the first time, the frequently silenced voices of combat women in the IDF. The researchers used a qualitative analysis of narratives of IDF combat women, intending to bring their experiences out of a desire to undermine binary thinking about gender, military service, and combat situations. The study focused on the double battle in which Israeli combat women find themselves in conflict zones, as soldiers and women, illustrating the complexities of their situation.

Analyses of their data indicated that study participants who served in combat roles reported having to deal with gender stereotypes, with resistance, including derision from male combat soldiers or Palestinian men they met during their service. This was in addition to the moral complexities of their service, and first and foremost, the problematic nature of service in an army that controls a civilian population, women had to face questions of gender. Their research focuses on how female combat soldiers cope during their military service, and how they can be supported. This is in light of the effort that these soldiers are fighting for their place in the Israeli army, their integration into traditional male military roles, and the role that gender has in their personal experiences. Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah's research offers, in addition to adopting a feminist perspective, a variety of new insights into the experiences of combat women that have been truly lacking so far in the existing literature on military experiences in Israel. The authors call for a more flexible and open analysis of similar experiences, which transcends the dominant binary analytical frameworks. In this sense, their research adds a new and important layer to examine the importance of IDF combat soldiers' narratives from a gender perspective in research fields such as international relations and security studies, which so far have been perceived as very masculine (Garciani, 2022).

Overall, Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah's research provides both a critical feminist perspective on trauma and knowledge about traumatic experiences among women.

One of the important findings that emerged from the study relates to disability and, specifically, to PTSD. Their study points out the importance of awareness of gender differences in trauma research, specifically, the need to shift the discourse on PTSD in the context of gender, military, and masculinity. They call for breaking the stereotypes of hysterical women, women as victims of rape and abuse, and women as victims of PTSD, and to better listen to the variety of women's traumatic narratives. However, as Garciani (2022) noted, the study lacked a focused reference to the participants' experiences after their release from military service and transition to civilian life.

Recognition of Military-Related Injury/Illness

From its early days, the State of Israel needed to secure and defend the country's borders. DIDF veterans are part of the quiet and persistent reminder of the continual conflicts and the high price of war in Israeli society (Araten-Bergman, Tal-Katz, & Stein, 2015). In light of the role of the military in Israeli society, the State of Israel has a moral and legal obligation to take care of DIDF veterans (men and women) who endanger themselves in defending the state (Araten-Bergman et al., 2015; Gold-Gazit, 2021). This attitude is reflected in Israeli law and by the responsibility of the Rehabilitation Division. "The Ministry of Defense Rehabilitation Department is the government authority designated by law to support and serve the community of veterans who have suffered an injury during their service in the IDF or other national security frameworks" (Israel Ministry of Defense, 2017) (<https://bit.ly/3w65Ftl>).

The Disabled Law (Benefits and Rehabilitation) of 1959, which was modified in 2017, regulates the issue of benefits and medical treatment of those who were injured during military

service or were affected by such service, or in any other national security service branches as defined by the law (police personnel, Israel Prison Service, Israeli Parliament (Knesset) guards, and civil guards (*Mishmar Ezrahi*), (Mor, 2006; Peleg-Gabay, 2021).

The definition of disability under this law refers to:

Loss of ability to perform a normal, physical, mental or intellectual activity, including cognitive activities, or the reduction of this ability, caused to a soldier or discharged soldier as a result of 1) injury that occurred during his service and due to his service; however, in the case of a soldier in permanent service, an injury which is a service injury; and 2) Illness or aggravation of an illness that occurred during his period of service and due to his service, but in the case of a soldier in permanent service – a service illness or aggravation of a service illness that occurred during his period of service and due to his service (The Disabled Persons [Benefits and Rehabilitation] Law, 1959 as cited by Peleg-Gabay, 2021, p. 3).

One of the Rehabilitation Division's divisions, the Claims and Eligibility Determination Unit, is responsible for the recognition process. The stages of this process and the authority of the medical committees appointed for this purpose in the Rehabilitation Division include the functional assessment of the person who has applied for recognition from the Ministry of Defense regarding a military-related injury or illness, as well as determination of the degree of disability. Applications related to obvious injury or combat circumstances, training accidents, or ongoing security are directed to the "green track." Applications that are not routed in this way are classified into one of two possible classifications: injury claims, usually due to old injuries, or those whose circumstances are not unequivocal and clear, as well as illness claims (Peleg-Gabay, 2021).

Since information on the number of D IDF veterans is not readily available to the general public, Peleg-Gabay's (2021) report is vital. This document contains information that was provided by the MoD following a personal query submitted by the author of that report. It was written as part of the activity of the Knesset Research and Information Center, and it provides a formal description of the recognition process by the MoD and data on the number of people who applied to the MoD for recognition as D IDF veterans in the past years. Some of the report's key facts are shared below. The process of recognizing a D IDF veteran by the MoD following military or other security missions is known to be a long and frustrating process consisting of two main stages: (1) examining the causal connection between the injury (or illness) or its aggravation and the security service, under the responsibility of a compensation officer, (2) determining the degree of disability by a medical committee. Two Rehabilitation Department units, the unit for Claims and Determination of Eligibility and the unit for Medical Committees are responsible for carrying out the examination process of applications at various stages, recognizing those who are eligible, and determining the degree of their disability/ies.

- The report shows that during the years 2015–2019, approximately 3,200 to 4,900 applications were submitted to the Rehabilitation Division per year; 55%–60% of them were requests for recognition of disability due to injury, and the rest were due to illness.
- Overall, the rate of requests for recognition for injury in different circumstances was usually double the rate of requests for recognition of injury in operational circumstances. Of the requests for recognition for illness, about a quarter to a third were mental illness-oriented.
- Following the submission of these applications, the Remuneration Officer made 6,200–5,200 decisions per year: 57%–67% of their decisions were in regard to injury, and the rest to illness.
- Between the years 2015 and 2018, in approximately 54%–69% of the decisions the committees made regarding injury, the injury was recognized. Of these decisions, 65%–76% involved cases of injury in operational circumstances and 49%–65% in general circumstances).
- In 54%–69% of the decisions made regarding injuries, it was decided to recognize the disability.

- In 37%–45% of the decisions made regarding disease, it was decided to recognize the disability (54%–68% of the cases of mental illness and 20%–31% of the cases of general illnesses).

Similar findings were viewed in an earlier report from October 2016 from the MoD, which reported that 61% were recognized due to injury in different circumstances and 39% were recognized regarding illness. Of those recognized due to injury, 23% were recognized for circumstances related to combat activity, a terrorist incident, or military training, and another 38% were recognized following other accident circumstances (10% for work accidents, 10% for non-operational car accidents, 16% for various accidents such as falling in the shower, and 2% for accidents occurring on vacation including car accidents). Other important statistics were found in the budget report of 2016, such as the distribution of DIDF veterans by the type of their security service: compulsory service 53%, permanent service 16%, reserve service 21%, police 7%, prison service 1%, and other 2% (*Budget proposal for the fiscal year 2018–2017 and explanatory notes: Submitted to the 20th Knesset, Security – Unclassified issues*, 2016).

During the year in which this study was conducted (2017), about 57,000 eligible DIDF veterans received services from the MoD Rehabilitation Department from a budget of about NIS 850 million (Peleg-Gabay, 2021). Similar data were received from the MoD in response to my request for information from the Israeli MoD Public Inquiries under the Spokesperson's unit: 57,286 DIDF veterans were officially recognized and receiving support from the Israeli MoD, the Rehabilitation Department. Of this total number, 37,790 DIDF veterans were over 50 years of age. This indicates that there are about 19,496 DIDF veterans under the age of 50, which is the age group most relevant to this study (The Public Inquiries, The Ministry of Defense, 2017).

Disabled IDF Veterans and Rehabilitation

In general, veterans moving from the army to civilian life encounter significant challenges during this time of transition (Ahern et al., 2015; Cooper et al., 2018; Kelty et al.,

2010). Despite the similarity that can be found between DIDF veterans and disabled veterans in other Western countries, some significant differences include Israel's mandatory recruitment, younger recruitment age, permanent service, reserve duty, needing to cope with the challenges in the rehabilitation processes at a younger age, cultural elements, a multiplicity of wars and operations since the establishment of the State, as well as different legislative arrangements (Segev, 2016; Segev & Schiff, 2019).

In his book, Nadav (2008) reviewed the history of the MoD Rehabilitation Department, during the years 1948 to 2005. He indicates that society's responsibility and treatment of people who were injured during their security service began even before the establishment of the Israeli State, referring to people who were protecting the Jewish population during the 1930s. According to Nadav (2008), from a historical perspective, since the earliest days of the State of Israel, the Rehabilitation Division was guided by a constructivist perception that has impacted its rehabilitative approach. The term rehabilitation refers to restoring the specific concern to its former state to the maximum extent through deliberated action. Nadav emphasized that the perception of rehabilitation should address not only the medical aspects, but also social and occupational aspects; To provide a person who was injured or became ill with the optimal quality of life in all areas of life.

Rehabilitation programs for veterans with disabilities in Israel include three main tracks: rehabilitation for studies, rehabilitation for work placement, and independent economic rehabilitation. These tracks are part of the services of the MoD, which include vocational rehabilitation and career development counseling (Segev, 2016; Tal-Katz et al., 2011). Segev (2016), who investigated the integration of DIDF veterans in the workplace, found that there is a link between the type of disability, the type of military service (compulsory service, reserve duty,

permanent service), and the rehabilitation intervention. Specifically, he found that disabled veterans applied for rehabilitation intervention that includes studies in training and education programs by the type of military service as follows: compulsory service (59.4%), reserve duty (48%), and permanent army (23.5%). Among all types of disabilities, about half of the participants were assisted in the rehabilitation intervention, which included training and/or education. However, 36.4% of head injuries and 46.5% of mental injuries were not assisted by any rehabilitation program (Segev, 2016).

A unique group of DIDF veterans in the Israeli HE system was the focus of this research. Schlossberg (2003), who investigated the identity of DIDF veterans, indicated that “the literature on Israeli war veterans is primarily rehabilitative and psychological” (p. 27). He emphasized the expansion in the field of research on veterans with psychological impairments such PTSD. Researchers such as Solomon Zehava who have studied this population since 1990 and Stein-Jacobs who joined this field in 2015 are lead the field of veteran studies regarding Israeli veterans with PTSD, their symptoms, social constructions, and social and family support. In recent years, they established the National Center for Traumatic Stress and Resilience at Tel Aviv University (https://english.tau.ac.il/global_campaign/healthandwellness/post-trauma).

Along with other academic studies mentioned above about DIDF veterans and their transition to civilian life, recent academic research was conducted as Ph.D. dissertations by researchers with work affiliations in the Israeli MoD (Kroch, 2009; Segev, 2016; Segev & Schiff, 2019; Shnoor, 2016; Shnoor et al., 2017). These researchers focused on different populations of DIDF veterans of different age groups and in different contexts. Shnoor (2016) investigated the “Quality of life and personal well-being of IDF disabled adolescents,” and Segev (2016) investigated "The integration of the IDF disabled at work: Characteristics and predictors."

Kroch (2009) studied “Living with military-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD),” comparing Canadian and Israeli disabled veterans.

Other relevant studies on this population were done by researchers who investigated topics regarding the disability policy in Israel and the social welfare mechanism (Gal & Bar, 2000; Gilad & Rimmerman, 2014; Mor, 2008; Rimmerman et al., 2005). Recent studies by Gold-Gazit (2019, 2021) examined the issue of DIDF veterans' rights and the public discourse in connection with this specific population. Only one study mentioned DIDF veterans in Israel's HE system in some way (Fichten et al., 2016). In this study, Fichten and colleagues examined the sustainability of providing services for students with disabilities in HE in Canada and Israel. Interestingly, in their study, they made the following hypothesis: “Given the military service requirement in Israel, we expected a larger proportion of Israeli students to be veterans with disabilities such as mobility impairments, and chronic physical and mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorders” (p. 25). This hypothesis was not confirmed in their study, and will be discussed later in this study. Following this brief review of the literature on DIDF-veteran students, I felt the need to delve into DIDF veterans' experiences in the Israeli HE system.

Israeli Higher Education System and Inclusive Practices

There is overwhelming evidence that only 19% of people with disabilities have an academic degree, compared to 33% of people without disabilities in Israeli society. Conversely, more people with disabilities have a high school education level or lower than the general population (Barlev et al., 2017; 2021). The inclusive education policies in the K-12 system influenced overall the increase in the number of students with disabilities in this system and the graduation rate from secondary education. This development has influenced their entrance into HE (Leyser, 2011).

Scholars and policymakers are recognizing the importance of the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Israeli educational system and its future benefit for their adult life, looking at HE and employment. They recognize the importance of accessibility and disability services in HE for people with disabilities to participate and inclusion in Israeli society (Dangur, 2013; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). Almog (2018b) compared the general population of students in Israeli HE in the academic year 2011 to the academic year 2017. According to the statistics in this study, the proportion of students with disabilities was quite low when compared to the population of students without disabilities: “only 1.2% in 2011 and 1.7% in 2017” (p. 43). Other recent data reports show that, despite an increase in the number of students with disabilities in HE, the proportion of this group of students (about 20%) remains quite low when compared to persons without disabilities (about 36%) (Barlev et al., 2017; 2021).

Along with the rise in the number of students with disabilities and the broader trend toward expanding higher education, Israel's legislation on people with disabilities has also grown. While in the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law (1998) there was a Chapter referring to accessibility which was enacted in 2005. This Chapter includes comprehensive regulations regarding the accessibility in different public places including HE. Comprehensive regulations were enacted in 2016 which mandate the obligation of institutions of HE and institutions of vocational training to be accessible in all their aspects (physical accessibility and service accessibility) and it was scheduled to take full effect by the end of 2018. Among other things of this law, the HE institutions are committed to establishing DSCs in each institution as well as providing various accessibility accommodations to their students. In addition, there is the Law on the Rights of Students with Learning Disabilities in Post-Secondary Institutions from 2008, which was amended in 2014 and for which regulations have not yet been enacted (Almog,

2018a; Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019). After these laws, the commitment of HE institutions in Israel is to provide accessible educational services on their campuses: including the establishment of support centers at each institution (universities and colleges; public and private), providing accommodations for many issues such as information accessibility, libraries, modifications in professional tours, various modifications in learning processes, and providing accommodations in evaluation processes, as well as information, guidance, and support both for administrative and academic staff. In the last 27 years, there has been a revolution in Israel regarding the accessibility of HE for people with disabilities. As part of this change, about 55 support centers have been established in a significant portion of all institutions of HE (Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019). According to various estimates, about 20,000 students with disabilities receive consistent and professional support in the support centers each year, of which several thousand have complex disabilities, about 4,000 of whom are also recognized by the NII (2016) and are also recognized as eligible for rehabilitation (Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019).

Israeli Higher Education – Importance and Development

In Israel, the value of HE is well understood, and it is widely agreed that well-educated people move the economy ahead. The Israeli HE has a crucial role in the nation's development, and it is recognized “as more than institutions occupied with creating and transmitting knowledge” (Troen, 1992, p. 45). Rather, they are “been widely appreciated as an intellectual reservoir which can contribute to the solution of social and political problems, to the development of the country's economy, and the to the strengthening of its physical defense” (Troen, 1992, p. 45). In its early days, Israeli universities “were essential to this effort for they provided skilled personnel as well as carried out work in laboratories” (Troen, 1992, p. 56).

Israel is a small and young country compared to other Western countries. At the time of the State's establishment (1948), there were only two HE institutions in Israel: the Israel Institute of Technology – the *Technion*, which was founded in 1924, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which was founded in 1925 (Davidovitch, 2011; Rokach, 2016; Sehayek, 2005). Herskovic (1992) pointed out that in 1948, there were only 1,635 students at both academic institutions (as cited in Guri-Rosenblit, 1999), and they constituted less than 3% of the relevant age group (21–24 years old) (Guri-Rosenblit, 1999).

HE in Israel was originally shaped in its initial stages by the elite European HE tradition, while the American HE tradition gained a gradually dominant influence (Irám, 1982). Historically, from 1948 until the 1990s, HE in Israel was public and included only universities. The universities were regulated by the CHE and had high public esteem domestically and internationally. In the 1990s, however, the system was radically transformed. Major structural reforms were taking place with privatization (establishment of private institutions), internationalization (licensing of extensions operated by foreign universities), and diversification, (development of a public college sector). These reforms dramatically changed the landscape of Israeli HE and led to an increase in the number of academic institutions (Menahem, 2008). The expansion in Israeli HE is expressed first and foremost in the increasing number of institutions, the proliferation of accredited institutions, and the increased number of students enrollment since the 1990s. This expansion is mainly a result of the establishment of new HE institutions – degree-granting colleges (*michlalot*) – which concentrate on undergraduate programs and, unlike the older universities, are not research-oriented (Ayalon & Yogev, 2005). This development was integrated into the global trend of expansion of post-secondary education (Ayalon, 2008; Ayalon & Yogev, 2005; Davidovitch, 2011).

Today, the Israeli HE system includes 9 public universities, 20 public academic colleges, 12 private academic colleges, and 21 colleges of education (*Higher Education in Israel Selected Data for 2018/19, 2019, p. 11*). In general, Israeli higher education presently comprises of universities that specialize in research and graduate studies, as well as colleges that specialize in undergraduate degrees (Davidovitch et al., 2012). This move was designed to “serve as an act of equality and social justice for students from the periphery in Israel by allowing them access to Israeli HE” (Davidovitch et al., 2012, as cited in Rokach, 2016, p. 32).

According to recent statistical data, compared to previous years, a dramatic increase in the number of students can be seen, with almost 300,000 students enrolled in the 2018–2019 school year (*Higher Education in Israel Selected Data for 2018/19, 2019*).

This situation is also reflected in international reports, for example in reports from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) from 2019, the average rate of persons with HE in OECD countries was 44 %, while the OECD average stood at 41% (*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, 2019, p. 7*). Relating to this data, Israel was ranked in 2018 among the 10 most educated countries in the world with 49.9%, while Canada had 56.27%, Japan 50.5%, and the US 45.67% (*Most Educated Countries 2022, 2022*).

To sum up, the above data and historical perspectives highlight Israeli society’s values that see human capital as a vital resource for its economy and resilience. HE in Israel is seen as a natural continuation of the education system and as a way to reduce social gaps and promote equality in society.

Entry Requirements for Higher Education

High school graduation is a significant milestone in one’s life and is an important component in the transition to HE. In Israel, students' admission to HE institutions is determined

by their final matriculation (*Bagrut*) exam results, which grant them the requisite *Bagrut* certificate. In addition, a composite score from the Psychometric Entrance Test (a national standardized test) is required for admission to some Israeli HE institutions. This method combines stringent selection with the *Bagrut* at the end of high school and psychometric screening by the universities.

Students with Disabilities in Israeli Higher Education

According to global statistics (*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, 2019; Most Educated Countries 2022, 2022*), Israel is one of the countries where the proportion of academic institutions is relatively high for the population, but the proportion of people with disabilities with HE is relatively low, partly because the HE system has been inaccessible for many of them and is not tailored to their needs (Almog, 2018a; Dangur, 2013; Fichten et al., 2016; Sachs et al., 2013).

Various reports and academic studies have indicated that there has been an increase in the number of students with disabilities attending HE programs, especially in light of the development of legislation, the inclusion policy in Israel in HE, and the development of support centers (Almog, 2018a, 2018b; Dangur, 2013; Eliav et al., 2015; Sachs et al., 2013). Particularly, there is evidence for the rise in the number of students with LDs (Al-Yagon & Margalit, 2016; Leyser et al., 2011; Meltzer & Dahan, 2016; Russak & Daniel Hellwing, 2015; Vergen, 2006). This rise can be credited to four major trends: growing public awareness, legislation, support services at the secondary level, and support services in HE (Russak & Daniel Hellwing, 2015). However, as was stated earlier, there is a lack of national statistics regarding the number of students with disabilities in all Israeli HE systems (Almog, 2018b; Dangur, 2013; Fichten et al., 2016). In addition, there are no data on dropouts of students with disabilities from Israeli HE

institutions, but according to Sachs and Shrueuer (2009), 18.8% of students with disabilities shift from one institution to another during the school year compared to only 9% of students without disabilities (as cited by Sachs et al., 2020, p. 3). As the rate of Israeli students with disabilities continues to rise, the support services available for these students will be discussed in the next sections.

Inclusion and Discourse on Accessibility in Higher Education

In Israel, the common term “accessibility in higher education” (*negishut bahskala ha gevoha*) is used both in the State’s new policies and plans, and in academic research. However, much of the Israeli academic literature uses this term to describe the general expansion in HE, and the inclusion of periphery and marginalized specific social sectors in Israeli society. Among this research, some studies are addressing the general shift from elite participation to mass participation in HE (Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007; Kirsch, 2010), while others are investigating the social gaps in HE based on ethnic affiliation based on parents’ country of origin (Sephardim or Ashkenazim), Arabs versus Jews, other group affiliations as gender identity, socioeconomic status, and regional differences (Ayalon & Yogev, 2005; Dobrin, 2015; Feniger et al., 2015; Guri-Rosenblit, 1996; Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007). Yet, many of these academic and state publications that were located and retrieved discussed issues of expansion, massification, or diversity in Israeli HE with no reference to the unique population of students with disabilities or student-veterans with disabilities.

Only 19% of Israelis with disabilities have an academic degree, compared to 33% of non-disabled people, according to the Commission for Equal Rights for People with Disabilities (2016). In compared to the general population, more people with disabilities have a high school education or less (Commission for Equal Rights for People with Disabilities, 2016).

Findings in US studies indicate that disability policies and legislation that influence and serve students with disabilities in K-12 settings (IDEA 2004 and IEP plans) indirectly affect the transition experiences of students with disabilities in HE both in the support services process and in service quality (Kimball et al., 2016). Likewise, the inclusive education policies of the Israeli education system influenced overall the increase in the number of students with disabilities in K-12, and the graduation rate from the secondary education system. This development influenced their entrance to HE (Al-Yagon & Margalit, 2016; Leyser et al., 2011). Scholars and policymakers are recognizing the importance of the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Israeli education system and its future benefit for their adult life, looking at HE and employment. They recognize the importance of accessibility and disability services in HE in order for people with disabilities' to participate and be included in Israeli society (Almog, 2018a; Sachs et al., 2020; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011).

The Development of Disability Support Services in Israel

HE institutions in Israel started to follow government social policies and to implement their disability provision into their organizational policies to increase awareness and make progress in the areas of accommodations and support services (Almog, 2018a; Meltzer & Dahan, 2016; Sachs et al., 2013; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). Additionally, following the development of DSS offices in other Western countries, Israel first established its own disability support services offices in 1995. The first steps forward were taken in 1992 after a group of parents formed together with stakeholders in the field of LDs and established the *Leshem Association – for the Advancement of Education and Employment for People with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders*. Then, in 1995, the association initiated the establishment of the first DSCs for students with LDs at Tel-Hai College in the Upper Galilee (Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019; Meltzer

& Dahan, 2016). Since these first steps, DSCs have evolved and expanded to most HE institutions. Meltzer and Dahan (2016) stated that there are 55 DSCs that serve over 17,500 students in different academic settings.

In 2011, most of the disability support services were expanded and became DSCs designed for all students with disabilities. This change can be attributed to the "Revolution in Higher Education Project," which was initiated by the Foundation for the Development of Services for the Disabled and the Foundation of Special Enterprises of the NII. This project assisted in the establishment of new DSCs and the expansion of existing ones. The project aimed to increase the number of students with disabilities in HE institutions and ,as a result, to increase their chances of integrating into employment appropriate to their skills and their abilities. Two main objectives set for the project were to increase the number of students who will start and finish academic studies, especially students with severe disabilities, and to increase awareness among members of institutions of HE (academic staff, administrative staff, and other students), (Eliav et al., 2015; Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019; Meltzer & Dahan, 2016; Sachs, Shruener, Spiegelman, et al., 2020).

Sachs et al. (2020) reported that overall ,as part of the project, a total of 36 DSCs have been established and are operating in 31 different HE institutions throughout the country including universities, colleges, technological colleges, and colleges of education, sports, and the arts. Some of the activities regularly include accompaniment and peer learning with the participation of directors of the centers and deans of the institutions, members of the Rehabilitation Division of the (NII), representatives from the Ministry of Health, and other professionals in the field. Sachs et al. (2020) documented the project, examined its' development and the available services of the support centers to evaluate the success of the project. The study

was conducted in two stages over four years (2014–2018) and included a mixed methods research design. The data collection tools included questionnaires and personal interviews. The research participants were diverse and included students with disabilities who received services in the DSCs, students with disabilities who did not receive services in the support centers, students without disabilities (as a control group), administrative staff and staff academics, and last academic degree graduates who received support from the DSCs who had transferred to the labor market.

One of the significant findings of Sachs et al.'s (2020) report relates to the fact that most of the students with disabilities who participated in the study were students with LD or ADHD. Despite their extensive and lengthy research, there was no reference at all to students with disabilities who had a background of injury or illness as a result of military or security service. Therefore, this report mainly joined the vast research conducted in Israel about students with LDs (Almog, 2018b).

In addition, it is important to note that there are various bodies involved in supporting students with disabilities in HE in Israel (the NII, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health, and the MoD). In this context, (Almog, 2018b) pointed to the lack of reference to students with disabilities in the policy of the CHE within work programs, collection of data about students with disabilities, and especially distribution of financial resources among the various support factors. In terms of implementing the services and resources directed toward supporting students with disabilities in HE, Russak and Daniel-Hellwing (2015) also indicated that “the scope and intensity of services vary from one higher education institution to another based on differences in budget, policy, staffing, and nature of each academic institution” (p. 186).

Following the above statements, this literature review indicates that there is a lack of reference to this research population.

Accommodation and Services in the Israeli Higher Education System

Accommodations in taking exams refers to changes in the conditions of the examination, that allow the student to express his knowledge, while maintaining the essence of being tested, i.e., avoiding changes in the knowledge or skills that the exam measures. The accommodations provided are not "assistance" but adjustments, with the purpose to allow examination under fair conditions, as needed and under presentation of the required documentation. Accommodations for taking exams are intended to enable equal academic rights for students with disabilities, such as LDs, or other impairments or medical conditions. Despite this description and the distinction between these two words in the Hebrew language, such services are perceived as an easement by the general public. From the same prevailing position in the general public, students with disabilities themselves tend to use the incorrect expression of the facilitations instead of adaptations, as happened in this study as well. According to the Law on the Rights of Students with Learning Disabilities in Post-Secondary Institutions (2008; 2014) (<https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Legislation/Laws/Pages/LawPrimary.aspx?t=lawlaws&st=lawlaws&lawitemid=2000640>) students with a disability of 65% or more, students with blindness, students with mental health disabilities, and students with a learning disability are entitled to academic mentorship, which includes: mediation at the place of study, orientation in the learning environment, and strengthening of personal skills. The academic institution is not obligated by law to provide mentorship services but is subject to agreements and coordination between the academic institution and the NII. The DSCs responsibility is to provide students on-campus with counseling, support services, and personal and professional guidance in connection with their

studies at that institution. The academic institution also commits to improving physical accessibility in the classrooms, the campus environment, and during events (Clinic for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the Hebrew University & Saman – Students Leaders in Accessibility and Integration, 2018). The DSC services that most students choose to use during their studies include: academic accommodations mainly for exams (extension of time, quiet room, exams on a computer), coordination of exam dates with the exam division, transcription services, accessible classrooms, personal counseling, private lessons by teaching staff, psychological assistance, personal tutoring, assistive technology rooms, vocational advisement, and learning strategy and time management workshops (Sachs, Shruener, Spiegelman, et al., 2020).

Disabled IDF Veterans, Rehabilitation, and Higher Education

Since the early days of the state of Israel, rehabilitating DIDF veterans has been viewed as a value-based strategy based on care and gratitude. This viewpoint formed out of a sense of solidarity and a desire to integrate DIDF veterans back into Israeli society, and specifically into the workforce. Following the Disabled Law of 1959 and the Disability Benefits and Rehabilitation Regulations amendment of 1987, one of the paths for rehabilitation placement for recognized DIDF veterans was to provide them with opportunities for vocational training and HE (Nadav, 2008). Decisions to approve vocational studies and HE falls under the authority of the committees for HE and vocational training in the Rehabilitation Division in the MoD. As Nadav (2008) explained, HE has always been a part of DIDF veterans' vocational training for specific occupations (especially in the past) and, in some circumstances, DIDF veterans were also assisted in finishing their high school education (*Bagrut* certificate). Nadav highlighted that, in

the past, the number of DIDF veterans who enrolled in HE was low because they were asked to sign a contract promising to pay tuition at the end of their studies.

Nowadays, the significant support agent for DIDF-veteran students outside of academia is the MoD, particularly the social workers in the Rehabilitation Division. Following new updates in the regulation (Disabled IDF veterans' Benefits, Education Funding for a Rehabilitated Disabled Veteran, 2017) a DIDF veteran must meet several guidelines to receive financing for his studies from the MoD:

- A 20% or more recognized disability (10% or greater if recognized before 1.1.1996),
- If the DIDF veteran is unprofessional, or if he or she is forced to change professions due to the recognized injury, or
- If he or she requires professional training to establish himself in his workplace.

The MoD provides financial assistance to cover the costs of registration, tuition, and payment upon completion of specific courses, such as (in English, Hebrew, mathematics, chemistry, or physics), that a DIDF-veteran student will need for his specific studies and the program admission requirements.

In the MoD (2017), there is a reference to exceptions and restrictions such as those defined in the law regarding a “rehabilitated disabled veteran” – a DIDF veteran who already received support from the State to start a business, for vocational training, or for an academic degree studies, as well as a DIDF veteran who has a regular source of sufficient income for his livelihood, or if their education or profession allows him/her to engage in his job. The Rehabilitation Division may, at its discretion, approve the financing of studies also for a rehabilitated disabled veteran, if convinced that one of the following conditions is met:

1. There is an aggravation of the recognized disability, which prevents the person from continuing to engage in their work
2. The person has discontinued their work due to reasons beyond their control

3. The requested studies are a condition for initial integration or continued employment in the workplace

During their recovery, DIDF veterans frequently receive employment counseling, which includes a professional psychiatric diagnosis test. As part of their social rehabilitation, they are advised on vocational training or academic courses in higher education. The rehabilitation program is usually individually tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual and is led by a social worker who serves as a rehabilitation process manager. It may include, for example, physical therapy, psychological therapy, psychosocial services, vocational training, studies, mobility, and personal mentoring (Segev, 2016). The Rehabilitation Division of the Ministry of Defense was mentioned in my study, in relation to providing DIDF-veteran students with financial assistance as well as other services such as personal and social mentorship.

Changes in the Rehabilitation Division of the MoD have occurred over time in both its organization and the definition of who is eligible for its services. Different sorts of military-related injuries, particularly those of mental illness and combat reactions (PTSD), have seen a substantial increase in number over the years, particularly following the Yom Kippur War (1973) (Nadav, 2008) and other recent security tensions and war situations in Israel. It is worth noting that the rehabilitation project for DIDF veterans includes the active involvement of eligible organizations. The first DIDF veterans' organization was founded in 1984, partly with the help of Israeli government officials, and financial assistance was granted on behalf of the state budget for their organizational activities (Nadav, 2008). Over the years, more organizations and associations have been established to assist various groups of DIDF veterans (as some of the participants in this study mentioned).

The Scope of the Population

In the last two decades, there has been a steady increase in the number of overall students with disabilities in HE institutions (Almog, 2018b; Almog et al., 2006). As previously mentioned, few studies have looked into the experiences of DIDF veterans integrating into HE, employment, or Israeli society at large. In this sense, Nadav's book was an essential historical source, as it contains statistics on the number of DIDF veterans who attended HE institutions between 1952 and 1997. However, since then, the number of DIDF-veteran students has not been documented or recalled in any of the recent academic studies or in any other available statistics reports in regard to the Israeli HE system. Moreover, the latest records of DIDF veterans who transfer to HE system are not available to the HE institutions, national databases, or the Israeli public. The numerical records that are presented in this Chapter and in some other sections of this study were received from the MoD in response to my requests to the Spokesperson's unit in the Public Inquiries Division during the period of this study. Thus, in the academic years 2017–2020, I sent several requests for the population data under the procedures of the Freedom of Information Act, which included personal application reasoning and payments. My first requests for more detailed information such as for age, gender, and HE institution preference (university/college) were not met. I received more specific information, which is shown below, only after sending further requests and payments. Several important pieces of information were discovered from these data records. First, the number of DIDF veterans in HE in Israel is relatively small. Table 1 presents the number of DIDF veterans in Israeli HE in recent years, during the time of this study (Israeli Ministry of Defense 2017, 2019, 2020).

Table 1

Number of DIDF-Veterans in HE (2016-2019)

Academic years	Number of DIDF-veterans in HE	Reference to time of the research
2016-2017	535	Proposal Time
2017-2018	433	Survey time
2018-2019	546	Interview time
Total	1,514	

(Israeli Ministry of Defense, July 2017; December 2019; April 2020)

The MoD data indicates that there were only 546 DIDF veterans in 82 post-secondary educational institutions (including non-academic institutions) in the 2018–2019 academic year. At the same time, according to the CHE, 316,400 students studied in 62 Israeli HE institutions. The total number of Israeli academic institutions is divided into eight research universities, one open university, 32 academic colleges, and 21 academic colleges of education (The Council for Higher Education, 2019). Accordingly, the number of DIDF-veteran students in HE is relatively low. See the distribution of the 546 DIDF-veteran students by age, gender, and degree of disability in Israeli post-secondary educational institutions in the following tables (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

Table 2

DIDF-Veterans in Israeli Post-Secondary Educational Institutions by Gender

Gender	Number of DIDF-veterans in HE (2018-2019)
Male	465
Female	81

(Israeli Ministry of Defense, April 2020)

Table 3

DIDF-Veterans in Israeli Post-Secondary Educational Institutions by Age Group

Age group	Number of DIDF-veterans in HE (2018-2019)
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20-35	503
36-50	40
51-67	3

(Israeli Ministry of Defense, April 2020)

Table 4

DIDF-Veterans in Israeli Post-Secondary Educational Institutions by Degree of Disability

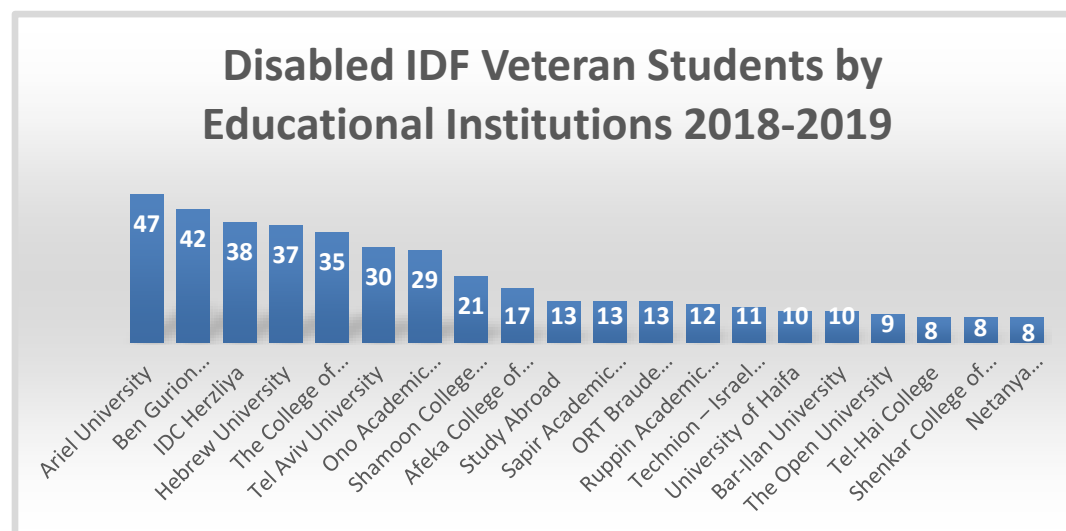
Degree of disability	Number of DIDF-veterans in HE (2018-2019)
49%-20%	434
50%-100%	110
+100%	2

(Israeli Ministry of Defense, April 2020)

Figure 3 below illustrates the distribution of 411 DIDF veterans (out of a total of 546 DIDF-veteran students) between 20 academic education institutions out of a total of 82 post-secondary educational institutions in the 2018–2019 academic year.

Figure 3

The Distribution of the 411 DIDF Veterans in the 2018–2019 academic year.



(Israeli Ministry of Defense, April 2020)

Table 5

The Distribution of DIDF-Veteran Students by Academic Degrees

Academic degree	Number of DIDF-veterans in HE (2018-2019)
BA	381
BA and teaching certificate	21
MA	4
Total	406

(Israeli Ministry of Defense, April 2020)

The latest data information tables were inconsistent with the total figure of 546 DIDF veterans with no explanation given. Overall, the different reports did not include additional information, and inconsistencies in the data were found among the tables presented by the MoD in these reports. Reference to the incompleteness of the information provided by the MoD was also noted in the report of Peleg-Gabay (2021).

It is worth noting that during the preparation of this research work, the ministry provided data from recent years that differed in some parts from those provided initially, and according to the ministry's explanation, this was due to calculation errors. In addition, the MoD's response provided no data in regard to my request for more detailed data regarding specific disabilities, ethnic and national sector segmentation of DIDF veterans, details regarding their HE time, etc. The MoD response was that this information does not exist in their database, as DIDF veterans are not asked to transfer such data. As a result, the focus of this study was primarily on the experiences of DIDF veterans as revealed by the study data, rather than a comparison to the larger population size.

Summary

There is a lack of study on the experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE institutions in general, and specifically on how they chose to identify themselves on their

campuses, as demonstrated in this thesis. While there is extensive research on the experiences of American veteran students and other students with disabilities (students with disabilities in general or specific groups based on the type of disability), this study has the potential to fill in the gaps by highlighting the impact of disability identity and the use of support resources on- and off-campus. Furthermore, the findings of this preliminary study could contribute to the field's understanding of the function of disability identity among DIDF-veteran students and the overall community of students with disabilities in Israeli HE institutions. It can also assist to develop and reinforce the narrative surrounding students with disabilities, and academic accommodations and other forms of support.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This Chapter describes the research approach used in this qualitative interpretive study. The purpose of this research was to gather data related to the experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE and to provide information that will be valuable for improving the awareness of their needs and the efficacy of support resources for them in HE settings.

The focus of this study was to understand how DIDF-veteran students with various disabilities experience their academic journey in different educational settings. The interview protocol sought descriptions of their self-identification, challenges, disability disclosure, and their support experiences. A phenomenological research methodology was chosen since it articulates the essence of human experiences concerning a specific phenomenon in our world, as described by the participant, and makes sense of them directly (Creswell, 2003; Crotty. 2003; Patton, 2015; Seidman, 2013).

The study's research methodology is discussed in this Chapter and includes discussions around the following areas: rationale for the research approach including epistemology and the theoretical perspective; a subjectivity statement reflecting the researcher's positionality, research methods, and data collection; a description of the research sample; steps of the data analysis; and ethical considerations.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

The research design is the way the researcher plans, articulates, and sets up the study process. It is the overall approach regarding the many ways the researcher links up the content of the study so that the process makes sense and the data has meaning (Bloomberg, 2019). The methodology also addresses the strategy that a researcher chooses to integrate the various components of the research coherently and logically, thus, ensuring that they effectively address

the research problem or research questions. The methodology is the program for collecting, measuring, and analyzing the research data.

In qualitative research, meaning-making is socially constructed by individuals in their interaction with their world. Therefore, there are different approaches of qualitative research, while the main common feature refers to its intent to approach the world “out there” (social and cultural) and to understand, describe, and explain social phenomena by using different means to understand the study participants’ perspectives and experiences (Gibbs, 2007; Merriam & Associates, 2002). For this perspective, I describe in this Chapter, the components of my research study and the perceptions that led me as a researcher.

Methodological Framework

Interpretivism Approach

Interpretivism as a form of social sciences research emerged from the work of 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, along with other well-known philosophers such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber, Edmund Husserl, and others (Glesne, 2016a). This theoretical perspective emerged in contradiction to positivism, which is a scientific study of the social world (using counts and measures) (Gibbs, 2007; Glesne, 2016a).

Interpretivism focuses on people's subjective experiences, on how people “construct” the social world by sharing meanings, and how they interact with or relate to each other. The researcher is “interested in understanding how the participants make meaning of a situation or a phenomenon ...” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 6).

Through the years, many different traditions of interpretivism have developed. In particular, Edmund Husserl elaborated on the philosophies of Kant and developed the philosophy of Phenomenology. During the late 19th and the 20th centuries, other philosophers such as Alfred

Schutz, Hans-George Gadamer, and others developed phenomenological theories, and their ideas were used in different disciplines and at different locations (Glesne, 2016a).

Phenomenology Research

Phenomenology is one of several inductive qualitative research traditions. It is rooted in the 20th century philosophical traditions and evolved through the protest of the positivist paradigm (Lavery, 2003; Reiners, 2012). The term phenomenology comes from the Greek, *phenomenon*, meaning “appearance”; thus, the study of phenomena or “study of appearance(s)” of things. Phenomenology examines things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, revealing the meanings things have in our experience (Smith, 2018).

Phenomenology was originally and essentially a philosophical discipline, while it has become a core component as a research method in many human sciences disciplines (Crewell, 2003; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Van-Manen, 2014). Phenomenological inquiry articulates the *essence* of human experiences concerning a specific phenomenon in our world, as described by a study participant, and makes sense of them directly (Creswell, 2003; Crotty, 2003; Patton, 2015; Seidman, 2013). Phenomenologists reject scientific realism, and they focus on describing subjective experiences, subjective points of view, and how subjects experience things (Gallagher, 2012; Schwandt, 2001). Using this approach, a researcher can investigate complex and sensitive issues to reach a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how people think and feel. Phenomenological research in general is an in-depth inquiry into a specific area with a relatively small number of homogeneous participants (Glesne, 2016a).

Phenomenologists insist on a careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life (lifeworld), that is, a description of “things” (the essential structures of consciousness) as one experiences them. These things we experience include perceiving,

believing, remembering, deciding, feeling, judging, evaluating, and all experiences of bodily action. Phenomenology in qualitative research aims to identify and describe the direct subjective experiences of the research participants. It is the matter of studying everyday experiences from the subject's point of view, and it avoids critical evaluation of forms of social life (Schwandt, 2001). There are different methods of phenomenology, divided by different perspectives. Mostly, it is divided into two types: descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. Phenomenology was originally coined by Husserl (Crotty, 2003; Gallagher, 2012; Merriam & Associates, 2002) and later works of Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and others (Schwandt, 2001). As there are many different research methods and techniques that are considered part of the phenomenological research approach, I will briefly review the historical foundation and the different approaches of the phenomenology genre.

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), who was a German mathematician, is considered the founder of the phenomenological movement. Husserl turned phenomenology into descriptive philosophical science (Gallagher, 2012; Reiners, 2012). His method focused on the essential structures that allow the objects naively taken for granted in the “natural attitude” (characteristic of our everyday life and ordinary science) to “constitute themselves” in consciousness. Among those who influenced him were Descartes, Hume, and Kant (Beyer, 2018). Husserl was particularly interested in finding a means by which someone might accurately come to know their own experience of a given phenomenon.

The phenomenological inquiry according to Husserl is descriptive and focuses on the structure of experience (Lavery, 2003; Smith et al., 2009) and the consciousness of the individual. Husserl argued that to “go back to things themselves” was the essence of experience (Smith et al., 2009). To achieve the phenomenological attitude, Husserl developed a “phenomenological

method.” He believed that we could effectively understand the essences of lived experiences through the process of “reduction” and “bracketing.” The process of bracketing is the act of suspending, holding the impact of the outer world, as well as the researcher’s beliefs, bias, and previous knowledge about the phenomenon under study (Laverty, 2003; Smith et al., 2009; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). Lived experiences involve a person’s internal consciousness of life; the “Being” as Husserl defined, it is the lived experience before anyone has categorized, conceptualized, or reflected on it (bracketing). From this view, the researcher must be aware of their bracketing work so that their subjectivity does not bias the data analysis and interpretations (Laverty, 2003).

Over the years, the phenomenological movement flourished and offered a different view into the phenomenology methodology and transitioned from emphasizing only “pure description”, as prescribed by Husserl, to focusing on the interpretation of experience, as advocated by Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur (Finlay, 2009; Van Manen, 2016, 2016; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). Although descriptive and interpretive approaches share the epistemological foundation laid down by Husserl, significant methodological differences have emerged over the years between the approaches (Laverty, 2003; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019).

Laverty (2003) summarized the important distinctions and differences between the two approaches: “Phenomenological research is descriptive and focuses on the structure of experience, the organizing principles that give form and meaning to the life-world.” In contrast, “Hermeneutic research is interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels” (p.28). Interpretative phenomenological research using the hermeneutic phenomenology approach provides a useful and legitimate way to study, understand, and value human

consciousness and action. The value of phenomenology is that it prioritized and investigates “how the human being experiences the world” (Patton, 2015, p. 115).

Following this view, the interpretive approach guided me to a deeper and broader understanding of DIDF-veteran perspectives as students and their support interactions during the time of their academic studies. Creswell (2013) stated that qualitative inquiry is appropriate in research that seeks to explore a complex phenomenon. This statement seems to be significant in the case of the transition of DIDF veterans to HE settings and their subsequent experiences in academic life.

The phenomenological tradition is in line with the purpose of the present study, it allows one to grasp, from the perspective of DIDF-veteran students themselves, the meaning they give to their identity in HE institutions, their challenges, and the support practices they use. This methodology allows careful examination and description of each participant’s experiences in this study, while shaping larger social insights and understanding of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE, however, at the same time, being careful not to unify their experiences and not to generalize. Furthermore, phenomenology as a methodology seeks to gather the meaning of the individuals’ experiences by analyzing their spoken or written language (Kvale, 2009). This aspect was critical to my study, as I interviewed Hebrew speakers and analyzed their narratives in Hebrew and then translated them into English, while the translation to English adds another layer of interpretation (Woodley, 2004).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology Analysis

As an interpretive approach, hermeneutics is not one orderly theory. It includes a variety of theories that differently define the essence of interpretive work. Schwandt (1994) explained the development of hermeneutics and divided it into two main types: objective validation

hermeneutics (of Dilthey, Betti, and Hirsh) with a realistic presentation for objective understanding and, in contrast, philosophical hermeneutics (of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Taylor) concerned with the concept of being and human existence.

Philosophical hermeneutics believes that human existence (*Dasein* – being in the world) is characterized by a subjective interpretation of things. The *Dasein* includes our relation to others, how we “see” ourselves, and our existence in the lifeworld. According to Heidegger, the existence of self takes importance over the essence of self (Bergman, 2010).

Later, Gadamer (1975) emphasized that the work of hermeneutics “is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understating takes place. But these conditions are not the nature of a ‘procedure’ or a method which the interpreter must himself bring to bear on the text” (as cited in Schwandt, 2000, p. 196).

Philosophical hermeneutic phenomenology differs from the descriptive approach, as it is an interpretive approach and it does not reject the use of theoretical orientation, conceptual framework, personal assumptions, or biases of the researcher as a component of inquiry, and they are not bracketed or set aside. Rather the hermeneutic phenomenology asks the researcher to engage in a process of self-reflection (Laverly, 2003).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), who was Husserl’s student, believed that researchers cannot “bracket” themselves from phenomena and that the act of “reduction” is limiting. Gadamer (1900–2002) agreed with Heidegger’s view and concerns regarding the researcher's role in phenomenological inquiry and the perceptions of subjectivity (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). This hermeneutics approach is about making meaning of our lives; it is about trying to understand oneself and others in a common world. The researcher is seeking to understand and see possible problems with the phenomenon that is under study and not to solving them

(Schuster, 2013). Hermeneutics offers the researcher a way to interpret, explore, understand, and handle text. It centers on the subjective experiences of groups and individuals in an attempt to disclose the world as experienced by those being studied through their life-world stories (Kafle, 2013). Hermeneutic phenomenology also provides the researcher with an opportunity to “give voice” to participants’ experiences (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). As Moules et al. (2014) stated: “There is no inner and outer in hermeneutic research, in the sense of an unbridgeable chasm between self and world... Hermeneutic research is always about understanding, about what it means to be in the world in a particular way” (p. 5). Therefore, in hermeneutic research, the researcher is seeking to reach a deep understanding of the richness of the human experiences of the participants, while paying attention to the language and meaning that arise from the participants’ spoken words.

Principles of Philosophical Hermeneutics

From the groundbreaking work of his teacher and friend Heidegger, Gadamer wrote about human subjectivity and developed a critical and dialogical approach to philosophical hermeneutics in his book *Truth and Method*, which was first published in 1960. Gadamer (2003) calls for openness to human otherness and how other people make meaning of their lives (as cited in Schuster, 2013, p. 12) and expand the meaning of the hermeneutic circle (Grondin, 2014). Gadamer used the term hermeneutic circle to clarify that the act of interpretation is subjective and circular, as the process of interpretation is moving between “the interpreter (or his language) and his object (which is also language)” (Grondin, 2014, p. 125). Through the process of interpretation, the interpreter, and the speaker (or the text) are in a dialogue that underlies the common interest in the question and the subject under consideration. This process is called the

“fusion of horizons” by Gadamer (1976), and it is a creative process that cannot be planned and controlled in advance.

The hermeneutic view in this study can be presented as based on three guiding principles: (1) background and prejudices of the interpreter; (2) understanding through dialogue; (3) "hermeneutic experience" or "fusion of horizons."

Background and Prejudices of the Interpreter

Heidegger’s hermeneutics refers to the phenomenological pre-understanding of “Being” and methodology as a circular movement (Crotty, 2003). Heidegger eliminated any distinction between the individual, his experiences, and the interpretation since these are connected and cannot exist without each other. Heidegger believed that phenomenologists could not "shut down" themselves from the phenomena being studied, and the act of "reduction" was limiting. Like Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer also believed that in-depth inquiry must preserve the cultural, historical, political, and social aspects that influence the experience (Bergman, 2010; Vessey, 2007). Gadamer (2004) also identified language as acting and the medium for understanding and as a means of sharing the complexities of human experience.

Heidegger’s interpretive hermeneutics utilizes the hermeneutic cycle method of analysis. The hermeneutic cycle is a metaphor for the process of understanding and interpretation of textual materials, where there is continual review and analysis between the parts and the whole of a text (Bergman, 2010; Reiner, 2012). The hermeneutic cycle includes: reading, reflective writing, and interpretation in a rigorous mode (Lavery, 2003). This circular process involves shifting back and forth between the parts of data collection, while seeing the phenomenon in its context and process as a whole. In doing so, the researcher can arrive at a holistic understanding

of what seems unclear or contradictory, and discover a resolution between segments and the entire text (Kafle, 2011).

According to Gadamer, interpretation does not revolve around the text alone, but it involves the human being who does the interpreting and this person's interaction with the world. Understanding involves language, the historical context of the interpreter's prior knowledge of the world (Lavery, 2003). Language as well as decisions, conflicts, and hierarchies are part of social phenomena. Language exists objectively globally and exerts strong influences on human activities because people interpret it in common ways (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The area of the world that is seen or illuminated by human perceptions is the horizon (Gadamer, 1992). Gadamer uses the everyday word "horizon" as "a metaphor for how we perceive and interpret reality" (Austgard, 2012, p. 830). According to Gadamer's approach, "all interpretations are derived from a basic level of understanding or pre-judgment and accepting the inner world of subjectivity" (Regan, 2012, p. 293). The researcher arrives at the field of research with a set of prejudices, which provide them a kind of "lens" through which they examine the phenomenon under investigation. Awareness of this set of prejudices allows the researcher to examine these and confront them with the information gathered in the study, and in this way to reach a greater and deeper understanding of both themselves and the phenomenon under study. The researcher's reflective observation of themselves on beliefs, ideology, and prejudices is essential to conduct the research and to have a personal and interpersonal dialogue in an interpretive process in qualitative research (Janesick, 2000).

Gadamer's dialogical conception of interpretation and the hermeneutic phenomenological (the hermeneutic circle) allows us to consider the double components ("fusion of horizons") of the interpreter with his object, and with a tradition, positively or in a way that does not

incorporate the idea of a scientific understanding (Grondin, 2014; Schwandt, 1994). The hermeneutic circle integrates different levels of interpretation, in different levels of the text and offers different perspectives: “the participant’s sense of their lived experience and the researcher’s attempt in understanding how the participant make sense of their personal and social world” (as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 82).

Most importantly, in phenomenological hermeneutic research, the researcher brings his/her assumptions, and subjective accounts to the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2017; Seidman, 2013; Van Manen, 2016). Following this perspective, in this study, I discuss DIDF-veteran students' experiences as the experiential basis of this study. My self-experience as a woman with a disability, a former special educator, the knowledge I acquired during my Ph.D. program in Disability Studies, as well as the disability policy laws in Israel are part of the relevant experiences and context of this research and cannot be removed from the interpretive context of this study. Therefore, in this study, I attempted to integrate my own experiences, knowledge, self-perceptions, and beliefs as an integral part of this study.

Understanding Through Dialogue

Holding a phenomenological ontological stance means that an object or truth can only be seen or experienced from our particular situation and perspective and only in the aspects that are accessible from that perspective. According to Gadamer (1976):

The interpreter must recover and make his own, then, not the personality or the worldview of the author, but the fundamental concern that motives the text – the question that it seeks to answer and that it poses again and again to its interpreters... in our own questioning, continually transcending the historical horizon of the text and fusing it with our own horizon, and consequently transforming our horizons. (p. xxi)

The participants themselves were the experts in this study, and I, as the researcher, searched for their ideas, reflections, feelings, and meaningful narratives as they came up during the interviews. Throughout the interview sessions, I maintained a professional attitude coupled with a caring approach. I used both verbal and non-verbal behaviors that helped reduce the social distance between the participants and me. I encouraged them to share their experiences and succeeded in extracting rich descriptions of their experiences, thoughts, and responses that were relevant to this study. Later on through this study, I used several methods to analyze the data, to produce a rich and meaningful description that included a powerful means (poetic transcriptions) to describe the evidence that helped me later to present the research interpretation and insights that emerged from it. Thus, in this way, I sought to bring together the experiences of the participants with my experiences as a researcher, towards answering the research questions.

"Hermeneutic experience" or "Fusion of Horizons."

Gadamer's dialogical conception of interpretation and the hermeneutic phenomenological (the hermeneutic circle) allows us to consider the double components (fusion of horizons) of the interpreter with his object, and with a tradition, positively or in a way that does not incorporate the idea of a scientific understanding (Grondin, 2014; Schwandt, 1994). The hermeneutic circle integrates different levels of interpretation, in different levels of the text, and offers different perspectives – “the participant's sense of their lived experience and the research's attempt in understanding how the participant make sense of their personal and social world” (as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 82).

From the above reasoning, the methodology chosen to guide the study was hermeneutic phenomenology. It is acknowledged that merely describing veterans with disabilities' experiences and challenges in Israeli HE is not enough to fully understand how these experiences

shape their decisions about how to, with whom, and when to self-disclose, and what support resources they use. As a researcher, I know that describing the experiences and challenges of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE is not enough to fully understand how these experiences shape their decisions and actions. However, in order to study this population in Israel, I found hermeneutic phenomenology to be the best way to guide this study.

Research Methods

The lived experiences of DIDF-veteran students were the focus of this investigation, while using phenomenological research methods and procedures. The research procedures governing the study included the following: an online survey, semi-structured interview sessions, a verbatim transcription of the transcripts, and hermetic analysis of the data. Specifically, using phenomenological hermeneutics as a methodology impacts the data collection methods as well as the data analysis procedures, as will be introduced in the following sections of this Chapter.

Data Collection and Tools

Research Setting and Research Phases

This study was conducted partly in the US and later in Israel and used two data collection methods. The study began during the 2017–2018 academic year and continued after I returned to Israel in August 2018. The first phase of the research included an online survey that was designed and distributed during the time I was studying and living in California, while the second phase of conducting the interviews took place a short while after I moved back to Israel in August 2018. The interview guide was designed during the time I was in the US and under the supervision of my dissertation advisors. Returning home was an important component of the study procedure, allowing me to examine this phenomenon in its natural setting.

The qualitative component in this study allowed me to explore, in detail, the experiences of DIDF veterans who were pursuing an academic degree in Israeli HE settings (universities/colleges) or who were recent graduates. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) emphasized the importance of researching in a natural setting: “Researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). Phenomenological research approaches were used for data collection.

Participant Recruitment

In phenomenological research, the purpose of participant choice is to locate people who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation and can transfer their life experiences to the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of DIDF-veteran students and their academic journey in different HE settings in Israel. Locating potential participants was challenging, as very little information is available about this unique group of Israeli student-veterans with disabilities, and how they are managing their academic studies.

In Israel, military service is compulsory, and most of the Israeli population serves in the IDF from age 18 to 21, before entering HE institutions. Therefore, they are not specifically identified as veterans, in the same way as in the US because many university and college students are veterans.

Before providing the data collection procedures and the participant description, I will unfold here some of the challenges I had in locating study participants in the early stages of the research. In the first phase of this research, I sought to locate participants by contacting the Israeli Ministry of Defense, Rehabilitation Department, *Beit Halochem* centers (“The fighter home”), and the “*Zahal*” Disabled Veterans Organization (ZDVO). These are the only

organizations that have the potential research population data and contact information I was seeking.

In light of the subject's sensitivity in Israeli society, information regarding this unique group is not available to the public or the HE institutions. From the initial stages of the research, I contacted these organizations via long-distance telephone calls, and email messages and visited their offices while visiting Israel during summer vacations in 2016 and 2017. I also was in touch with and visited some on-campus disability support services and asked for their help in distributing the survey's link. In light of the lack of response from these organizations and institutions in cooperating with me in launching the survey, the survey link was eventually independently distributed on social media networks, specifically on Facebook (FB). In these circumstances, the study was first addressed publicly, while I was attempting to locate student veterans with disabilities who were officially recognized by the Israeli Ministry of Defense. Later, face-to-face interview sessions were conducted with 13 DIDF veterans. Following these challenges, the research data was collected in two phases: an online survey and follow-up in-depth interviews. (See Appendix B and Appendix C for the list of online survey questions in chronological order in English and Hebrew. See Appendix D for the interview guide questions.)

Online Survey

An online survey instrument was developed to recruit participants and collect demographic data. The survey asked recognized DIDF veterans about their self-identity, disability disclosure, perceptions, and experiences with disability support services in HE institutions in Israel. An online pilot survey was conducted with five DIDF veterans who had graduated from Israeli HE. This phase took place before distributing the online survey, to ensure the relevance of the survey questions, clarify the wording and clarity of the questions (closed and

open-ended questions). The five participants in the preliminary survey were asked not to respond to the survey that was later distributed on Facebook and were not part of the study population.

By using the online survey, the researcher was able to explore and learn about (a) the study target population and its' research sample demographic characteristics (b) what disability services are important for Israeli student veterans with disabilities at universities and colleges in Israel, and (c) what factors influence the students' experiences with disability services and their overall HE experiences.

An invitation to follow-up interviews was set at the end of the online survey, on a separate survey page. Participants who stated that they were willing to be interviewed were asked to leave contact information: their first name, telephone number, and email address. Later, interviews were conducted only with 13 students who had answered the survey and agreed to be interviewed.

Semi-Structured Interviews

A phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection as a tool to uncover the essence and meaning of a research participants' experiences (Merriam et al., 2002). A phenomenologist researcher is not concerned about how things are in reality, rather they are concerned about how human beings experience things. As was stated in the second phase of the research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with all 13 participants. Based on the phenomenological approach, the interview sessions of this study were focused on understanding the lived experience of the study participants and the meaning they made of their experiences (Seidman, 2013).

Kitchin (2000) investigated the opinions of 35 people with a range of disabilities about research methods and their experiences. Kitchin's research gave me inspiration and helped me to

understand that there is “strong support for qualitative methods, particularly interviews, because they allow respondents to express and contextualize their true feelings rather than having them pigeon-holed into boxes with no or little opportunity for contextual explanation” (Kitchin, 2000, p. 43). In light of Kitchin’s findings, as my primary research tool, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to allow participants to respond in a freer manner in order to share their life experiences as student veterans with disabilities in Israeli HE.

All interview sessions were designed with open-ended questions to give a voice to the study participants. The interview protocols were a modified version of Seidman’s (2006; 2013) model of phenomenological interviewing (see the interview guide in Appendix D). The interviews were obtained in a face-to-face manner and were conducted in Hebrew, which was the native language of both the participants and the researcher. The interview structure was based on Seidman's in-depth interviewing method model to structure the phases of the interview sessions. All first interview sessions began with a wide open-ended question such as: “Please tell me about your life...” and moved on to more direct questions such as: “Have you used disability services on campus”? Through the interviews, the participants gave both brief answers and extended accounts. Following Seidman's suggestion, I used a 90-minute format for a standard interview session. All interviews lasted from a minimum of 90-minutes up to three hours. Several participants were interviewed twice, while others were interviewed only once due to personal circumstances such as place of residence (peripheral area far from the center of Israel), personal circumstances (e.g., after giving birth), or work/student life. The relevant information was collected in one session where all the research interview questions were addressed for these interviewees.

Seidman's interviewing method model involves interviews that allow in-depth information to be uncovered from participants that is related to specific topics. "The root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). Seidman organized his interview method into three separate interview sessions to contextualize participants' experiences, while using open-ended questions to "have the participant reconstruct his/her experience within the topic under study" (Seidman, 2006, p. 15). The first interview focused on the life history of the participant with the intent to reconstruct his or her earlier life up to the present time, the second interview is structured for the stories related to the topic or topics of the examination. The third interview centers on reflective meaning.

Following this model, the interviews were semi-structured and adhered to a general protocol while maintaining degrees of flexibility. The interview protocol aimed to capture the participants' lived experiences during their military service, their disability cause/injury event, or any account of traumatic events, as well as the disability's influence on their family and social life, and explicitly on their HE experiences. In addition, the participants were asked to share their previous educational experiences, including during their K-12 studies to pinpoint any difficulties or disabilities before their military service and current experience as students in HE. The interviews focused on participants' disability needs and student life. During the interview sessions, the participants were encouraged to relate to their self-perceptions, self-identity, disability needs, strategies, support experiences, and overall experiences as students on their campus.

The interview structure was flexible and dynamic. Throughout the interview, I used different kinds of questions to open up topics and allow participants to construct answers in ways

they found meaningful (Riessman, 2008). To allow transcription and data analysis procedures, each interview was audio-recorded (using an iPhone and iPad “VoiceRecorder” app). Data were collected from over 35 recording hours and 638 double-spaced pages of text from clean interview transcripts. Analytical memos were written separately by the researcher during the interviews and transcript reading.

The research topic, goals, and informed consent form were presented both at the beginning of the online survey, as well as at the beginning of each interview session. The qualitative experiences shared in this study are specific to the individuals who were interviewed. Therefore, the results emerging from this qualitative study cannot be generalized to this population, but they do identify and illuminate individual experiences of DIDF veterans in Israeli HE.

Informed Consent

Once I established contact with the research participants, I arranged to meet them in person at a convenient location. The interview sessions took place in different locations in Israel: the participants’ homes, a quiet room on their campus, or at public places like a coffee shop. At the beginning of the first interview session, I gave all the participants an informed consent form to read and sign. The form had been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Chapman University. This informed consent form included the study purpose, procedures, and minimal risks and potential benefits, along with provisions for participant confidentiality, storage of personal information, data retention periods, and access to study data, as well as a section for agreement to participate in the study.

Research Population

The population of this study was DIDF veterans in Israel, men, and women who were students in Israeli HE settings at the time of the study or who had recently graduated.

The total number of DIDF veterans is not documented or recalled in any former academic studies or in any other available statistics in regard to the Israeli HE system. Information about this population is exclusively held by the Israeli MoD, and specifically to the Rehabilitation Department.

According to recent data provided by the Israeli MoD (April 2020), 57,286 DIDF veterans are officially recognized and get support from the Rehabilitation Department of the Israeli MoD. Out of this total population, there are about 19,496 DIDF veterans under 50 years of age, which is the relevant age group of this study. From these data, it can be seen that the number of DIDF veterans in HE in Israel is relatively small (see Table 1 and Figure 3). More specific data compared to this study sample is presented in the next Chapter of the findings.

Description of the Sample

Participants were recruited through an online survey that was distributed mainly on social media (FB). Following this strategy, 102 people entered the survey link; out of the total number of those who responded to the survey, only 44 completed it. An examination of the survey responsiveness revealed that some of the questions had not been fully answered, both because of the structure and sequence of the questionnaire (survey logic), and due to the relevance of some of the questions (such as lack of awareness of disability support services). In the survey, respondents were given the option to choose whether they would be willing to respond to a personal interview. Out of the 44 who fully responded to the survey, 20 accepted the offer to be

interviewed and identified themselves by their first name and contact information (telephone number and email address). Out of this number who responded positively to the invitation to be interviewed, I successfully scheduled face-to-face interviews with only 13 respondents, as a number of them were unable to meet due to personal circumstances. This approach allowed me to conduct personal interviews, to meet these DIDF veterans and learn more about their background and experiences, and to primarily hear their voices. From this point, the second phase of the study began, and it included semi-structured interviews with the 13 IDF veterans with disabilities, that served as the main source of data collection for this study. This research sample matched the approach with which I had chosen to conduct the study, as in phenomenology, sample sizes often are relatively small (Connelly, 2010; Creswell, 2013).

All participants had been born in Israel except for one woman who had immigrated to Israel at a very early age. A total of seven women and six men were interviewed, with the number of sessions held with each interviewee ranging from one to two sessions. All 13 participants were Jewish Israeli citizens, while three identified themselves in the interviews as having a religious background (religious Zionism). Despite my efforts to reach out to a diverse population from other sectors in Israeli society who had also served in the Israeli army, all the survey respondents, as well as the sample of research participants who were interviewed, identified as Jews.

There were two main criteria for target participation: (1) Being an Israeli IDF veteran who self-identified as a person with a disability or disabilities due to army or other security service, and (2) Being an IDF veteran with disabilities who was currently studying in an Israeli HE institution or who had graduated in the last five years. Concerning the first criterion, all of the participants who were willing to be interviewed were DIDF veterans who had been legally

recognized by the MoD following their military service. Regarding the second criterion, at the time of the interviews, most participants had stated that they were currently students in Israeli HE except for five participants. Four of them had graduated at the previous year (June 2018) or had taken a break for the semester due to family matters.

Participants’ Demographics

Thirteen DIDF veterans with various impairments who studied in different colleges and universities in Israel were interviewed for this study (see Tables 6 and 7). The Israeli MoD had recognized all 13 participants who were interviewed as veterans with disabilities: Nine participants identified themselves with a physical disability, one identified with a sensory disability, three participants identified with PTSD, and another two were identified with PTSD in addition to their physical disability. The following tables summarize the relevant demographics of each participant based on the information collected from each questionnaire of the online survey participants.

Table 6

Participants’ Demographic Information Summary

Demographic Information	Results	(number of participants)
Gender	Female	(7)
	Male	(6)
Age	20-29	(3)
	30-39	(7)
	40-49	(2)
	50+	(1)
Family status	Married	(9)
	Divorced	(1)
	Single	(2)
	Widow	(1)

Demographic Information	Results (number of participants)
Current higher education setting	Public University (5)
	Private University (1)
	Public College (6)
	Private College (1)
Previous post-secondary experience	Yes (9)
	No (4)
Demographic information	Results
Current student status	BA second year or more (6)
	BA graduated last academic year (2)
	BA on a break from school semester (1)
	MA first year (1)
	MA Last year (2)
	PhD (1)
Military service at the time of injury	Compulsory (12)
	Reserve (1)
	Combat (9)
	Non-combat (4)
Type of disability following military service	Physical disability (6)
	Sensory disability (1)
	Mental health disability (PTSD) (3)
	Physical disability + PTSD (3)
Impairment onset age	18–21 (12)
	30+ (1)
Disability percentage (as recognized by the Ministry of Defense)	20%–29% (5)
	30%–39% (1)
	40%–49% (4)
	50%–99% (2)
	100% (1)

Table 6 illustrates the diverse demographic information regarding the research sample of DIDF-veteran students in terms of age, gender, marital status, disability type, disability rate, and HE program. Table 6 summarizes the background characteristics of all participants in more detail, as collected from the online survey. The significant data emerging from this table are: (a) a large number of the participants were undergraduate students, (b) some of the participants had experience as students in post-secondary or academic settings before their current studies, (c) all research participants had been drafted at age 18 and had served in different units in the IDF and most of them had been injured or gotten ill during their compulsory army service (at the of 18, 19, or 21). Only one participant (Miki) had been injured during reserve service (at age 35), (d) they had diverse disability degrees as recognized by the Ministry of Defense, (e) most of the participants had been recognized as having a physical disability or physical disability with PTSD, and (f) only one participant had been recognized with a sensory disability – a vision disability. Each participant's personal data is listed in greater detail in the Table 7.

Table 7 illustrates information regarding the DIDF-veteran students' pseudonym, gender, age (at the time of response), specific academic degree, academic setting, area of studies, time they started their current academic program, and recognized military-related injury or illness, as well as its percentage rate. Most of the participants were studying at HE institutions that were part of the Higher Education Revolution Project, implying that they had an active disability support center on their campus. In addition, other characteristics regarding the participants' academic experience were examined, as illustrated in Table 8.

Table 7*Participants' Main Characteristics (as collected through the online survey)*

General info			Current Higher Education Info			Military-Related Injury/Illness (Recognized by MoD)	
Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Current Degree	Higher Education Setting and Area of Study	Start Academic Year	Disability Type (Onset Age)	Rate
Yaron	M	32	BA	Public College, Social Sciences	2015-2016	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury), Back injury (19)	40%–49%
Shir	F	27	BA	University, Social Sciences	2016-2017	Vision impairment (not properly corrected by glasses / contact lenses) (19)	+100%–100%
Miki	M	48	MA	Public College, Education and Teacher Training	2016-2017	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury) (35)	20%–29%
Dalit	F	30	MA	University, Social Sciences	2018-2019	Injury in upper limbs (18)	20%–29%
Eran	M	37	BA	Public College, Engineering and Design	2015-2016	Mental illness, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (19)	20%–29%
Sarit	F	42	BA	University, Education	2017-2018	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury), Back injury (18)	50%–99%
Rachel	F	33	MA	Private College, Social Sciences	2016-2017	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (19)	30%–39%
Uzi	M	30	BA	University, (Graduated last year), Social Sciences	2013-2014	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (19)	40%–49%

General info			Current Higher Education Info			Military-Related Injury/Illness (Recognized by MoD)	
Navit	F	30	BA	Public College, (Graduated last year), Engineering and Design	2014-2015	Cancer (skin cancer) that has not been properly treated (19)	40%–49%
Shahar	M	26	BA	Public College, Education	2016-2017	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Back injury, Chest, and abdominal injury, (21)	40%–49%
Noa	F	28	BA	Public College, Social Sciences	2017-2018	Fibromyalgia (19)	20%–29%
Michal	F	33	PhD	University, Social Sciences	2017-2018	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (19)	50%–99%
Sagi	M	55	BA	Private college, Social Sciences	2013-2014	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury) (19)	20%–29%

Table 8

Summary of Contextual Characteristics of Participants – Higher Education Experiences

Variable	N	Percentage
Higher Education Institution:		
Public University	5	38%
Private University	1	15%
Public College	6	46%
Private College	1	15%
Degree:		
BA	9	77%
MA	3	15%
PhD	1	8%
School Program:		
Social Sciences	8	62%
Education	3	23%
Engineering and Architecture	2	15%

Five of the participants studied at different public universities in Israel including the Open University, one at a private university, six studied at public colleges including education training colleges, and one participant studied at a private university. Most of them (eight) studied in fields related to the social sciences.

Both disability-identity and disclosure of disability needs are complex phenomena involving multiple strategies, purposes, and interpretations. In this study, the hermeneutic phenomenology methodology was used to inductively develop key themes based on information individuals shared through semi-structured interviews. Disabled veterans are part of the landscape of Israeli society; The focus of this study was on capturing their experiences and self-identification as students in Israeli HE settings.

Data Analysis Procedures

This research employed a qualitative research design with a limited quantitative component. The first level of analysis utilized a descriptive approach and provided background information about each participant, drawing together general information about the research participant group, as provided by each participant. This level includes the data analysis collected through the first phase of the research – the online survey. The survey data were analyzed using a descriptive strategy to identify participant characteristics. These data were exported from Qualtrics to Excel sheets and were cleaned and organized to demonstrate only the 13 research participants' informed data. Descriptive statistics are mainly used to describe the research participant's background and to illuminate specific perceptions and experiences regarding the use of disability services during their school years.

Semi-structured interviews were the primary source of data collection in this hermeneutic phenomenological study. As a qualitative researcher, I used a few phases of systematic

engagement with the data and applied judgments about what was meaningful and useful (Patton, 2015). The second data analysis phase included a thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) of the interview transcripts as the main practice of my qualitative research design, including participants' profiles and a poetic form (Mears, 2009; Seidman, 2013). This phase of data analysis included inductive analysis, detecting patterns, and identifying themes immersed in the data. I used an iterative process, including cycles of data analysis and interpretations.

The thematic analytic model is mainly based on the work of Braun and Clark (2006), as well as the gateway approach of Mears (2009). These two models served as a general guide in the identification of relevant categories and themes in this study. Braun and Clark (2006) identified six main steps:

- Step 1 – Case-by-case familiarization with data
- Step 2 – Identification of patterns of meaning
- Step 3 – Search for initial themes
- Step 4 – Review and categorization of themes
- Step 5 – Definition and categorization of themes and subthemes
- Step 6 – Discussion and interpretation of findings

Mears' (2005; 2009) gateway approach assisted me in incorporating a thematic analysis with participant profiles and poetic transcriptions. This approach was developed as Mears was studying the Columbine tragedy as part of her doctoral studies. The gateway (Mears, 2009) is "a narrator-centered model for interview research into the 'reality' of a life experience through the perspective of others" (p. 48). According to Mears (2005; 2009) this approach of using an open-ended style of questioning from the tradition of oral history was a way to "invite narrators to share stories of their experiences and to consider the impact of those experiences on the many

dimensions of their life” (p. 48). Moreover, Mears (2009) indicated that “gateway inquiry can help traverse limits of experience, connecting the researcher, the narrator, and the reader by bringing the qualities of a situation or event into vibrant clarity so that all can achieve a deeper understanding” (p. 149). The gateway approach uses a literary style of presentation of original excerpted narratives as a way of data reduction. As a novice researcher, I based my data analysis on these two approaches and engaged the study data with the following steps to analyze it.

The data analysis process of the interview transcripts included the following steps: (a) reading and re-reading; (b) initial noting, coding, and categorizing significant statements from each participant transcript; (c) thematically constructing an explicit process – searching for connections across emergent themes; (d) creating a codebook; (e) describing individual profiles and writing interview transcripts as a poetic form; and (f) looking for patterns across the research participants. These data analysis methods were chosen to explore and analyze the lived experiences, hidden meanings that participants create about their self-identity, disclosure strategies, and disability support services experience on Israeli campuses. The overall data analysis included participants’ profiles, a thematic analysis framework emerging from the interview transcripts, interpretative analytical memos of the researcher, and poetic forms crafted from the interview transcripts.

Reading and Re-Reading

The data analysis and interpretation in qualitative research based on interviews always began with a careful reading of all interview transcripts. To achieve this initial task, I had to carry out several preparation phases: First, the audio recordings of the interview sessions were transcribed. I need to say here that because I am a woman with a hearing loss, the task of listening and transcribing the interviews by myself was impossible. After several attempts to

transcribe the interviews on my own, I decided to share the audio recording with three Israeli undergraduate students in my hometown. Before I shared the audio recording with them, I guided them individually. Second, after receiving the transcripts, I verified them by comparing each transcript to its respective audio-recorded session for accuracy; I read the participants' transcripts while listening to the audio recording using my hearing aid accessibility Resound Smart App and FM assistive technology device. By doing so, I was able to recognize the details in the participants' narratives about their self-experiences. Third, I again reviewed the participants' answers and demographic information which they had provided in the online survey before the interview sessions to get a better picture of their disability identity and experiences as students and to increase rigor and reliability.

Through the process of inductive analysis, I detected patterns and identified codes and categories immersed in the data. I used an iterative process, including cycles of data analysis and interpretations. I used a few phases of systematic engagement with the data and applied judgments about what was meaningful and useful (Patton, 2015). The interview transcripts were coded, and categories were identified.

Coding Process and Thematic Construction

The coding process was accomplished in several steps: First, I read through the participants' transcripts, highlighting significant participant statements, and wrote notes by hand on the printed transcripts. Second, I used computer assistive qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS), specifically Maxqda software. Through the Maxqda software, I defined the codes and sub-codes with the help of the "Code Memo" in Maxqda (see Appendix E). I could define each code by identifying words that tended to be markers of control. In some cases, I added specific comments referring to the participants' experiences and related literature.

Krippendorff (2004) sees computer aids such as Maxqda and the process of coding in qualitative research serves as an interactive hermeneutic in content analysis in general.

Krippendorff called this process *Interactive* as the “content analytic categories become apparent to the analysts in the process of reading...” and *hermeneutic* because “the process of analysis is directed by the analyst’s growing understanding of the body of texts” (p. 303). In this context, Krippendorff (2004) mentioned the hermeneutic circle:

Text is interpreted relative to an imagined context, and these interpretations reconstruct that context for future examination of the same or subsequently available text. The iteration continues until some satisfactory understanding is achieved. Understanding is the point at which the reading of the texts resonates with the analyst’s background.

(Krippendorff, 2004, p. 303)

During the reading and coding process, I referred to the text when the participants: (a) made meaningful statements or judgments about their self-identity as disabled veterans and as students at their HE institution, as well as in some cases when there was a reference to their demographic info and self-perception (*Self*); (b) when the participants shared their experiences as students with a disability who were overwhelmed by many factors, referring to disability policy in Israel, and stating their accessibility needs and barriers on their campuses (*Situation*); (c) when the participants expressed disability self-management and use of support resources (*Support strategies*); and (d) when the participants reflected on their support experiences (*Student experiences and outcomes*). These became the initial four categories of the coding system at the beginning of developing the research codebook. Overall, the interview data increased awareness of the DIDF-veteran student's sense of self, challenges, disability needs, identity management skills and practices, and availability of support resources during their studies.

In the third step, I reviewed the significant statements with more focus on the research questions as a frame of reference and completed another round of thematic coding following the initial coding to ensure consistency as well as to deepen and refine the categories. In the fourth step, I condensed the significant statements and transformed my participants' interview transcripts into poetic form. The participants' statements were reduced and represented in a poem-like structure (stanza) as these poetics became part of the hermeneutic phenomenological research process and assisted me in the data analysis and presentation of findings. The transcripts were divided into five relevant themes: (a) the story of the military-related injury; (b) self-determination as students; (c) the disability category and self-management; (d) self-awareness and use of support resources (on- and off-campus); and (e) self-perceptions and recommendations.

For this dissertation research, the data analysis was limited to the aspects that related to my research questions, emphasizing those that had implications for HE and DIDF-veteran students and other students with disabilities. Therefore, in the next step, the categories were grouped under each research question, and relevant examples were provided under a relevant theme. Lastly, in step 6, the themes were described under broad sets – superordinated themes: (a) multiplicity of self; (b) disability as a fluid state; (c) coping strategies and support resources; and (d) connections and attention. During this stage, themes were compared and modified as the structural analysis of the data progressed, with a shift toward more defined categories and themes connected to related former studies and theories.

Participants' Profiles and Narratives

The researcher's goal is to share the interview data and to mark what is of interest in the interview transcripts. Miles and Huberman (1984) stated that the role of the researcher is to

“reduce and then snape the material into form in which it can be shared or displayed” (as cited in Seidman, 2013, p. 121). Seidman (2013) offered two basic ways to share the interview data: by developing the interviewees' profiles, grouping them into categories, marking passages in the transcripts, and then exploring the categories for thematic connections within among them.

A researcher performing interviews comes to know the experience of the research participants through their stories. As “we learn from hearing and studying what the participants say” (Seidman, 2013, p. 122). Mears, who introduced the gateway approach, also used participant profiles as a way of “distilling transcripts of those interviews in a way that communicates the essence of the experience... a clearer expression of the thoughts and feelings of the narrators, thus, keeping people present in the research, not just represented in summaries or paraphrased profiles” (2009, p. 48). Following Mears' methodology (2005; 2009) and Seidman's (2013) strategy, I found that crafting a profile of the participants' experiences could be an effective way to share interview data and open up the interview material to analysis and interpretation.

Though the selection of the research sample of 13 DIDF-veteran students from the larger group of the DIDF-veteran student population cannot possibly represent the whole of the experience, it does offer a view of a small part of it. Data analysis of this research used the hermeneutical phenomenology analysis approach employing a case-by-case inductive and iterative qualitative analysis of interview transcripts. The content and meaning of the research data are anchored in the focus of the research questions, which enable understanding of the content and meaning of the material under study (Bergman, 2010). The main research question and the following five sub-questions addressed in this study are answered by using the

participant data collected through an online survey and semi-structured in-depth interviews (recordings and transcripts).

Each data analysis phase reflected the hermeneutic cycle of reading, coding, re-reading, poetic form editing, setting categories and themes, representing categories as song stanzas, and interpreting. I built background knowledge related to the research topic with specific awareness of the culture (as an Israeli) and language (Hebrew) of the research participants. Attention to nuances of language enabled connection, and by respecting and truthfully interpreting what the participants expressed, “it is possible to cross borders of understanding so that those outside of a situation can learn from the experiences and responses of those inside who are willing to share their stories” (Mears, 2009, p. 49).

By using this stage in the data analysis, I was hoping to provide a way for the research participants to reach out to relevant individuals outside (faculty, support services staff, Ministry of Defense personnel, and other peers) by sharing what it meant to be a disabled veteran student having these experiences, and creating connections and deeper understanding. For me, as the researcher, it offered an opportunity to deeper self-understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Poetic Forms as a Research Tool

My primary data in this study came from recordings of the interviews. I transcribed all these recordings and searched for meaning in the data collected. The transcription I used focused mainly on the dialog narratives between me as the researcher and the narratives of each participant. The transcript of interviews creates a huge volume of text, and the researcher's task is to reduce the texts inductively to what is most significant (Seidman, 2013).

Following Seidman's guidance (2013) and the data analysis stages described, I searched for a useful strategy to reduce and distill the study interview transcripts. Accordingly, the data reduction in this study was made inductively, after a few reading and rereading cycles and coding (iterative process). Along with the coding process, I chose to add another layer to my data analysis using poetic transcription. During the study stage, I was looking for the best way to represent the participants' experiences and insights, and not only to share the categories and coded themes as a result of thematic analysis.

Reading the interview transcripts and isolating themes can be viewed as a written interpretation of the lived experiences. Through this process, one rewrites the themes while interpreting the meaning of the phenomenon, or lived experience (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Saldaña (2016) was the first reference that I found that made the connection between in-vivo coding, data representation, thematic analysis, and poetic transcription. According to Saldaña, in-vivo coding can serve as a first cycle coding of data analysis or as a "solo method of choice for small-scale studies" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 109). Saldaña's advice is to use more than one coding method. In this study, the in-vivo coding and the poetic transcription were used only after the conceptual and thematic analysis. Following Saldaña's guidance, I was inspired by some academic works that had used poetic transcription as a tool to identify key elements while maintaining the richness of the original expressions of the participants' stories (Furman, 2006; Glesne, 2016; Mears, 2005; 2009; Rogers-Shaw, 2021; Tasker et al., 2014). In addition to these sources, I found that Rogers-Shaw (2021) indicated and detailed that there are many types of research such as poems created from interview transcriptions, interpretive poems, or ethnographic poems, as he shared the academic work of Glesne (1997), Richardson (2002), Furman (2003), Langer and Furman (2004), and Prendergast (2009).

I chose to use poetic transcription, or as it is called in some academic work, “found poetry” or “poetic form” to tell and share the stories of the research participants in their own words and to reveal the thematic findings (Mears, 2009; Rogers-Shaw, 2021; Tasker et al., 2014). This research tool helped me to focus on the co-construction of meaning between myself as the researcher and the research participants. Furman (2006) claimed that poetic phrases within a conversation can crystallize purpose, and poetry often can deliver an experience more deeply than ordinary text.

The compression of a poem allows text to express effect and context, or affect-in-context, powerfully and evocatively. The compression of a poem also makes it more consumable than longer, less “cooked” narratives. Poems are built on concrete, real-world images that engage the reader through various senses. Successful expressive poems are based on empirical data that are sensory and evocative in nature. Imagistic language allows the reader to enter a work and develop his or her own personal relationship with it; the images are transformed into knowledge pertaining to both the poem and the reader. (Furman ,2006, p. 561)

Poetic expressions are one way of using words sensitively (Tasker et al., 2014). A strength of poetry is its ability to engender empathy (Foster, 2012); it represents the opportunity “to transform people's emotional dispositions towards each other, such that more positive feelings are created in the form of greater empathy. In this way, a closer connection and understanding between the researched and the reader is created” (Reilly, 2013, p. 3).

I argue that an emotional response enhances understanding and is necessary for comprehending qualitative research, producing a stronger connection between the research and readers (Behar, 1996).

Developing this study, from a disability studies perspective and the social model, I found that using the poetic form can offer a way to better study and understand the experiences of DIDF-veteran students. I wished to affect change by creating emotionally heightened connections between the participants, myself, and readers through the use of the poetic form. In the same way, Rogers-Shaw (2021) argued that “using poetry, in the field of adult education, researchers can challenge hegemony not only through research content but also through writing style” (p. 1). This example was given to justify the use of the poem’s stanza presentation within the Chapter on the research findings. I also decided to follow my desire to include in this study the participants’ voice in their native language (Hebrew) and its translation into English.

Stanzas

Rogers-Shaw (2021) in his article “Enhancing empathy and understanding of disability by using poetry in research” (p.13) argued that:

Typical academic writing may include powerful direct quotations from participants, yet these statements may be overshadowed by the researcher’s voice that presents the surrounding interpretation. Using poems that set off the words of the participants in stanzas in the middle of the text draws attention to those words in a visually significant way. The white space surrounding the poem can signal the quieting of the researcher’s voice and the contrasting attention to the participant’s voice. (Rogers-Shaw, 2021, p.13)

Smith (2013) indicated that the “colonization of language is part of academic writing where the traditional style of writing and text citation is valued as authoritative and legitimate” (as cited in Rogers-Shaw, 2021, p. 13). Therefore, using research poetry can challenge these assumptions. Rogers-Shaw argued that this data presentation is especially important when the researcher is investigating a topic with social justice concerns. particularly in research on those

viewed as “Others” (people with disabilities) within the society. Reporting on the participants’ narratives in the interviews that are crafted into poems by the researcher is another way to amplify the participants' voices. According to Rogers-Shaw (2021), research that includes poems on disability draws attention to the embodied experiences of the participants. Moreover, scholars who have decided to include poetry in their research can argue that “writers of scientific prose are not the only source of knowledge” (p. 14).

According to Tasker et al. (2014), people make meaning of their experiences in conversation with others, and poetic phrases within such talk offer a means of coming to a deeper understanding of those experiences. Freeman (2007), who chose to use poetic transcription explained the decision to bring the poem stanza into the data analysis as “verbatim passages selected from the participants’ interview transcripts and put into stanzas to make the reading more accessible to the readers” (p. 931). Freeman was inspired by Gees’ work on the topic of social linguistics and literacy in the 1990s and Gees’ later work.

In this study, I chose to present the quotes of the participants' narratives in a stanza structure in which the Hebrew text is presented on the right side of the page and the English translation appears on the left. My task was to directly connect with the experience as described by the research participants (Mears, 2009). Following Mears’ (2009) research approach (gateway approach) and that of the other researchers mentioned above who used poetic transcription, my use of poetic form was intended to demonstrate the power of presenting interview data narratively, as it provided the context that brought to life the participants’ personal experiences, and later their recommendations to promote the inclusion of DIDF veterans in Israeli HE settings, as “presenting first-hand experiences in this way evokes immediacy and resounding understanding” (p. 7).

In the data display, the participants' words and thoughts remained as a whole as they were re-worked into poetry format (Tasker et al., 2014). This incorporated the dimensions of description and later the interpretation as it takes the form of unique narratives created by distilling and interpreting the participants' transcripts. The poetic language forms can articulate the essential "way of being" within the participant's lifeworld, allowing us (the researcher and readers) to more fully explore how people talk, interact, and make sense within human relationships as unexpected and hidden thoughts and feelings, and their meanings from the participant's point of view, may be accessed (Tasker et al., 2014). In this way, DIDF-veteran students' experiences in Israeli HE became part of the hermeneutic phenomenological research process, as it prepares the researcher for the research process and assists with analysis of the data and presentation of findings (Tasker et al., 2014) as part of the process of this inquiry. The poetic form provides a way of integrating the researcher's disability studies knowledge and self-experience with the research data. This allowed the development of a higher degree of resonance and understating, enabling interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Tasker et al., 2014), to move from the local, specific context of inclusion in HE towards wider issues of social interest within the recognition of more global themes emerging from the research findings.

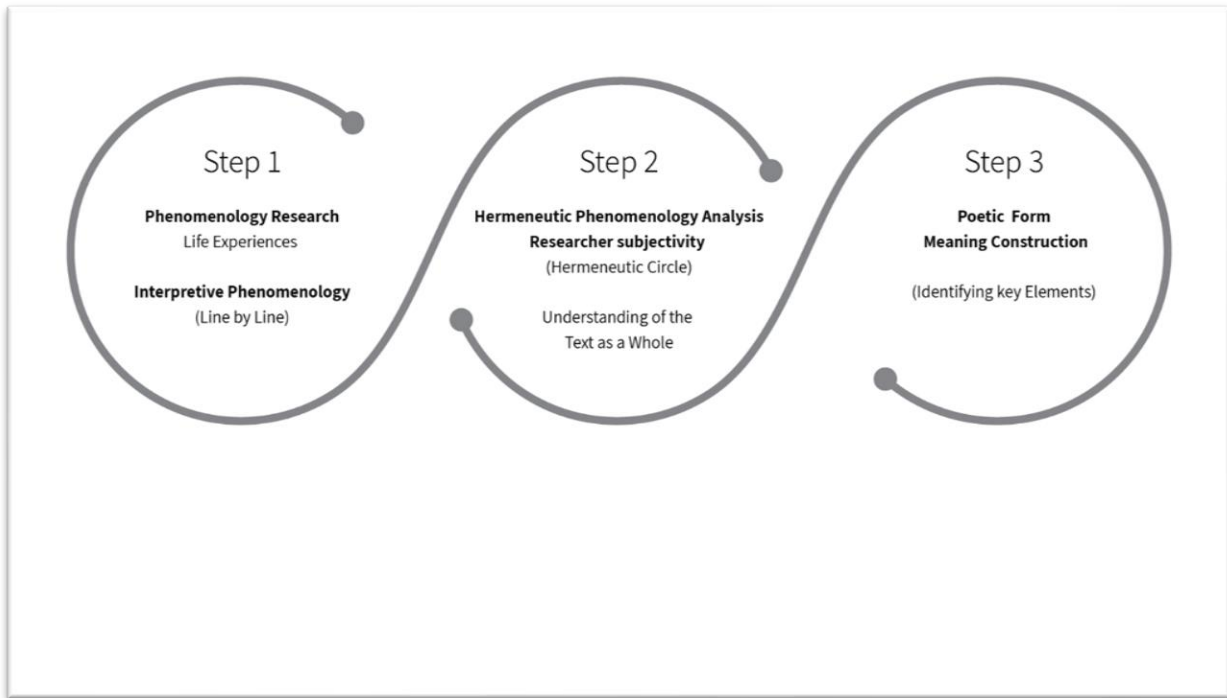
Rogers-Shaw (2021) claimed that research poems on disability draw attention to the embodied experiences of the participants, allowing the reader to share the experiences of the participants and to experience the emotions and feelings (p. 13), as it "does not impose the voice of the researcher, the academic voice of privilege, but rather resonates with the syntax, word choices, rhythms of the speakers" (p. 14).

I used this strategy to stay true to my interviewees' stories that were shared with me, while also contributing to the border discourses on disability, identity, needs, and support

strategies. I used poetry in my research because I wanted to provide a bridge to understanding and empathy. The research findings are presented in the next Chapter in the context of Heideggerian and Gadamer’s hermeneutic phenomenology, using extractions from the interviews and the poetic forms to give the participants a voice, while deepening the reader's feelings and understanding. Figure 4 illustrates the data analysis stages that were employed in this study as part of the inductive approach to the data analysis process.

Figure 4

Data Analysis – stages of Data Analysis (Inductive Approach)



Ethical Considerations

As a new researcher, I carefully considered my research procedures in a manner to minimize potential harm to the participants involved in this study. Marshall and Rossman (2016) “clarified that respect for persons captures the notion that we do not use the participants in our study as a means to an end, and we do respect their privacy, their anonymity, and their right to participate or not” (p. 51).

Ethical issues were considered from the beginning of this research, and the informed consent form was a central component. It was updated and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Chapman University through the research phases. The documentation of the approval of this study and the informed consent form were presented to the participants before their participation (both at the beginning of the online survey and at the beginning of the first interview session). Additionally, the research data were collected and held confidentially, and only I, as the researcher, could identify the participants.

To maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity in this dissertation document, I engaged in the following steps: First, the participants' names were not revealed throughout the study. Instead, each participant was assigned a pseudonym and their respective HE institution name was not detailed (see Table 7). Second, other identifying information was considered, and either was generalized or grouped under broader categories (like in referring to the name and type of HE institution, participants' specific academic major program). The participants' privacy was protected through these actions during the data collection and analysis process. Most importantly, the research data were collected and held confidentially. The names of the participants were not given to the personnel who were transcribing the interviews, and all personally identifiable information was erased before giving them the audio recordings.

During my entire study, I was also aware of how I communicated with each participant by being responsive to their narratives. I allowed each participant to express personal perceptions and feelings in describing their self-experiences and challenges of being a DIDF-veteran student. Since some aspects of the lived experience were painful and stressful, I was mindful of and sensitive to the participants' well-being, including their physical or psychological state during the entire interview.

Issues of Trustworthiness (Rigor of study)

The criteria for evaluating qualitative research differ from those used in quantitative research. The focus in qualitative research is on how well the researcher has presented evidence that his descriptions and analysis represent the reality of the conditions and individuals under study (Bloomberg, 2019). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested trustworthiness as a criterion for judging the quality of qualitative inquiry. They proposed that qualitative inquiry demands different criteria than those inherited from traditional social sciences. For this purpose, Lincoln and Guba developed four key concepts: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2013; Schwandt, 2001).

Credibility (Internal Validity)

Credibility refers to the methods and approaches used by the researcher, and if the researcher accurately represented what the participants think, feel, or do. The criterion for credibility addresses the researcher's ability to take into account and explain all the complexities that exist in the study and to address the patterns, themes, and issues that are not simply understood (Bloomberg, 2019). Here are some strategies that I used to support the credibility of my study:

First, since this research perspective and design is based on phenomenological hermeneutic, I considered my subjectivity and bias within the process of my study. During the data collection phases, I did not make assumptions. I used thick description of the participants and their group affiliation. Including expanding my interactions with the collected data, as a way to construct knowledge gradually, through cycles of analysis and interpretation. I monitored my subjectivity perspectives and biases by using reflective field and analytical notes. The methods I

used were specific to this study, but also drew on the experience and knowledge of other researchers and experts in the field of qualitative research.

Second, the research phases (online survey and interviews), as described, allowed me to learn more about the research participants. Following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommendation for the qualitative researcher to be in the setting for a long time (prolonged engagement), I met the participants only after they had responded to the survey and were willing to be interviewed, and the interview sessions were conducted only after I returned to Israel. During the interview sessions, I asked the participants follow-up questions to gain a deep understanding of their self-identity, challenges, and needs as part of their experiences as students in Israeli HE. I followed my interview guide and used it in a flexible way to reach out for my participants' personal stories and their willingness to share their self-experiences. I built relationships with participants based on trust and sharing of information. The documentation of the research phases and my description of how I came to know the participants promoted trustworthiness.

Third, I used multiple methods of data analysis to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (thematic coding, poem transcriptions). Further, according to the guidelines (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for triangulation, I also extended the data analysis process while using multiple theoretical lenses (identity theory, disability studies, and veteran studies).

Fourth, throughout this report, I have given readers a comprehensive description of the study process, a description of the participants, data collection, and analysis so that they can clearly understand the course of this study. I also shared the data and interpretations with the participants (member check), as I requested that they review their poetic transcriptions.

Lastly, the findings were introduced and discussed with academic scholars in related fields in Israel to “ensure that analyses are grounded in the data” (peer debriefing) (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 40). During the study period and writing, I participated in disability studies learning groups held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at the Ono Academic College. I also participated in recent conferences of Israeli studies and, during the past year, I also took part in a doctoral workshop in the field of the military and society in Israel. At all these meetings, I presented my research topic and practices of data collection and analysis, and I discussed the relevant theories and models.

Transferability (External Validity)

Transferability refers to the researcher's ability and responsibility to provide readers with sufficient information and descriptive context-related findings that can apply to broader contexts, while still maintaining their content-specific richness (Bloomberg, 2019; Schwandt, 2001). Although as a qualitative researcher, I do not look for or consider my findings to be generalized to all other relevant settings, these study findings and the participants' experiences might be useful to others. Transferability, according to Bloomberg (2019), does not concern whether the study includes a representative sample. Instead, it means “how well the study has made it possible for readers to decide whether a similar process will be at work in their setting and communities by understanding in-depth how they occur at the research site” (Bloomberg, 2019, p. 205). For achieving transferability, I outlined the sampling strategy of the research participants in this study, described their background information, research context, research setting, and the participants' experiences were detailed in the findings Chapter. By doing so, I have permitted readers to form their own opinions about the quality of the research, the meaning of its findings, and the authenticity and relevance of my interpretation.

It was important for me to provide a rich, detailed, and in-depth description of the research participants and their experiences. Through an iterative data analysis description, I believe the reader is likely to consider and trust the results. Through my data analysis process, the findings were reviewed by my dissertation committee to ensure validity and that the analysis was reliable and true to the data. Also, the extracted poetic transcriptions of the interviews were read by the participants, and their responses were recorded. Furthermore, one of the committee members, who is a Hebrew speaker, reviewed the transcripts and the coding process as well.

Dependability (Reliability)

Dependability focuses on the process of the inquiry and the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the process was reasonable, traceable, and documented. It also refers to the stability and consistency of the data over time. Additionally, the inference is that data are dependable in the sense that they answer the research questions and that the research process and procedures can be tracked (Bloomberg, 2019).

To construct dependability, I justified the use of my research methodology and the data collection and analysis process, as mentioned earlier in this Chapter. In conducting qualitative research, it is common to keep an audit trail (Bloomberg, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit trail allows the researcher to make the reasoning transparent, so others can retrace the process employed throughout the study and detail how the researcher arrived at the findings. In this study, the audit trail connects to each of the phases of the phenomenological hermeneutic research design (survey recorded responses, interviews recorded on my cell phone and tablet for backup, field notes, the participants' narratives, comments while coding the data, and their profiles and poetic transcriptions). In addition, it was important for me to allow the

readers of this study to follow all participants' interview transcripts both in Hebrew and in English by reading the poetic transcriptions.

Confirmability (Objectivity)

Confirmability is an agreement with the researcher about what can be done with the information obtained about the research participants following the consideration that these participants were chosen for their ability to shed light and bring knowledge to the topic and expand the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bloomberg, 2019; Moules et al., 2014). As a researcher, I must prioritize and guard my participants' identities and avoid exposing their identities to other people. This matter is especially important since this study took place in Israel, within a seemingly small community.

A data triangulation strategy was used to better understand DIDF veterans' experiences as students in Israeli HE. From the beginning of the study, I searched for as many data sources as possible, considering any related books and memoirs on and about DIDF-veteran. I sought to build connections with relevant organizations and professional people in the field, which led me to meet key people in the Ministry of Defense, who are responsible for the integration of DIDF veterans in HE as part of their rehabilitation; social workers who are responsible for the young DIDF veterans in several *Beit Halochem* centers which are part of the Zahal disabled veterans organization; as well as key personnel at the disability support offices including social workers and occupational therapists who are in charge of the placement of students with disabilities in HE settings in Israel.

I also visited college and university websites to learn more about the support services that are available to students with disabilities in Israeli HE institutions. As the goal of confirmability is to acknowledge and explore the ways that the researcher's biases and prejudices impact on

his/her interpretation of the data (Bloomberg, 2019), field notes and reflective comments were written throughout the data analysis process and were linked to the theory or other relevant literature review sources as a way to ensure objectivity and reflexivity, and let the readers understand how and why decisions were made.

Researcher Subjectivity

The interpretive paradigm and the hermeneutic phenomenology specifically were viewed as the most suitable for this research because of their potential to generate new understandings of complex multidimensional human phenomena, such as those investigated in this research. I acknowledge that my positionality may have influenced my interpretation. Still, my goal was to conduct a constant and detailed data analysis, self-reflection, and examination throughout the process, while sharing my bias and providing an explanation regarding my interpretation to maintain a high level of transparency and reliability.

In qualitative research, the researcher's role is fundamental to the methodology, as this type of research is interpretative and involves personal interactions with and documenting experiences of the research participants. The researcher serves as an instrument; he or she is in present in the participants' lives (Berger & Lorenz, 2015). On the one hand, the researcher tries to collect data objectively and, on the other hand, he or she uses personal experiences in making interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stake, 2010). Furthermore, according to the interpretive paradigm, human beings construct meanings in unique ways, depending on their context and personal frames of reference as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 2003).

One of the most important differences between phenomenology and hermeneutic approaches relates to the researcher's role in the study. In contrast to Husserl's approach of

“reduction” and “bracketing,” the hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the meaning of the lived human world (Van Manen, 2007). Heidegger believed that phenomenologists could not “bracket” themselves from the phenomena under study, and the act of “reduction” is limiting. Moreover, “personal knowledge, research background literature, are both useful and necessary to phenomenological research” (Geanellos, 2000, as cited in Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 730). Whereas “interpretation is not an additional procedure, rather it constitutes an inevitable and basic structure of our ’being in the world’. We experience a thing as something that has already been interpreted” (Finlay, 2009, p. 11).

Following this view, because it was very hard for me to follow Husserl’s phenomenological approach, I looked for other approaches that would guide me as a novice researcher and give me tools to analyze the data without bracketing my view and my subjectivity. Therefore, one of my reasons for choosing hermeneutic phenomenology was my belief and wish not to “bracket” myself from the phenomenon in this investigation. Rather, I believe that the researcher’s beliefs and previous knowledge about the phenomenon as knowledge about the socio-cultural context is critical in understanding and interpreting the research participants’ identities and experiences.

In choosing the interpretivism paradigm and hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology of choice, certain assumptions and perspectives of the researcher are accepted and meaningful in the analysis process. In this type of research, findings emerge from the interactions between the researcher and the participants as the research progresses (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, subjectivity is valued; there is the acknowledgment that humans are incapable of total objectivity because they are situated in a reality constructed by subjective experiences. Further,

the research is value-bound by the nature of the questions being asked, the values held by the researcher, and the manner in which findings are generated and interpreted.

This qualitative research used an inductive analysis process of the phenomenon with a rich description of the subject under study. The purposes of this study, along with the lack of academic research on this specific population, are important in my opinion. My research participants were wounded former IDF soldiers with a variety of impairments, as well as different educational backgrounds. DIDF-veteran students wish to see themselves as regular students and may not view themselves as students with special needs and may not disclose themselves on their campuses. I used phenomenological hermeneutics to discover that which was limited and unexplored within Israeli HE. This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature and to bring more awareness of the needs of DIDF-veteran students and the availability of support resources in Israeli HE. For my "horizons," including my "prejudices" to be as clear to me as possible, I kept a field diary throughout the study, as I took notes and described my feelings, thoughts, and reflections that came up during the study. It was important for me to get a full description of the participants' experiences and not to make any assumptions based on my own self-experiences.

Self as Researcher

It is important for me to state my positionality, share my background, my academic knowledge, and how I came to this research. I researched the general topic of disabled veterans in HE during the time of my studies at Chapman University. During my stay in the US, I was exposed to an increase in the number of military veterans at American HE institutions, as well as to the advanced legislation that came to help them (GI Bill, 2009), and the vast free information and academic literature that were available on this topic. Specifically, I was exposed to new

theoretical literature (Veterans Studies) regarding the transition and support practices regarding American veterans at American colleges and universities. In terms of personal experience at that time, I was taking part in the activities of advisory groups regarding diversity and cultural issues. These groups involved the participation and involvement of students, faculty, and staff with similar interests to gain knowledge and skills relevant to Chapman's community and climate. These interest groups work on a variety of topics such as international students, disability, veterans, gender differences, etc. Following a meeting I conducted between the veterans' advisory group and the disability advisory group, I discovered that many of the veteran students did not seek support from the disability support office on campus even though many of them were encountering challenges as a result of disabilities related to their military service.

A Woman with a Disability

I entered this qualitative inquiry as a woman with a disability, along with an academic and professional background in special education and disability studies. I feel that my background as a woman with a disability impact and connects to the current study. My hearing impairment is a major axis in my life, an axis revolves around my challenges, concerns, coping, and adjustment both in my daily life and as a student in HE. My impairment has led me both in the past and in recent years to study topics and research content close to issues dealing with the lives of people with disabilities. The current study brings me closer to the self-experiences I have gained over the years, both as a student with a hearing impairment in Israeli HE and in the United States, and as a former teacher in the field of special education.

My hearing disability needs and experiences during my academic life as a young student in Israel were not considered or compared in any way with those of the study participants. This is especially true because, at the time of my undergraduate studies, disability support services

centers were not available in HE settings in Israel. However, during my graduate studies at Chapman University, the experience of using disability support services was significant for me. For each lesson or learning activity, I was eligible for a human transcript service – Real-Time captioning (CART) services. This experience allowed me to firsthand understand the importance of these services for students with disabilities. In light of these circumstances along with my position as a PhD student, and a novice researcher in the field of disability studies, I approached my study from a “disability-friendly” point of view.

At the beginning of each interview, I shared with the study participants my status as a woman with a hearing disability who is interested in disabled student veterans in the Israeli HE system. This fact may have influenced the participants and their sense of comfort to talk about their experiences as students with disabilities. During the interviews, they openly shared the challenges they faced during their academic studies.

An IDF Veteran Woman

I am an Israeli citizen and an IDF veteran, and this study is meaningful to me as an Israeli citizen. My military experience (1982–1984) was many years before my academic studies and did not involve any experience of disability or illness during my service in the IDF. Moreover, I did not compare my experiences or reflect on the experience of the DIDF veterans who participated in this study. However, my disability identity helps me understand some of the research participants’ experiences and perspectives as disabled veterans at the stage of acquiring their HE. I need to state that while the choice of the study population and subject of inquiry was rooted in my personal experiences, I am a researcher who knows what a disability is, but who is foreign to the participants’ specific experiences because I am not a disabled veteran.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the process and methodology of phenomenological hermeneutics, including data collection, and data analysis that was used in this study. This study, used inductive analysis process of phenomenological hermeneutics inquiry, was used to develop a deeper understanding of the life experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli HE institutions. I present the profiles and narratives for each of the participants in the next chapters (Chapters 4 and 5), which capture the primary topics discussed by the participants. Each DIDF-veteran student's life experiences during their academic studies were revealed using in-depth data analysis methodologies.

Chapter 4: Disabled IDF Veterans and Their Stories

*“Disability identity is about stories, having the space to tell them,
and an audience which will listen.”*

- Shakespeare (1996)

The phenomenon of disability is part of human life and the human condition “as almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life, and those who survive to old age will experience increasing difficulties in functioning” (World Report on Disability, 2011, p. 3). Doing a study about people with disabilities and studying how individuals construct their disability-identity requires awareness of and sensitivity to the expressive and creative dimension of the analysis. The purpose of this study was to capture the lived experiences and self-perceptions of DIDF-veteran students in HE in Israel.

Participant interviews took place in natural settings (e.g., home, office, or another place chosen by the participant), and this specific social phenomenon was viewed holistically (Creswell, 2003). This Chapter provides a meeting ground, a first opportunity for the reader to meet the participants in the study. The following sections are profiles of each participant that are introduced through the process of extracting information from the DIDF-veteran students. The 13 participants openly shared their military service experience, military-related injury event circumstances, family background, educational history, descriptions of their learning weaknesses, and their social experiences as students in HE. This Chapter presents the participants by describing their demographic and military background information, their shared stories as DIDF veterans, and experiences during their time of academic studies in Israeli HE.

The purpose of this Chapter was, first and foremost, to give a voice to the participants’ experiences and shared stories that have not previously been documented. These stories were constructed through means of both descriptive and interpretative analysis throughout the research

process. The second goal was to create a fruitful dialogue between the reader and the narratives and the voices, stories, and meanings that emerged from them in a way that may evoke new understandings in the reader about this specific population.

The detailed participant narratives included in this Chapter reflect the perception of the life of DIDF veterans in higher education in Israel who experienced an acquired disability during the years following their military service. The participants' profiles are displayed in the order in which the interviews were conducted. The participants (six men and seven women) are identified by the pseudonyms Yaron, Shir, Miki, Dalit, Eran, Sarit, Rachel, Uzi, Navit, Shahar, Noa, Michal, and Sagi. The decision to present the interviews in this order stems from the desire to lead the reader through the data collection process that is an integral part of the interpretation in this study. I assumed that each interview affected me as an interviewer and that this influence quite possibly had an effect on the interviews that followed. In building trust with the study participants, I was able to learn about each DIDF-veteran student's academic journey and how they formed their identities, faced their challenges, and managed their support.

Each participant is represented by a quote, that exemplifies their point of view towards the disability they acquired during the military service as it emerged from the analysis of their narratives. Some of the participants shared stories that revealed their need to deal with another disability that was unrelated to their military-related injury, but had great significance on their life as students in HE. Given these stories and the meaning they may hold, the reader will have to leave behind prejudices, judgments, and assessments that may be part of a way of thinking about people with disabilities in the world, and Israel in particular.

Introducing the Participants

This Chapter provides a descriptive summary of each participant's profile. After transcribing the interviews and studying the resulting transcripts, I determined that I could achieve the strongest representation of the DIDF-veteran students' experiences, by keeping the narrative as close as I could to the stories that they shared with me during the interview. I found this type of rich data display to be a way to evoke the complexity of disability identity and experiences of DIDF-veteran students and to understand their challenges and supports as a unified whole.

During the interviews, the participants detailed personal information such as their recognition process experiences as a veteran with disabilities by the Israeli Ministry of Defense (MoD), aggravation of disability condition, previous academic background, place of living, number of children they had, and other disabilities they had before or after the injury or illness acquired during the military service. These brief biographies are provided to offer a snapshot of the participants' identities, disability needs, and experiences in HE. Each of the participants portrayed described their specific needs and interests in negotiating their self-identification, disability identity, and needs as a student in HE

In addition, to describing the participants in narrative form, I constructed a poem using the phenomenological interview transcripts that took place with each participant. These poetic representations (Ohlen, 2003; Mason, 2018; Mears, 2005, 2009; Richardson, 2002) are direct quotations extracted from the interview transcripts and arranged into a narrative sequence. Each participant's narrative was organized in a chronological sequence, that is, in each poem, the military injury experience was shared first, which was then followed by the participant's HE experiences. In this way, a direct connection was created between the researcher and the details

of each story through the words of the participants themselves. One example of poetic form from Michals' interview transcript is presented in the Appendices (see Appendix F). The poem for Michal is expressed both in English and in Hebrew.

Individual Participant Descriptions

A narrative description of each of the participants is included in the following sections.

Yaron

"You do not see it on me"

"לא רואים את זה עליי" –

Yaron escorted me and welcomed me near the gate of his university. He walked before me, leading me towards one of the university's buildings. While walking behind, I noticed that he had a slight limp in one leg, as well the crocheted skullcap on his head (meaning he is a religious Jew). We walked into one of the university buildings and entered an empty classroom. Yaron was my first interviewee, and the time was early September 2018, during the school break.

Our relaxed conversation took place in a large classroom. Yaron chose to sit where the lecturer usually does, and I sat down in front of him. With quiet grace, he sat down and waited patiently for my first question. While he was sitting, I noticed that he was not sitting upright in the chair, and one of his legs was stretched straight forward. Later in the interview, Yaron often referred to his difficulty in sitting for a long time and indicated the discomfort of the existing chairs in the classrooms on campus. In his words, they were "Inquisition chairs."

Yaron is a 32 years old, and married with one child. During the interview, Yaron shared with me that he and his wife were soon expecting another baby. The interview was conducted in one extended session on the same day due to the distance, and his work and family obligations. I

was afraid that I would not be able to interview him again soon and since he was comfortable and available, I decided to have one long interview session with him.

At the beginning of the interview, Yaron commented on his rich experience as a student in higher education: “I am a student for 8 years now.” At the university where we were conducting the interview, Yaron had studied for his undergraduate and graduate degrees and now he was employed there as a staff member. In recent years, in addition to his work, Yaron was an undergraduate student at a public college studying in a specific social sciences program designed for employed students. He had dreamed of studying this specific field in the past, and he had received much encouragement from his family members to return to school to acquire a new profession and to make a career change.

Yaron had served as a combat soldier, and was injured during his compulsory service in the IDF. Specifically, he was injured during parachute training when he was 19 years old. He has a spinal cord injury that affects his leg and causes him a lot of pain. He was released early from army service due to his injury, but he was recognized as a DIDF veteran by the Israeli MoD only during the first year of his BA studies. Yaron shared the long and stressful process of being recognized by the MoD. When we talked about his injury and how much his disability affects his life, he explained that he mainly suffers from chronic pain, and emphasized that because he stopped taking painkillers, his disability was invisible to others. Yaron also shared that taking painkillers caused him some difficulties during his studies (falling asleep in classes, difficulty in concentrating).

Although Yaron stated a few times during the interview that his privacy was important to him, he stated that he did not try to hide his military-related injury. During his academic studies

(in the past and at the time of this study), he applied for disability support services only for exam accommodations (use of laptop and extended exam time accommodation).

Yaron shared his positive experience with the disability support center (DSC) services , along with his frustration with their policies and bureaucracy.

Shir

"I am a newly blind woman"

"אני עיוורת חדשה"

Shir invited me to interview her in her home. She opened the door of her apartment as her dog came out and stood next to her. She walked across her living room and settled stiffly into a large sofa and invited me to sit near her. Shir is a young woman with a pleasant appearance whose words were accompanied by an occasional smile and a slight laugh. Her interviews were conducted in two extended sessions on two different days, at the beginning and the end of the same month at her apartment. She was very excited and happy to share her experiences. Her speech was fluent, fast, and a little "bouncy" as she tended to move from topic to topic.

Shir is a 27-year-old married woman without children. She was not born in Israel, but she immigrated at a very young age. She spoke with great openness and described her experiences as a high school student, through her experience in the military, and her rich experiences as a student in higher education. She cheerfully shared her HE experiences. Like Yaron, she also had extensive experience as a student in HE. She said that she began her post-secondary education in 2010 in academic studies, as well as other courses as (Reiki and Clown Therapy). Shir stated that she loves to learn all kinds of things. Moreover, she shared her experience at several institutions of HE in Israel in various social science programs, and at the time of the interview, she was nearing the end of her BA degree. Shir openly shared her experiences in different higher education settings and her motives in moving from one place to another.

Shir served as a non-combat soldier, and was trained to be a military paramedic in her compulsory service in the IDF. She lost her vision during her service in the IDF when she was 19 years old. Due to her vision impairment, she was released early from army service. She was recognized as a DIDF veteran by the Israeli MoD during her first year of studies. Shir shared that her recognition process was shorter and not complicated, compared to other DIDF veterans' experiences.

Shir was very happy to share her experiences as a DIDF veteran and as a student; the interview was very vibrant and open. Shir was currently enrolled at one of the universities in Israel that has vast experience in serving students with learning disabilities. She uses her private dog as a guide dog (the dog is not an officially trained guide dog), and spoke about the dog's assistance and importance both in her personal life and on campus. She used vision assistive technology (CCTV – screen magnification system, computer, and text-to-speech software) both at home and during her classes. During her time of studies, Shir was using the DSC on her campus both for accommodations during classes and during course exams (laptop and extended test time accommodation, assistance of a reader, dictation, scribes to transfer answers to Scantron bubble sheets). Shir said that she was receiving social and academic mentorship both on campus and at home. The mentoring service was provided in collaboration with the campus DSC and the Rehabilitation Division of the MoD. Shir also shared her sports activity on one of the Israeli disabled sports teams and her participation in one of the Paralympics games a few years ago. She is a secular Jew.

Miki

*"I do not think identifying myself
has always helped"*

*"אני לא חושב שלזהות את עצמי
זה תמיד היה עוזר"*

Miki met me in the town where he is working as a high school teacher. We met on one of the main streets near the high school during his break. Miki welcomed me and escorted me to a nearby coffee shop. He is a tall and slightly heavy man. As he walked, I noticed that he had a slight limp in one leg, and that he wore a crocheted skullcap on his head (he is a religious Jew). We sat outside, not too close to the busy street as I was afraid the noise of the cars would interfere with the course of the interview and recording. We started with a brief introduction and Miki waited patiently for my first question. His interviews were conducted as two extended sessions on two different days, and took place about a month apart at the same place. Miki was smiling, pleasant, easy to communicate with, and patient throughout both interview sessions.

Miki was a 48-year-old (almost 49) married man with a large family— he has seven children. He served as a combat soldier and was injured badly in his knees during his unit training in the reserve service when he was 35 years old. He was recognized as a DIDF veteran by the Israeli MoD, but only regarding one knee, and he shared that since 2006, he has been negotiating with the MoD for recognition of his second knee injury.

Some of Miki's difficulties are prolonged walking, standing, and sitting. He shared his experiences as a man with chronic pain and its influence both on his life routine (he has severe pain at night), employment, leisure time, and family life. The town where we met, his profession as a teacher, and his injury during his military service enriched my understanding as he introduced himself following my first question: “For 20 years, I have worked with children diagnosed with ADHD, and two years ago, I left. As a result of my injury, I was told I no longer can be a home teacher... ‘you cannot do some of the activities with them, so we do not want you to be a home teacher.’ Therefore, Miki had to find a new workplace and, as a result of this situation, he was looking to expand his educational skills. Following this event, where his

physical disability made it difficult for him to take part in some educational activities outside of the classroom, he decided to return to HE to expand his professional abilities in the field of education (he thought of studying educational counseling). Miki's disability, due to his military service, was viewed as a barrier to his functionality as a home teacher.

At the time of this study, Miki was enrolled for an M.A. degree in educational counseling at one of the largest religious colleges in Israel (he started in the 2015–2016 academic year). His previous academic experience included earning a B.A. in Jewish Studies and Special Education. Miki had studied for a bachelor's degree in education, as well as for a teaching certificate at one of the religious colleges. At the time of his military injury, he already had these credentials, and was working in the field of special education.

According to Miki, during his current studies, he did not use any DSC on his campus, but because of his mobility limitation, he only asked for assistance with a parking permit and the location of his classes. For this purpose, he identified himself as a DIDF veteran with the secretary of the department in which he studied. According to Miki, his request was approved, but he had to repeat this procedure at the beginning of every new semester. Miki stated that he could not cope with the mobility limitation and inaccessibility on his campus, so he identified himself as a DIDF veteran. He also shared his use of medication and medical cannabis to deal with his chronic pain. Miki described his use of a knee brace as a means of relieving pain, improving walking, and daily functioning. He stated that he knew how to manage on his own and claimed that he was not at all aware of the DSC office at his college.

In responding to the online survey questions, Miki identified himself as a student without a disability. During the interview, he shared his experiences with ADHD symptoms, but he declared that he was never officially diagnosed. According to Miki, he had experienced some

challenges during his academic studies because of some ADHD symptoms. Following this difficulty, he revealed that he sometimes took medication (Ritalin) to help him function better.

Miki shared his disappointment with the MoD's treatment and support during his time as a student. As part of his injury and experiences, Miki shared his involvement in a new association (*Ma'aleh*) that works for the welfare of DIDF veterans who live with PTSD. According to Miki, one of the association's goals is to improve collaboration with the MoD.

Dalit

*“Right now, I have another limitation
unrelated to my injury [in the military] “*

*”כרגע, יש לי מגבלה אחרת
שלא קשורה לפציעה שלי [בשירות הצבאי]”*

Dalit is a young married woman of 30, who recently returned from her honeymoon. During the two interviews I did with her, we met at her spouse's parents' house. She happily greeted me in her room as she was lying in bed. During her military service, Dalit served as a non-combat soldier, and was injured during her basic training in her compulsory service when she was only 18 years old. Dalit was injured in her upper limbs (shoulders), but despite the injury, she insisted on serving the entire period of her military service.

Recently, Dalit was involved in a car accident during her honeymoon, and she was badly injured (pelvic and leg fractures, and concussion). At the time I met her, she was in pain and had difficulty managing independently. She had difficulty moving around the house, as well as outside the house. Dalit's last injury occurred in between her response to the online survey and the interview sessions. She recently had started her M.A. degree at a new university, while she was still healing and undergoing rehabilitation. Due to her recent injury, Dalit was using a wheelchair and needed a close companion.

Dalit described her needs both with mobility inside the house with daily functions, as well as with school tasks. Her spouse was her main supporter, and helped her in her daily functioning from the most basic things to her role as a student. He helped her to get to the university, he carried her to her class, he sat by her side in some of her classes, and assisted her in learning at home. When I first met Dalit, she welcomed me while resting in bed due to her recent injury. She explained that she just returned from her studies at the university.

Dalit seemed to be a very delicate woman, even a bit fragile. She spoke in a weak, quiet voice. Her interviews were conducted in two extended sessions on two different days, and took place about a month apart at the beginning of the academic year. When I met Dalit for the second interview session, she looked much better, but she still welcomed me while she resting in her bed.

Dalit identified herself as a DIDF-student veteran in the online survey, while throughout the interview sessions, she shared her accessibility and academic challenges due to her recent car accident, as well as being diagnosed with learning disabilities during her B.A. studies. Dalit studied for her first degree at one of the universities in Israel that has much experience serving students with learning disabilities. Her greatest challenge during her undergraduate degree was in studying statistics. She was officially diagnosed with a learning disability (LD) only at her university when she failed to pass an exam in this subject. Following the LD diagnosis, she applied for DSC, and she received several accommodations during her studies (i.e., time extensions and taking the exam in small and quiet classes). Dalit also participated in several workshops held for students with LDs, and she received individual lessons in statistics on campus.

Now, as she was starting her MA studies in Social Sciences at a new HE institution, she already had started to look for DSC and to learn what services she can use during her studies. Dalit's mobility limitations led her to deal first with accessibility issues: she first asked for a parking permit, and class locations that are accessible and close to the parking area. "The truth is, I have not yet reached it. The accident was fresh, school started a few weeks ago ..." When I asked her about other DSC that she might need and used to have in her previous studies, she said she was currently more concerned about her mobility difficulties: "I was very busy in understanding how I even get physically to class and start studying, and if I can even sit for more than one class session ... so I still did not approach everyone. I need to go to the accessibility office; I know there is such a place ..." After moving to a new HE setting, one of Dalit's main academic challenges was dealing again with statistics and English classes, which are compulsory courses. In terms of her academic needs, she received support mainly in English, using one of her friends as a tutor.

Dalit shared that her military-related injury makes it difficult for her as a student, especially with prolonged writing. Several times during the interviews, she repeated that because of her recent injury and her new challenges, she had not yet come to officially seek DSC, both for her academic difficulties in terms of her LD or her difficulty in writing during her classes and in taking exams. She shared her feelings and reflections on her experiences and honestly expressed the difficulty of dealing with several disabilities and the complex implications of her identity and functionality as a student in HE institutions.

Eran

*"There may be a Toyota logo,
but it's not a Toyota anymore,
It's a battered car
that was bumped into something ... "*

*"יש אולי סמל של טויוטה,
אבל זה כבר לא טויוטה,
זה רכב חבוט
שנדפקה שם איזה משהו ..."*

Eran's interviews were conducted in two extended sessions on two different days, and took place about a month and a half apart at two different public places. The first interview session took place at the *Beit-Halochem* center (rehabilitation, sports, and recreation center serving disabled veterans and their families) in his hometown, and the second interview took place in a private room at a nearby academic library. When we first met, Eran kindly came to pick me up at the train station, and we drove together to *Beit-Halochem*. Eran is a 37-year-old married man with one child. He is a secular Jew.

Eran served as a combat soldier and as a paramedic in a special military unit. He was injured in his compulsory service in the IDF during a confrontation with another Israeli soldier in his unit when he was 19 years old. After this incident, he was moved to another military unit and he served almost the entire period of service required of young men. Eran was recognized as a DIDF veteran who suffered from PTSD only after he finished his military service and before he started his academic studies. At the time of the interview, Eran was a student at a public engineering college.

Eran stated that his dream was to study veterinary medicine; however, in his evaluation for occupational adjustment, which was part of the rehabilitation process, the MoD recommended that he study some type of engineering "in the direction of technical things." During the interview sessions, Eran shared his experiences at two former HE institutions where he studied before his current studies. First, he had studied in a pre-academic program for students with LDs at one of the public universities, and then he took some courses at the Open University in Israel. This information was interesting because on the online survey, he identified himself as a student without a disability, while throughout the interview, he shared that he had been diagnosed with ADHD in high school and received exam accommodations (oral testing) at that

time, as well as during his current studies. Towards the end of the second interview, Eran added that he also had studied for sports training as part of certificate studies, following the advice he received as part of his rehabilitation process by the MoD.

Eran also stated that he was considered a rehabilitated disabled veteran (*neche mechukam*) since more than five years had passed from the time of his recognition. Therefore, he was not entitled to financial support from the MoD. He openly shared his challenges as a student veteran with PTSD, both academically and socially. He talked about the lack of empathy on the part of other students and faculty at the college where he studies. Eran also had difficulties in making social connections both on- and off-campus.

During the interviews, Eran tried to explain his feelings and challenges using the metaphor of a car: “Think as you repaired your car, but the parts are not original” He used the metaphor of the car and especially of a Toyota to portray a person without a disability, and of the person, he was before the injury: “You were born with the steering wheel of a Toyota in hand...,” while he sees himself and other DIDF veterans as “a battered vehicle; a sputtering vehicle.” I asked Eran: “What would you like them (faculty, DSC personnel) to know more about DIDF veteran students?” He replied: “That they just need to understand that I learn differently.”

Eran also referred to his difficulties, as his PTSD impairment is invisible. According to his shared story, he did receive support services on camps during his current studies. These services were related to exam accommodations such as extended test time, a separate room, and larger text. Eran also was privileged to have an academic mentor for a while.

Sarit

*“It was very important for me
to be normal all the time”*

*“נורא היה חשוב לי
כל הזמן להיות רגילה”*

Sarit was injured during her military service at the beginning of her officer training course during her first year of compulsory service in the IDF when she was 18 years old. She has a multisystem trauma, as she was injured in her back, pelvis, legs, arm, wrist, and other joints in her body. The doctors were very concerned for her life right after the injury and prepared her parents that she might not be able to walk again.

Sarit was released early from army service and was recognized as a DIDF veteran before she was released from service. Her injury is recognized by the MoD as an 82% disability. She describes herself as a medical miracle on the one hand, yet the other, she would like “to be normal” and function like everyone else, without mercy on the part of other people in society. Part of this mission is studying for a degree, and later to find a job. Sarit is a 42-year-old divorced woman, and caring mother of two children. She teaches in an elementary school and loves her job. She is a secular Jew.

I met Sarit by the train station in her hometown, as she generously offered to come pick me up. She came in her private car, and when we were on the way to her home, she apologized for her nice car, which she received as a privilege as a DIDF veteran. The interview was conducted in one long extended session at her home. At the time of the interview, Sarit was at the beginning of her second year in a multidisciplinary bachelor's degree program. She began her current studies in light of the Ministry of Education's requirement for teachers who are already working in the field to complete a bachelor's degree, especially to acquire a senior teacher rank. Sarit's educational background includes an engineering certificate and a teaching certificate. She studied these programs in two different post-secondary education settings (she did a professional transition from engineering to teaching). Sarit began these studies shortly after her injury, which

about 20 years ago, once her rehabilitation period ended and after she had traveled for a short time overseas.

In the online survey, Sarit identified herself as a DIDF-student veteran, while she also shared her LD needs and accommodations through other questions in the survey. During the interview, she detailed that she had been diagnosed with an LD as part of her rehabilitation process after the injury in the army. During a diagnosis for employment counseling, she was informed that she had dyslexia. Through her engineering studies, she received accommodation only for English course exams, as she received permission to have an alternative test format, while she listened to recorded test materials. Through the interview, she referred to her learning disability as a “language impairment.” She also shared her memories from K-12 as a student who had a lot of learning difficulties. Today, she only uses text-to-speech software in English courses. In other courses, she developed a strategy: “I read aloud! Reading in the heart (silent reading) is difficult for me, I read aloud.” And she does this whenever she studies with others in a group. “When we study in groups before exams, when we study together, usually, I am the one who reads aloud. I’m one of those people who has an authoritative voice, who knows how to read beautifully and properly, so I read to them.”

When walking, Sarit has a noticeable limp, as one leg is two-and-a-half centimeters (one inch) shorter. Sarit requested a parking permit, but did not receive one. She shared her difficulty sitting on chairs in main campus classrooms due to her disability, especially in the campus halls. This was especially hard for her when taking exams. Sarit claimed that she did not use the disability support office very often as she was disappointed with their service availability.

Rachel

*"[When] you're suffering from PTSD,
It is a transparent disease.
No one really sees her,
Conduct in front of you is unstructured.
And you have to succeed on your own."*

*"[כ]שאת סובלת מפוסט טראומה,
זה מחלה שקופה.
אף אחד לא באמת רואה אותה,
ההתנהלות מולך היא לא מובנית.
ואת צריכה בעצם להצליח לבד."*

Rachel welcomed me in her small apartment where she lives with her husband and their two young children. I arrived at her home on a cold winter day. Rachel is a 33-year-old woman and a secular Jew. She is short and thin with beautiful eyes. Rachel appears to be a very pleasant and delicate woman. When I met her, she was taking care of her newborn baby. Rachel's personal story is fascinating. She was born in Israel after her family immigrated to Israel. She talked about her close and extended family, about the family roots, and about different traditions and customs. Rachel spoke about her personal experiences and the desire to integrate into Israeli society, which sometimes clashed with family customs. Through the interview, she shared her experiences as to be the first in her family to serve in the IDF, as well as the first to attend HE studies. Rachel stated her desire to integrate HE as part of her rehabilitation process.

Despite her feminine and delicate appearance, she served as a combat soldier in a combat unit. She said that she was the only woman among 60 male combat soldiers. During her compulsory service, she participated in operational activities. Rachel said she was aware of her appearance and the fact that it was difficult for people to describe what she went through as a combat soldier: "I'm really ... a strong girl."

Rachel shared her challenges of suffering from PTSD symptoms, and the long process until she was diagnosed and recognized by the MoD. During her service, after her military activity, she started to suffer from PTSD symptoms and was hospitalized several times without being diagnosed with PTSD and without understanding what she was suffering from. She asked

to be released from the army to have more medical examinations. Rachel served in the IDF almost the entire time required for female combat soldiers.

Rachel also shared her personal and intimate experience of suffering from postpartum depression after the birth of her eldest child. She received help and support to deal with these difficulties. She shared openly her experiences of coping with depression and her need for mental support (medication and personal counseling) during the time of her service, before being diagnosed, and after she was diagnosed and released from service, as well as after the birth of her oldest child.

Rachel earned her bachelor's degree at an Israeli university. At the time of the interview, she was in the final stages of her M.A. degree program at a private college. During her B.A. studies, she was also diagnosed with ADHD symptoms, and she received extended time as an accommodation. Rachel recalled her memories of having difficulties in K-12 as well. During her M.A. studies, she took part in meditation and mindfulness activities in the disability support office on her campus and was also provided extended time as a testing accommodation. In the online survey, Rachel identified herself as a DIDF-student veteran while she also shared her LD needs and accommodations through other questions in the survey. During the interview, Rachel expanded and provided additional detail regarding her academic challenges.

Uzi

*"It's some kind of story that is
a very significant milestone in my life."*

*"זה איזשהו סיפור ככה שהוא
נקודת ציון דרך מאוד משמעותית בחיים שלי."*

Uzi is a 30-year-old single man and a secular Jew. He recently graduated with his B.A. studies in social sciences. Uzi's interview was conducted in one extended session on the same day because I felt that another interview would not contribute new information. Uzi kindly came

to meet me at my workplace where we found a private and quiet room to conduct the interview. Uzi studied in one of the biggest universities in Israel and enjoyed student life. He shared that he was a first-generation college student in his family, and that before the injury, he had thought of staying in the army for permanent service, never thinking that he would study in HE. He began to think about going to doing so only after he was injured. Later in the interview, he detailed that he enjoyed his student life very much, and he was very active in various initiatives on campus.

Uzi served as a combat soldier and was injured in his compulsory service during his unit training at the age of 19. He was released early from army service due to his injury. Uzi was recognized as a veteran with a disability who suffers from a disability in his left leg and also with PTSD. His injury is hard to notice (he has a slight limp), especially when he is wearing long pants. He underwent several surgeries and was in rehabilitation for a long time. Uzi explained that his disability is visible only when he walks in short pants due to the long scar that he has. "I really like to wear shorts in the summer because then other people ask me questions, and I am thus portrayed as a hero (laughs)."

Uzi has no difficulty in sharing the story of his injury with others and his impairment and challenges. He stated that "This is a very significant milestone in my life, and I tell about it in my initial acquaintance with others" Uzi feels that his disability is part of his life and has a meaning in his social life while his friends use the fact that he is a DIDF veteran. His friends have given him a nickname, they call him the "disabled." His mobility functionality got affected and he is suffering from pain. Because of the severe pain, it is difficult for him to sit, stand, or walk for a long time. In the survey, he identified himself as a DIDF student veteran. Through the interview, he shared that he identified and disclosed himself as a DIDF student veteran only for the privilege of a parking permit on campus. He also shared his experiences with physical

barriers on his campus, but he said that he did not apply for or use any other support services on campus.

Uzi preferred to study at the university where he studied for his bachelor's degree even though he knew that in terms of mobility within the campus it would not be easy for him. During the interview, Uzi referred several times to the fact that the campus where he studied was inaccessible for him in several circumstances due to stairs, the distance between buildings, limitations, and policies regarding accessible parking. During his studies, Uzi volunteered at the Legal Clinic on his campus and it was his first exposure to the existence of disability support services on his campus. However, he did not disclose his disability or the consequences and needs he has following his military-related injury. Overall, Uzi's disclosure and seeking for services was around administrative things (parking, registration, and applying for an alternative exam date).

Navit

"The disease actually started during the military."

"המחלה בעצם התחילה במהלך הצבא."

Navit is a 30-year-old single woman and a secular Jew. Her interviews were conducted in two extended sessions in two different modes. The first interview session was made virtually on Skype as Navit was abroad, and the second interview took place in Israel, face to face while she was visiting her family in Israel. Navit kindly agreed to come to meet me at my workplace, and we conducted this interview in a private and quiet study room.

Navit's story of being recognized as a DIDF veteran is unique. She served as a combat soldier and participated in security activities as part of her compulsory service in the IDF, which she completed. She was 19 years old when she was diagnosed with skin cancer. The process of

diagnosis began during the time she still was a soldier, but her final diagnosis and treatment took place only after she finished her compulsory service.

Navit stated that she suffered from a very violent type of cancer and as part of her battle with the disease, she underwent several surgeries, chemotherapy, and other aggressive treatments. After she returned home from the hospital, she suffered from functional difficulties and became clinically depressed.

About a year after she finished her medical treatments, she started the process of recognition as a DIDF veteran. According to Navit, “the lawsuit took at least seven years.”

HE was not part of her plan before she was drafted into the IDF. Navit shared that the personnel in the department of rehabilitation in the MoD tried to offer her only vocational rehabilitation. Her search for her future and academic studies started only after she was assisted by a private therapist who helped her to find answers regarding her future.

Navit studied for a BA in humanities studies at one of the public colleges in Israel and was a recent graduate (June 2018). She shared her academic challenges in HE during course sessions, class assignments as papers, and exams. In the online survey, she identified herself as a student without a disability while during the interview sessions, she shared her challenges in K-12, beginning in elementary school. She had been diagnosed with LDs in the fourth grade and again in high school. When she registered for her program in HE, she again was asked to take an LD diagnostic test.

Navit openly shared her challenges as a student, both because of her illness and her LD and ADHD symptoms. She talked about coping with depression and her need for mental support (medication and personal counseling). Navit applied for DSC for academic support and she used several support services such as academic mentorship during the school terms, extended test time

accommodation, text-to-speech software, and a quiet class during her exams. She specifically appreciated the mentorship support.

During her studies, despite her difficulties, Navit chose not to disclose her disability to all of her faculty and peers. According to her, some of the faculty who knew her challenges did not seem to develop sympathy. Navit also shared her social experiences and challenges during her K-12 and HE studies as well. Finally, following her illness, Navit explained that after her graduation, she decided to relocate outside of Israel to a country with cooler and grayer weather.

Shahar

*“I’m not comfortable holding this title (...)
Sometimes to slip under the radar.”*

*“לא נוח לי להחזיק את הטייטל הזה (...)
לפעמים לחמוק מתחת לרדאר.”*

Shahar is a 26-year-old recently married man. We met in a coffee shop at a center in the city where he lives. He is a tall, slightly thin young man, and he seemed a bit shy when he entered. Shahar served as a combat soldier and was injured in his compulsory service during the summer of 2014 in the Israel–Gaza conflict known as Operation Protective Edge (*Miv'tza Tzuk Eitan*). He was 19 years old when he was injured, just a short time before he was supposed to finish his military service. Shahar was severely injured in his chest, abdomen, and back, and was released early from military service due to these injuries. His rehabilitation process included both physical and mental therapies. Shahar was recognized as a DIDF veteran who suffers from physical disability in his left leg and with PTSD symptoms. After a long recovery and rehabilitation period, he was advised by the MoD’s Rehabilitation Department to register for a non-academic program. This recommendation was given to him so he would not have to deal with additional pressures. After he graduated from this program, he applied for a bachelor's degree in education and humanities at one of the religious colleges.

Shahar is a religious Jew and his army recruitment was part of his yeshiva study program (*Hesder*). The college where he currently studies is a religious public college, and he said that several friends who were with him during his military service are studying there as well.

In the online survey, he identified himself as a student without disability, while he stated that he did have a recommendation letter from his psychiatrist to apply for accommodations and to receive support during the time of his studies. During his studies, he has not applied for any support services or accommodations even though he admitted that his military-related injury impacts him during his studies. Shahar shared openly about his difficulties and challenges, both in his personal life and as a student. He talked about difficulties both in class and during his home studies. Shahar believed that in order to recover and return to the person he was before he was injured, he must hide the fact that he is a disabled veteran. In his opinion, “asking for help can be interpreted as an anti-rehabilitation act.” He shared his experience of having a disability during his adult life and his difficulty of support seeking stating “I think it's harder to get used to asking for help if the injury arose in the middle of life.”

During the time he studied Shahar used the rehabilitation services and mental support offered him by the social worker of the rehabilitation services of the MoD. He also shared that he had good support experiences on his campus from faculty members who were aware of his military-related injury and needs.

Noa

*'I started with nothing,
I went out with a mountain... “*

*”התחלתי בלי כלום,
יצאתי עם הר...”*

Noa is a 28-year-old woman. She lives in the southern part of Israel, and to meet me she had come a long way. Later in the interview, I found out that it was quite a challenge for her.

Noa is a secular Jew, and she revealed that her father and her partner were DIDF veterans.

Noa started her bachelor's degree at one of the public colleges in Israel. During her studies, she also worked off-campus, which often made it difficult for her. Recently, she quit her studies after one semester because she lost her partner in a car accident during the spring semester of 2018. At the time, she had filled out the online survey she was still a student in Social Sciences. Throughout the interview, Noa shared her difficulty in losing her partner and her plans to go back to college in the next semester. She stated that she planned to change her field of interest and to start to study in the next academic year at a new program in the same college. My interview with her was one extended session on the same day since she lived so far away, and because I felt that another interview would not contribute new information.

Noa served as a non-combat soldier during her compulsory service in the IDF. She served in a very unique role related to caring for soldiers and their families. She was chosen for this role along with a small number of young women. Noa was drafted into the IDF service with mild fibromyalgia symptoms that became aggravated during her military service “defined in the IDF as a mild joint disease.” When she was drafted, she had a recommendations letter from a doctor which stated that she was “not allowed to carry heavy weights, should sleep 7 hours and not 6 hours...” She shared that when she started the basic training, she went to see a doctor at her base to get military approval for her accommodation. “There, I came across the obtuseness of the medical service in the army. He told me ‘Fibromyalgia is a psychiatric illness; you need a psychologist’ and sent me out without any accommodation or treatment.” Unfortunately, until recently, this was the reference to the disease among health and welfare professionals in Israel.

Noa served in a very responsible role which required a lot of mental and physical strength. She shared her difficulties during her personal life due to her illness. The disease worsened during her military service, and almost one year after she started her service, she was officially diagnosed with severe fibromyalgia. Even so, she completed her compulsory service. The recognition as a DIDF veteran was a very long process and took five years (from 2013 until the summer of 2018). After Noa finished her compulsory military service, she continued to serve in the same role in both permanent military service and during her reserve service.

In the online survey, she identified herself as a student without disabilities, but in replying to other questions in the survey and also during the interview, she shared her experiences as a woman with disabilities (fibromyalgia), as well as with ADHD, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). She said that her sister was also diagnosed with ADHD during her childhood.

Despite these difficulties, Noa reported that she was a good student and did not need accommodations during her studies.

Due to fibromyalgia, Noa suffers from chronic pain every day and finds it very challenging to wake up, get dressed and prepare herself for going out. She shared her difficulties when sitting for a long time, specifically in class. Noa takes medications both for pain and depression on a daily basis. She shared her challenges as a student with memory difficulties, and organization and order problems. She also explained to me that “Anyone who has fibromyalgia has memory problems, and I also experience it ...”

According to Noa, during her studies, her main challenges were in managing the symptoms of the disease, including difficulties in mobility and physical accessibility, and her need to be absent from school on days when she was dealing with severe pain and was unable to

get to her classes on campus. Noa explained, “When there are three absences per semester, if you go through them. you must take the course again. In an aggressive disease like fibromyalgia, you cannot manage that thing.” Moreover, Noa stated that “the rule of three absences overwhelmed me on a level that it was so stressful for me that it also created pain.”

Noa discussed at length the physical accessibility issues on her campus. Despite the difficulties she faced, she said she was not aware of the DSC until her loss and she did not disclose her disability to faculty or staff on her campus, preferring to manage her pain by herself. According to her, it was only after her partner's accident that she discovered the support system that existed on campus.

Michal

*“It's like it seems to them
that I'm too complex”*

*“זוה כאילו נראה להם
שאני יותר מידי מורכבת”*

Michal is a 33-year-old married woman, and she had one child, with another on the way. She is a nice, delicate, and calm young woman. During the interview, she smiled a lot and laughed. She is a secular Jew. The interview with her was conducted in one extended session on the same day due to her pregnancy and because I felt that another interview would not contribute new information.

Michal is now a doctoral student in social sciences at one of the universities in Israel. She earned her previous academic degrees (B.A., M.A.) from the same university where she is studying now. Michal shared that after a year of recovering from her injury at home “doing nothing,” she decided to go away for a trip overseas. Like many young Israelis after military service, she left Israel and went to India as part of her “liberation trip” (*tiul shirur*) for a few months. She returned home to Israel after her father informed her that she had to return home and begin the MoD process to be recognized as a DIDF veteran before she planned to start her

academic year in the university. This move had an impact on her: “All the research I do is related to India, seminars, thesis, doctoral research—all about India.”

Michal served as a combat soldier, taking part in operational activities in her compulsory service in the IDF. She enjoyed her military service very much and summed it up as “an amazing experience. It takes your body to distant places, the soul No one can take it from me.” She was injured during a confrontation with Arab civilians at a military checkpoint in the area between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. She was 20 years old at that time. After her injury, she continued as a combat soldier in the army service. During her military service, while she was receiving rehabilitation treatments, she collapsed, and the doctor who checked her informed her father that she suffered from PTSD. As she described this incident, she shared the symptoms she experienced; “I did not sleep, I did not communicate with people, I was angry, outbursts of rage, I was not me. I was not me ...”. When Michal spoke about her injury, the diagnosis, and evaluation process, she became emotional. It seemed that she has a hard time talking about and sharing these things with another person.

After Michal was diagnosed, she was released early from her compulsory service (she served almost until the end of her service). Later, after she returned from her trip overseas and after being recognized by the MoD as a DIDF veteran with PTSD, she started her B.A. studies. During the interview, Michal shared that in her military service, she had a knee injury and had undergone surgery during the army service, but this injury was not recognized by the MoD. She shared that she suffers from pain, and that it is hard for her to walk from the parking lot to her classes.

Michal shared her parents’ support, as they were very helpful after the injury, through the rehabilitation, and through the MoD recognition process. When I asked her about their support

and understanding of her challenges throughout her academic studies, she replied that she is a first-generation college student in her family and that both her parents and sister have LDs (“she barely finished high school”), so they do not know how to help her.

In the online survey, she responded that she identified herself as a D IDF-student veteran during her studies, while she revealed that she also had ADHD and LDs. Michal shared her difficulty with the routine challenges of living with PTSD. She stated, “Post-trauma is something that is not simple; it goes with you all day ...” and with the lack of understanding and awareness in the Israeli society indicating, “I think the hardest problem with post-trauma is that no one understands you... It's not something like a knee injury that you can see.” Michal continued to describe her challenges: “My story is a little more complex. I am a D IDF, combat soldier in the army, with learning disabilities.” In another passage, she shared her complicity as a woman with PTSD having an LD; She emphasized the lack of awareness in Israeli society to PTSD as a whole and especially for a woman with it. Michal also was trying to examine the link between these challenges (i.e., PTSD and LDs). Michal described her experiences in her first years in HE as good and that they helped her to deal with her PTSD: “It kind of made me quiet... suddenly I had silent, suddenly I was dealing with other things, not in the room, it was fun!”

Michal shared that her LDs were diagnosed before she started her B.A. studies. She listed her needs as a student with LDs and stated that she received the ability to take her exams orally as an accommodation in her BA studies, while in other exams, during a written test, she received an extended time accommodation. During her undergraduate study, she shared her LD problems and army service injury only with one of her faculty members who was touched by her story and gave her a lot of support during her bachelor's degree studies. In her MA studies, she did not use any help; “Freelance, I was alone ...,” nor in her Ph.D. studies. Regarding her knee pain and

challenges, she remarked that now she has a parking permit, but as a young student, she did not have one. Michal detailed that she had numerous challenges during her first-degree studies. She indicated, “There are difficulties, it does not come easily to me; it comes with a lot of hard work.”. Persisting in her struggles and dedication, Michal shared the benefits of being a student in HE. “I made dreams come true ... that I did not even know existed.”

Sagi

*“I am such a type,
who does not expose [himself] to these things,
I do not ask,
do not demand things”*

*”אני טיפוס כזה,
שלא נחשף לדברים האלה,
אני כזה שלא מבקש,
לא דורש דברים”*

Sagi is a 55-year-old married man. He is tall and looks young for his age. We met in a restaurant before the rush hour in the center of Tel-Aviv. I met Sagi, the last interviewee in this study, on a hot Israeli summer day. Sagi came a few minutes after me due to a parking issue. His injury is hard to notice, but he has a slight limp. As he introduced himself, Sagi looked confident and calm. I conducted one extended session on the same day with him since he lives far away, and because I felt that another interview would not contribute new information.

Sagi is married with two children and is a secular Jew. He served as a combat soldier and was injured in his compulsory service in an officer training. At the time of the injury, he was 19 years old. Sagi referred to his injury event and the lack of immediate evacuation. He spoke about his desire to stay in the IDF after his compulsory service and his disappointment of being injured, interrupting his plans to continue to service in the military as his preferred career. He had to endure several surgeries and was in rehabilitation for a long time. After his recovery from the injury, Sagi continued his service and was reinstated to a new position that did not require physical exertion.

Contrary to Sagi's early plans, he decided not to continue in the military service, and he was released after he finished his full compulsory service. He was recognized as a DIDF veteran only after he was discharged from the military. In a diagnosis by the MoD, he was found suitable to study for the profession that he desired in HE. However, after getting married, he changed direction and chose to study a profession in the field of tourism. About a year after he was released from the military service, Sagi started to study for a certificate diploma in tourism studies.

For the last four years, Sagi had been enrolled in a social sciences program at a private college and had recently graduated (June 2018). His recent studies in the social sciences field were the completion of a dream from a young age.

Sagi's story presents the impact of an injury on daily life and the possibility of aggravation of that injury. He shared his challenges over the years, as his mobility functionality was affected as his leg condition deteriorated. Sagi described his life experiences as a hardworking man and his need to stand for long hours during his work. He said that he suffers from chronic pain that has affected his employment, routine, leisure time, and family life. He stated that he experiences this pain daily and has difficulty sleeping at night because of it. "[My] disability is more expressed when I was outside, that is, at work, at school, in my need to integrate into society, because at home ... what I could not do I just did not ..." To deal with his pain, Sagi said that he took painkillers during the day and at night. Recently, he applied to the MoD for further recognition due to his pain, but his application was rejected.

Sagi remarked that there were several times when due to intense pain, he was absent from school. Therefore, when he missed classes, it greatly influenced his schooling. In his opinion, a solution would be to record video lessons, then he could have watched the lesson that he missed.

Since he stated that he does not write anything during his classes and that he only relies on listening during learning, I asked him if he had difficulty with other issues in his studies, or if he had been diagnosed with an LD during his life. Sagi responded that this is how he liked to learn and that he did not have any LDs. Thus, this is how he also answered this question in the survey, and he had identified himself as a student without a disability. Sagi stated that he did not ask for any help except from his student peers. In terms of his self-identification as a student in HE, Sagi saw himself as “a completely normal student.”

In completing these interviews, I am grateful to the participants in this study, who willingly shared their experiences of being disabled veterans in HE. The findings of these participant interviews and surveys will be discussed in the next Chapter. Each research question of this study will be restated, along with the findings.

Chapter 5: Findings

“Data analysis is the final stage of listening to hear the meaning of what is said.”
(Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 226)

The purpose of this study was to capture the lived experiences of *Nechei-Zahal* (DIDF veteran) students in higher education in Israel. This Chapter presents the key findings obtained from all research participants—13 DIDF-veteran students who responded to a quantitative survey and were subsequently interviewed in-depth while answering the research questions. The main research question governing this study asked: What are the lived experiences of DIDF veterans in Israeli higher education? In addition to the central research question, the following four sub-questions were explored:

1. How do disabled IDF-veteran students identify themselves on their campuses?
2. What challenges do disabled IDF veterans encounter as students?
3. How do disabled IDF veterans manage their disability identity?
4. What are the sources of support used by disabled IDF-veteran students during their time of academic studies?

The main primary research question, with respective subcomponents of the research study, provides the principal framework around which the Chapter is organized. Following a brief group profile of participants, primary results are presented as they pertain to each research question. To privilege the voices of the study’s participants, excerpts from the interviews are presented, rather than paraphrased. Interview quotations are presented in both the original interview language (Hebrew) and English. The structure of the quotes usually appears in this Chapter in the structure of a stanza.

Results encompass data from participants’ narratives collected from all interview sessions as the primary data. In responding to the first research question, demographic data collected from the participants in the first phase of the study (online survey) are also presented in order to examine the subject matter of the participants’ self-identification at their higher education

institutions. In addition, some of the findings are compared to the wider population of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli higher education with the data that were provided by the Ministry of Defense (MoD) during the time of this study.

Looking carefully at the interviews as a “whole cloth,” the narrative enables me to be more conscious of the specific ways in which I chose to describe and interpret the participants’ disability identity, challenges, and support experiences. The long iterative process of coding and interpretation always began with the immersion in individual stories (Green, 2017). As a researcher, I wanted to get to know the participants through their stories, the stories that they had chosen to share with me, to try to see and understand their experiences as students. Through this process, I read and reread each transcript, and took notes about potential codes and categories. In this Chapter, I use significant statements from selected participants within each section to solidify the experiences and opinions that answer the research questions, and to search for the meaning derived from these findings.

Studying the experiences of DIDF-veteran students must be understood within the context of their self-perceptions and self-identification on campus, followed by looking at their challenges, how they manage their disability needs, and what support resources they can and choose to use. In this study, I invited the research participants to share their stories and relevant experiences as DIDF-veteran students. During the interview sessions, the participants communicated on a very personal level and shared their military service experiences, the stories of their injuries, or illness, as well as the process of being recognized as DIDF veterans, their challenges, and needs in everyday life. Sharing personal information serves as a framework for understanding their personal experiences in general and, in particular, as DIDF-veteran students in higher education.

“Setting the Stage”

For many young adults in Israel, studying in higher education is the next step after completing one’s military service. Hence, it is important to understand the participants’ self-perceptions as disabled individuals in higher education and the context of their group affiliation as DIDF within the Israeli society.

The participants’ experiences revealed the impact of their military injury on their personal lives both inside and outside the boundaries of their family life. They shared incidents regarding their military injury in their social life, employment situations, and especially as students. For some of the participants, the way they constructed their identity was often influenced by these experiences and affected the way they chose to identify in their transition to higher education or during their studies. In this study, the disability identity of DIDF veterans as students was found also to be related to their process of recognition by the MoD, since the disability allowance and other relevant benefits in higher education are connected to their group affiliation and privileges.

Having a Disability Following Military Service

The study participants were injured or developed an illness in different years under different circumstances and events during or right after their military service. Table 9 displays the frame of circumstances of being recognized as DIDF veterans compared to data taken from the MoD database.

Table 9

Cause of Military-Related Disability – Characteristics of Participants vs. Disabled IDF Veteran Population (Israeli Ministry of Defense, February 2018)

Cause of disability	Research participants’ cause of military-related disability	N	Percentage	Ministry of Defense Report 2019
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Injury	Battle injury or other security conflicts	3	61.5% (n=8)	23%
	Training accident	5		
	Other accidents	2	15.3% (n=2)	36%
Illness	Illness following terms of service/aggravation of existing illness	3	27% (n=3)	39%
On vacation				2%

Table 9 illustrates the high occurrence of injury and especially of injuries during military training. The overall findings on the incidence of injuries show a phenomenon similar to that found in the general population of DIDF veterans. Data on the percentage of the recognized disabilities by the MoD are presented in Table 10:

Table 10

Participants' Degree of Recognized Disability vs. Disabled IDF Veteran Population

(Israeli Ministry of Defense, February 2018)

Degree of recognized disability	Research sample	Disabled IDF veteran students in 2018-2019 academic year
20% - 49%	77% (n=10)	79.5% (n=434)
50%-100%	15% (n=2)	20.1% (n=110)
+100%	8% (n=1)	0.4% (n=2)
Total	13	546

Specifically, Table 10 shows that concerning the sample of this research, most of the participants were recognized with a degree of disability of 20%–29%. These findings were also found to be comparable to the wider population.

Following these numerical findings, we learn that the journey of DIDF-veteran students begins before they start their academic studies. It begins right after their military-related injury

occurred or their illness was diagnosed, and was later formally recognized. Most of the participants had to finish their military service prematurely following their injury or illness during their service.

All participants shared their military service experience. Most of them expanded their narratives and shared in detail the circumstances of their injury or illness, as was stated in the participants' profiles. Some participants used metaphors to describe their injury event and experience of having a disability following their military service. For example, Shahar, who was wounded in a battle, used a metaphoric expression:

*"After four days,
I received a ticket (back) home."*

*"אחרי ארבעה ימים,
אני קיבלתי כרטיס הביתה."*

Navit, who was diagnosed with skin cancer after her military service, sarcastically referred to the recognition of her military disability:

*"Leaving the IDF
with a gift received from the IDF–
it's not easy."*

*"לצאת מצה"ל
עם מתנה שמקבלים מצה"ל –
זה לא קל."*

These metaphors are powerful and reflect the essence of the experience of the injury during a battle or the military service in general. The participants reported on their military-related injury or illness event in a metaphoric way to express in their own words the great significance of this event on their status as active soldiers, and its implications on their future life events.

Being Recognized as a Disabled IDF Veteran

In contrast to other social identities (race, class, gender, etc.), disability identity is a relatively new category and has not been researched adequately in the context of higher education (Kimball et al., 2016) in general, and in Israeli higher education in particular.

The recognition process by the MoD includes contacting various medical experts and performing several medical examinations, attending formal medical committees, which serve as the forum for determining the rights of the veterans to claim benefits and assistance based on medical conditions.

In most cases, IDF soldiers were released from their military service after they were diagnosed. The process of recognition by the MoD is one of the first steps veterans have to go through during or after the early phase of recovery and rehabilitation.

Some participants stated that the formal recognition process as DIDF veterans began near the time of their injury or illness, while for others it began at a later time, as in the case of Dalit:

"I was recognized as a disabled IDF veteran only a few years ago, after I had already been discharged from the army."

*"הוכרתי כנכת צה"ל
רק לפני מספר שנים,
אחרי שכבר השתחררתי מהצבא."*

Dalit was injured in her shoulder during her basic training, but she applied for the recognition process by the MoD only after she completed her military service as planned. As she was afraid that if the MoD recognized her injury and saw her as a DIDF veteran, then this would harm her military service, and she would need to get out of the military service. Dalit explained that she preferred to remain in the military service immediately after her injury, and she asked her parents not to start any actions for the MoD recognition process.

The recognition process by the MoD is not simple, and for several of the veterans, the process was long and exhausting. Specifically, the participants described their experiences with the medical committees as unpleasant and frustrating. As was indicated by Shahar, who was recognized with a physical disability and PTSD:

"It's a very, very difficult process, to this day, it continues – appeals, issues, a lot of money has to be spent on it... for lawyers."

"תהליך מאוד מאוד קשה,
עד היום הוא נמשך –
ערעורים, עניינים,
הרבה כסף צריך להוציא על זה
על עורכי דין."

Shir, who lost her vision during her military service, described her recognition process as long as well:

"From the first committee to the second, until I got an answer, it took about two years, something like this – two-and-a-half years or even three."

"מהוועדה הראשונה לשנייה,
עד שקיבלתי תשובה,
לקח בערך שנתיים,
משהו בסגנון –
שנתיים וחצי, שלוש אפילו."

The process of recognizing DIDF veterans by the MoD's Rehabilitation Division is a lengthy process that consists of several stages. These stages examine the causal connection between the injury (injury or sickness) or its aggravation and the military or other security service, as well as to determine the degree of disability in a functional context. In the process of being recognized as a DIDF veteran, the medical committees examine each type of injury separately, and finally, the functional evaluation, namely, the percentage of injury is determined in general. In this context, Shahar referred to the recognition process of his multiple disabilities:

"Just in the physical, there was a legal battle, and in post-trauma, there was no legal battle. That's why I went without a lawyer ... "

"דווקא בפיזי
היה מאבק משפטי,
ובפוסט טראומה,
לא היה מאבק משפטי.
בגלל זה הלכתי בלי עורך דין..."

Interestingly, other participants also mentioned an easier recognition process of the post-trauma than the recognition of a physical injury. Michal also shared her experience of a long and complex recognition process, along with the committee agreement regarding the diagnosis of post-trauma:

*“The truth is that relatively
I think actually,
it went pretty quickly
because it was impossible to argue with me.
Everyone was in favor, unanimous
about what was happening to me,
but it took about a year for the whole story.
There were some three committees.”*

*”האמת שיחסית
אני חושבת שדווקא,
הלך לי דיי קצר
כי אי אפשר היה להתווכח איתי.
כולם היו בעד, תמימי דעים
בנוגע למה שקורה לי,
אבל זה לקח איזה שנה הסיפור.
היו איזה שלוש ועדות.”*

Navit shared that the rolling process of diagnosing her illness ended only after her release from the army:

*I was recognized,
but I still fought
for all sorts of percentages there.
I was in the beginning 27, 38
[percent disabled].
Then it changed.
And now it is finally set at 42%.”*

*”הייתי מוכרת,
אבל עדיין נלחמתי
על כל מיני אחוזים שם.
הייתי בהתחלה 27, 38
[אחוזי נכות].
זה השתנה.
ועכשיו זה נקבע סופית ל- 42%.”*

Thus, when Navit started her studies, she was already recognized by the MoD, but she was still in the process of defining the exact percentage of her disability to determine her disability benefits. The participants revealed their experiences and the difficulties they encountered in the process of being recognized by the MoD, as well as its impact on them as students. Like other participants, Navit shared the sense of having to fight the system to gain recognition.

Life-Changing Event

Injury during military service affected many of the research participants and diverted them from the path of life they had planned beforehand. As in some cases, after compulsory service, some of the soldiers decide to stay in the army for longer service (*Serut Keva* – permanent service). For example, Uzi and Sagi shared that their original plan before their injuries was to stay in the army after their compulsory service. Their injury during the military service

led them to re-calculate their plans and set a new route for the future. They viewed higher education as an option that they had not previously planned on.

As part of their new status, the financial support given to DIDF veterans helped some of them reconsider the transition to higher education as part of their rehabilitation process and to return to civil life. Uzi described the difficult time he had after his hospitalization and rehabilitation process. It was extremely hard for him to get back full functioning and to find value in his life. His decision to go to higher education happened only after his injury, and he is a first-generation student. Like Uzi, several other participants also aspire to be role models in their families as first-generation students in the Israeli higher education system.

*“I do not come from a home of academic people,
It is important to say.
I am the first at home
who studied in higher education.”*

”אני לא מגיע מבית של אקדמאים
חשוב להגיד.
אני הראשון בבית
שלמד בהשכלה גבוהה.”

And Michal added, as she described her difficulties:

*“They did not understand
[the difficulties]
because they do not come from this world.
I am the only one
who did academic degrees [...]”*

”הם לא הבינו
[את הקשיים]
כי הם לא באים מהעולם הזה,
אני היחידה
שעשתה תארים באקדמיה [...]”

Rachel also indicated that she is the first generation in her family, including her extended family, to seek higher education. She added and shared that in her family it is customary to go into the field of business. Rachel went on and talked about her family's country of origin, detailing their immigration experience in moving to Israel several years ago. For that reason, she found it hard to get support from her parents and other family members regarding language acquisition and academic development, as no one in her close family can read Hebrew:

*"I did not understand what to do,
how to do it ...
And my family in general is primitive.
'What do you need to learn at all?
Leave, do not go to school.
(...) What should a woman learn?
Get married and have children.'
That's it for them."*

*"לא הבנתי מה עושים,
איך עושים...
והמשפחה שלי בכלל הם פרימיטיביים.
'מה את צריכה בכלל ללמוד?
עזבי אל תלכי לבית ספר.
(...) מה אישה צריכה ללמוד?
תתחתני ותביאי ילדים'.
זהו זה מבחינתם."*

For Rachel, the military service was as she said, the “meeting point” that connected her with Israeli culture, and later on to her academic studies.

Michal who was injured in an incident at a border checkpoint (moving from the Palestinian territories into Israel), stated that she chose to seek higher education to better understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

*"This is what I wanted to learn following the
injury.
[I] sat in front of the computer one day and
wanted to see [understand]
'How does an Arab woman come
and beat a female soldier at a checkpoint?
What causes it? What is this conflict?' And
political science solved it for me."*

*"זה מה שרציתי ללמוד
בעקבות הפציעה.
[אני] ישבתי יום אחד מול המחשב
ורציתי לראות [להבין]
'איך אישה ערביה באה
ומרביצה לחיילת במחסום?
מה גורם לזה?
מה זה הסכסוך הזה?
ומדעי המדינה פתר לי את זה."*

Uzi, Michal, and Rachel noted that they were first-generation students in higher education. Therefore, in some sense, the military service, and specifically their military injury, directed them to go to higher education. In these narratives, the experience of higher education is expressed as a significant event in the participants' lives, which allows them to grow and contributes to their positioning within their family. Reference to higher education as a rehabilitation opportunity was also reflected in interviews and will be discussed later.

Research Question 1: Perspectives on Self-Identity

Living and coping with a disability during academic studies can be very challenging in terms of environmental barriers in campus spaces, academic challenges, and in building social relationships. The participants in this study revealed how their self-identification as students was a meaningful factor and vital in their academic journey. To answer the first research question, the data analysis specifically used a combination of survey data (the responses to the identity question from the online survey) and qualitative data based on the semi-structured interviews. During the first stage of this study, in the online survey, the participants were asked:

"כיצד אתה מזהה את עצמך מול מרצים, אנשי סגל, או נותני שירותים אחרים במוסד בו אתה לומד?"

"How do you identify yourself vis-a-vis lecturers, faculty, or other service providers at the institution where you study?" The response items of this question included three options: (a) a student without a disability; (b) a student with a disability; or (c) a disabled IDF-veteran student. The initial and most significant finding that emerged in this study was the gap between the participants' responses as recorded in the survey and their statements that emerged from the interview transcripts, as detailed in the following sections.

Personal Identity and Self-Identify as Students

Personal identity refers to the participants' reflections and perceptions about how they identify themselves as students on their campuses. Examination of the survey data responses for that specific question revealed that only seven (five women and two men) selected the option of DIDF-veteran student, while the other six participants preferred to self-identify as students without disabilities. None of the participants selected option (b) which was a student with a disability, as can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11*Participant's Self-Identity and Shared Experiences as Students in Israeli Higher Education**(Survey and Interview Session Data)*

Pseudonym	Gender	Disability type	Participants' survey response	Self-identified with LD/ADHD		Other stated impairments (Interview)
				On other parts of the survey	During interview sessions	
Yaron	M	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury), back injury	Disabled IDF-veteran student	No	No	
Shir	F	Vision impairment	Disabled IDF-veteran student	Yes	Yes	
Miki	M	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury)	Student without disability	No	Yes	
Dalit	F	Injury in upper limbs	Disabled IDF-veteran student	Yes	Yes	Physical disability
Eran	M	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	Student without disability	No	Yes	
Sarit	F	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury), back injury	Disabled IDF-veteran student	Yes	Yes	
Rachel	F	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	Disabled IDF-veteran student	No	Yes	Postpartum depression
Uzi	M	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	Disabled IDF-veteran student	No	No	

Pseudonym	Gender	Disability type	Participants' survey response	Self- identified with LD/ADHD	Other stated impairments (Interview)	
				On other parts of the survey	During interview sessions	
Navit	F	Cancer (skin cancer) that was properly treated	Student without disability	No	Yes	
Shahar	M	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), back, chest, and abdominal injury	Student without disability	No	No	
Noa	F	Fibromyalgia	Student without disability	No	Yes	
Michal	F	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	Disabled IDF-veteran student	No	Yes	Physical disability
Sagi	M	Mobility limitation (lower limb injury)	Student without disability	No	No	

Throughout the second stage of this study, during the interview sessions, the participants shared their disability identity more openly and the role it played during the period of their academic studies in different Israeli higher education settings. The significant findings that emerged from the interview transcripts are: First, most students stated that they have more than one disability. Secondly, nine out of 13 subjects reported having a learning disability (LD) and or symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Third, during the interview sessions, several participants reported additional disabilities such as mental or physical impairments that were not connected to their recognized military-related injury. For example, Dalit was badly injured in a car accident; Michal shared that her knee injury was not recognized

by the MoD despite its occurrence and treatment during her military service; and Rachel very openly shared with me her postpartum depression experience, after her oldest son's birth.

The above findings from both the online survey and the semi-structured interviews encouraged the participants to refer to adjectives they would use to define themselves as both DIDF-veterans, and students in higher education. Table 12 shows that the findings from the survey do not match the findings from the interview sessions. That is, most of those who self-identified as students without disabilities in the survey reported later in the interview sessions that they had LD or ADHD symptoms that existed before their military service. Some of the participants said that they were diagnosed while they were young students in elementary or high school, while others stated that they were officially diagnosed after the injury and/or after they had already started higher education. As Navit reported:

*“After second grade,
my mom noticed something,
and she thought about taking me for a diagnosis
and it took her a while...
So only in fourth grade, did I get a diagnosis
and then there was something.
They tried to help...
and then in 11th grade,
they took me for a diagnosis again,
and they saw the problem.”
[Attention Deficit Disorder]*

”אחרי כיתה ב',
אמא שלי שמא לב לאיזה משהו,
וחשבה לקחת אותי לאבחון
זה לקח לה קצת זמן...
אז רק בכיתה ד', עשיתי אבחון.
ואז היה איזה משהו.
ניסו לעזור...
ואז בכיתה יא',
שוב לקחו אותי לאבחון,
וראו את הבעיה.”
[הפרעת קשב]

The issues that were developed during the interview sessions raised the difficulties noted by many of the participants in the context of having LD or ADHD. This fact cannot be overlooked regarding their academic needs as students. Eran also shared his learning difficulties as a young student. He said he was officially diagnosed and then received oral accommodations in exams on study topics such as Literature and the Bible

Other students recalled their experiences as young students having some LD or ADHD symptoms, but some had not been officially diagnosed as young students. Miki, who was injured when he was in his reserve service, recalled some of his memories of having behavioral problems during high school:

<p><i>“I studied in a yeshiva high school... I was called ‘wild’ (disturbed child). So then they did not know What ADHD is. I probably have it.”</i></p>	<p><i>”[אני] למדתי בישיבה תיכונית, קראו לי מופרע’. אז לא ידעו מה זה בעיות קשב וריכוז. כנראה שיש לי.”</i></p>
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Miki further stated that he has never been officially diagnosed. In addition, it is important to state that most of the participants were studying for a bachelor’s degree (9), and there was almost no difference between them in terms of the academic settings in which they studied (colleges vs. universities). The distribution was quite similar: 7 were enrolled in colleges compared to 6 in universities (See Table 12). The following table refers only to the data of the participants who were identified with LD or ADHD symptoms.

Table 12
Summary Characteristics of Participants Who Stated They Had LD/ADHD Symptoms

Academic degree	Gender	Higher education institution
B.A. (n=9)	F (n=4)	College (n=6)
	M (n=5)	University (n=3)
M.A. (n=3)	F (n=3)	College (n=2)
	M (n=1)	University (n=1)
Ph.D. (n=1)	F (n=1)	University (n=1)

Gender, Personal Identity, and Disability Identity

Regarding gender differences in this research sample, there was no significant difference in the prevalence between the men and women. However, according to the MoD report, in the population of DIDF-veteran students, there are more men than women, as presented in Table 13.

Table 13

*Gender characteristics of participant sample vs. disabled IDF veteran population
(Israeli Ministry of Defense, April 2020)*

Gender	Research sample	Disabled IDF-veteran students in 2018-2019 academic year
Women	54% (n=7)	15% (n= 81)
Men	46% (n=6)	85% (n= 465)
Total	13	546

But in terms of gender differences in this study, more women than men indicated on the online survey that they identified themselves on campus as DIDF-veteran students. These women had different military-related injury events and unique recognized disabilities (Shir-sensory disability, Dalit and Sarit-physical disabilities, Rachel and Michal-mental health disabilities).

Navit and Noa were the other two women in this study and chose to self-identify as students without disabilities, although both have been recognized by the MoD due to illness. Among the men, only two self-identified in the online survey as DIDF-veteran students (Yaron and Uzi), while the other four (Miki, Eran, Shahar, Sagi) chose to identify themselves as students without a disability. All the men in this study were DIDF veterans who have been recognized with a physical disability or post-trauma, or with both disabilities.

In addition, all the women stated through the interview sessions that they have been officially diagnosed with an LD or have ADHD symptoms. Two of the men (Miki, Eran) stated through the interview sessions that they also have LD/ADHD symptoms, while Miki said that he has never been officially diagnosed. Additionally, Rachel and Michal were combat soldiers, and they are recognized as DIDF veterans with PTSD. During the interviews, both of them referred to the lack of awareness regarding DIDF veteran women who are also diagnosed with PTSD and its' effect on their lives. As stated by Michal:

*"It always comes down to it somehow
That I have to tell
That I am a disabled IDF veteran
With post-trauma,
And people do not know
how to contain it."*

*"תמיד איכשהו זה מגיע לזה
שאני צריכה לספר
שאני נכת צה"ל
עם פוסט טראומה,
ואנשים לא כל כך יודעים
להכיל את זה."*

Rachel described her experience of being a woman with a military-related disability and a student. She emphasized the transparent nature of her PTSD, which along with her pregnancy during her studies affected her daily routine:

*"I was post-traumatic
pregnant,
in studying (...)"*

*"[אני] הייתי פוסט טראומתית
בהיריון,
בלימודים (...)"*

Time of Injury

Almost all of the participants were injured during their compulsory military service in the IDF between the ages of 18 and 20 years old. Miki was the only one who was injured during his reserve service when he was 35 years old. For the majority of the participants in this study, more than 10 years passed since the event of their injury, and for two participants, more than 20 years have passed. Only for three participants, had the event of the injury occurred less than ten years ago (See Table 14).

Table 14

Participants' Age at the Time of Injury, and at the Time of the Interview

Pseudonym	Age at the time of interview	Age at Injury Event	Time since injury event	Participants' survey response
Shahar	25	21	4	Student without disability
Noa	27.5	19	8.5	Student without disability
Shir	27	18	9	Disabled IDF-veteran student
Uzi	30	19	11	Disabled IDF-veteran student
Navit	30	19	11	Student without disability

Pseudonym	Age at the time of interview	Age at Injury Event	Time since injury event	Participants' survey response
Dalit	30	18	12	Disabled IDF-veteran student
Yaron	32	19	13	Disabled IDF-veteran student
Miki	48	35	13	Student without disability
Rachel	33	19	14	Disabled IDF-veteran student
Michal	33	19	14	Disabled IDF-veteran student
Eran	36	18	18	Student without disability
Sarit	41	18	23	Disabled IDF-veteran student
Sagi	54	20	34	Student without disability

The data in this table do not indicate a direct relationship between the number of years that have passed since the injury and the response to the survey in terms of how the participants prefer to self-identify. However, both Shahar, who was injured four years ago, as well as Sagi, who was injured more than 30 years ago, preferred to identify themselves as students without disabilities and not as DIDF-veteran students. This desire to be like a regular student without an identification label was also reflected during the interviews with other participants.

An examination of the prevalence of the participants' age concerning the general population of DIDF-veteran students revealed that some characteristics are similar, as can be seen in Table 15.

Table 15

Participants by Age vs. Disabled IDF Veteran Population

(Israeli Ministry of Defense, April 2020)

Students' age	Research sample	Disabled IDF-veteran student population in 2018-2019 academic year by age group
20-35	69% (n=9)	92% (n=503)
36-50	23% (n=3)	7% (n=40)
51-67	8% (n=1)	0.5% (n=3)
Total	13	546

Table 15 illustrates that as well in the general population of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli higher education in recent years, the participants in this study also had a similar trend of prevalence in the age groups of those 20–35 years of age and those 51–67 years of age. However, the group of those 36–50 years of age was more significant among the study participants than the general population group of DIDF-veteran students.

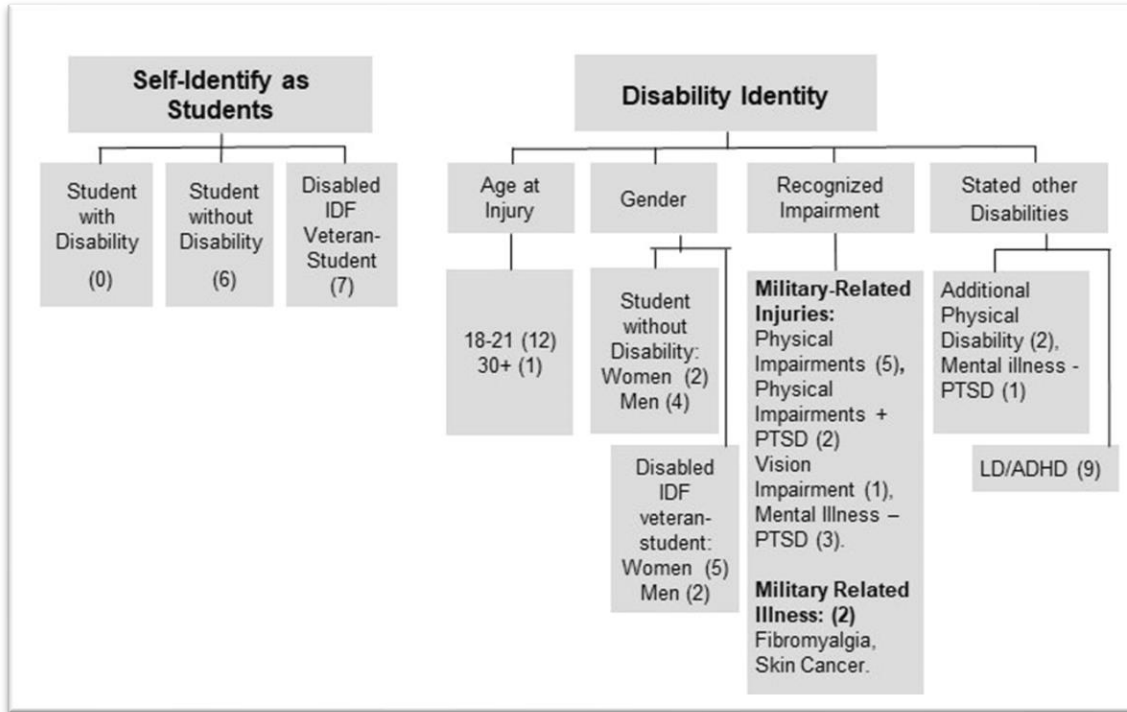
Conclusion

The comprehensive data presented in this section present a preliminary overview for understanding the self-identity and disability-identity of the DIDF-veteran students in Israeli higher education institutions. However, the data analysis of this research question revealed several primary and overwhelming findings: (a) DIDF veterans may have diverse self-definitions or self-perceptions regarding their identity on campus, (b) disability following military service is not the disability identity which most students tended to identify with on their campus, (c) disability due to military service is not always the main factor in student identity, (d) DIDF-veteran students may not self-identify on their campuses as students with disabilities due to their military-related injury or illness, or even as students with disabilities.

Overall, the findings in this section illuminate the intersection of veteran disability status, gender, student status, and disability-identity among DIDF-veteran students. To understand the experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli higher education settings in more depth, in the next sections, I present the participants' challenges, the way they self-manage their disability identity, and the support they utilized during their time of studies, as well as some of their recommendations. See Figure 5 which summarizes the findings of this research question.

Figure 5

Variables of limited identity and self-identification



Question 2: Participants' Challenges in Israeli Higher Education

The second research question sought to discover the challenges, needs, and barriers DIDF-veteran students are facing in the Israeli HE system. The findings of the first research question revealed two ways in which the participants preferred to identify themselves as students: either as DIDF students or students without disabilities. However, a more complex picture began to form during the interviews, as many of them stated that they had environmental and academic challenges that were linked to other impairments or health conditions in addition to their recognized injuries or illness by the Ministry of Defense (MoD).

The DIDF-veteran students described four major challenges: in transitioning to HE, inside the classroom, outside the classroom, and in forming social connections and collaborations. The study participants raised several significant issues that are important to the context of this research question.

Disabled IDF Veterans and Implications of Living with a Disability

Multiple Functional Impairments

In the past, the social model argued that no impairment was disabling only the failure of society to accommodate differences limited an individual's life options. The social model made a clear distinction between the terms of impairment and disability. *While Impairment* is defined as lacking all or part of a limb or having a defective limb, organ, or mechanism of the body, *disability* is the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by social organization barriers (UPIAS, 1976). Nowadays, the social model is widely accepted, with the perception that a complete description of disability must include also personal experience of disability and illness the approach of critical disability theory. Furthermore, the critical disability theory (CDT) offers

a balance between the contributions of disability, personal responses to disability, and the barriers that the social environment imposes on the concept of disability.

Overall, these two terms express the tension between the two notions of the phenomenon of living with an impairment and the social construction of disability in general, and in HE settings in particular. In this study, these terms are used to better understand the academic, environmental, and social aspects of the DIDF-veteran students' challenges.

All the participants detailed their impairments as recognized by the MoD: Some stated that they had physical disabilities, others suffered from PTSD, and some had both conditions. One participant had a sensory disability and identified as blind, while two others identified specific illnesses (skin cancer and fibromyalgia).

Beyond a recognized military-related injury, nine out of 13 participants stated that they had been diagnosed with a learning disability (LD) or attention deficit disorder (ADHD). In addition, some of them reported coping with the aggravation of their military-related injury/illness condition or reported an additional physical injury that had occurred either during or after their service. The participants emphasized the encounters they faced in Israeli HE as related to their overall impairments.

Some of the DIDF-veterans also encountered unique challenges of having another injury or illness that was unconnected to their military service. For example, Dalit had recently been injured on her honeymoon trip abroad just before beginning the first semester of her MA program. Dalit's accident happened after she replied to the online survey and before the first interview session. I first learned about it only at the time we set the time for the interview a short time before we met. In Dalit's situation, as well as in other participants' shared stories, a

combination of several characteristics influenced their integration as students with disabilities on their campuses:

*The accident was fresh,
school started a few weeks ago ...
I was busier in understanding
how I can even get physically [to the campus]
and start studying
and if I can even sit
for more than one class ...*

*(...) התאונה הייתה טרייה,
הלימודים התחילו לפני מספר שבועות ...
הייתי עסוקה יותר בלהבין
איך אני בכלל מגיעה פיזית [לקמפוס]
ומתחילה ללמוד
ואם אני יכולה בכלל לשבת
ליותר משיעור אחד ...*

*That's why I'm also postponing the end now,
With the university.
There are other things to focus on as well,
The rehabilitation process because of the
accident.
There are more things on my mind
But I think wow
again the bureaucracy
And again the documents,
... I do not know what it's going to be like
here."*

*בגלל זה אני כל כך גם דוחה את הקץ עכשיו,
עם האוניברסיטה.
יש גם דברים אחרים להתמקד בהם,
תהליך השיקומי בגלל התאונה..
יש עוד דברים על הראש
אבל אני חושבת וואו
שוב הבירוקרטיה
שוב המסמכים,
אני לא יודעת איך זה יהיה פה.*

As a result of her new injury, Dalit shared her physical challenges that limited her mobility and caused her severe pain. The new injury affected her actions in gaining support at the beginning of the school year at a new HE institution. At the beginning of the academic year, Dalit was searching first for the best response regarding some environmental barriers affecting her physical and mobility needs. After I asked her if she had applied at the disability support services office, Dalit said that she chose first to focus on her most recent injury, while postponing her application for other accommodations.

Since there are support resources that are available on Israeli campuses for the growing population of students with disabilities, several questions were examined: What challenges will DIDF veterans face? And where and when do they face these challenges? In the following sections, the participants' shared experiences are presented, referring to their impairments,

challenges, and barriers in Israeli HE settings. First, I describe the participants' experiences of having a newly acquired disability and their experiences in daily life. Then I refer to their transitioning challenges and their challenges as students inside and outside of the classroom.

A Newly Acquired Disability

The challenges of coping with a disability as a result of an injury during military service take on additional significance with the transition to HE, as was described. All 13 participants described in detail the circumstances related to their military-related injury or illness. In addition, they all referred to the shift in their life and how much their daily living activities were affected as a result. Several participants described their difficulties in dealing with the consequences of their injury or illness, especially the fact that it occurred when they were adults. For example, Uzi was a combat soldier whose military service ended following his injury during training. This happened just before he was supposed to begin a commanders' course. He was recognized with a physical disability and PTSD after being trapped under a tank. He remained there until other soldiers managed to get him out. Uzi expressed the loneliness and sense of lack of abilities he felt after his injury.

“It is very difficult for a 19.5-year-old boy when all his friends are still in the army, he finds himself all alone first off all ... I felt like nothing, lonely, useless in the world.”

“זה מאוד קשה לילד בן 19.5 כשכל החברים שלו עדיין בצבא, הוא מוצא את עצמו לבד קודם כל ... [אני] הרגשתי הכי כלומניק, בודד, יוזלס בעולם.”

Uzi felt alone and broken, especially in light of the security situation that existed in Israel at that time (Operation Cast Lead - מִבְּצֵעַ עוֹפְרֵת יְצוּקָה). He mourned his inability to contribute compared to his peers who remained in his military unit and who took part in the operation. In describing his feelings of being loneliness after his injury, Uzi used a third-person voice to refer to his experience as if it were an event that had happened to someone else rather than to him.

Other participants referred first to their daily living activities and family life. Dalit, who was injured in her shoulders during her basic training, shared her struggles with a simple activity inside the house:

*“There were things in the house
that my parents adjusted for me
for example, the cups in my mom's house
were on a very high shelf,
so they just lowered the cups
to a lower shelf.”*

*”היו דברים בבית
שההורים שלי התאימו עבורי
למשל, הכוסות בבית של אמא שלי
היו במדף מאד גבוה,
אז הם פשוט הורידו את הכוסות
למדף נמוך יותר.”*

Miki shared his need to use braces to support his knee injuries and their effect on his family role as a father to seven children:

*“You also lose your children's childhood,
you cannot play with them,
you cannot run with them,
you cannot go hiking with them,
they lost their dad.”*

*אתה מפסיד גם את הילדות של הילדים שלך,
אתה לא יכול לשחק איתם,
אי אפשר לרוץ איתם,
אי אפשר לעשות איתם מסלולי טיול,
הפסידו אבא.”*

Similarly, Shir also shared difficulties that arose from becoming visually impaired at an older age. She addressed and sharpened the difficulty of coping with a newly acquired disability in early adulthood and especially in the transition to HE.

*“I'm newly blind,
I do not know,
I have no blind friends,
I did not come from an institution [for the
blind] like this is completely new to me.”*

*”אני עיוורת חדשה,
אני לא מכירה,
אין לי חברים עיוורים,
אני לא באתי ממסגרת
כאילו זה חדש לי לחלוטין.”*

Shir compared her experience to other people with vision disabilities as she referred to the fact that her condition is distinct compared to other people who faced visual impairment from an earlier stage in their lives and had experience with it in various settings before entering HE.

These narratives reveal the shift in participants' lives after their injury and their challenging experiences in returning home and re-adjusting to daily life. Moreover, the participants revealed how a significant change in certain abilities in light of an injury, illness, or aggravation in their medical condition, or other existing impairments affected their experiences as students and their academic success.

Vocational Rehabilitation Approach

The rehabilitation process, both at The National Insurance Institute (NII) and the MoD, includes vocational counseling to direct DIDF veterans to HE studies or to diploma studies for the purpose of integrating them into the labor market. In some cases, people with disabilities, as well as DIDF veterans, receive recommendations to go to vocational institutions which train and prepare them for employment, rather than into the HE system. Some participants shared that in their counseling they were encouraged to enroll in vocational studies rather than HE in the rehabilitation process. For example, Shir described that as a blind woman, she felt that there was a lack of confidence in blind peoples' abilities to study in some academic programs:

"She [the social worker at NII] didn't want to let me study neuroscience at all because – "Neuroscience is too hard for the blind. Blind people are poor people. They can't learn. It's not appropriate."

"היא [העובדת הסוציאלית בביטוח לאומי] לא רצתה לתת לי בכלל מדעי המוח כי – "מדעי המוח זה יותר מידי קשה לעיוורים, עיוורים הם אנשים מסכנים הם לא יכולים ללמוד זה לא מתאים."

Likewise, Shahar stated that in light of his severe injury in battle, the social worker in the rehabilitation department of the MoD advised him to study to be a tour guide (a non-academic program). And only after he finished these studies, did he begin his current studies at an academic college for education as he wished to be a teacher:

*"The MoD sent me to professional counseling,
I was just about
to start [to study for] the psychometric exam,
and in the professional counseling, they told me
first of all, don't do psychometrics,
go do something fun,
something you like,
go learn to be a tour guide."*

*"משרד הביטחון שלחו אותי להכוונה,
[אני] הייתי אמור בדיוק
להתחיל פסיכומטרי,
ובהכוונה אמרו לי
קודם כל, אל תעשה פסיכומטרי,
תלך תעשה משהו כיף,
משהו שאתה אוהב,
לך תלמד הדרכת טיולים."*

The MoD recommended that Shahar study something practical and fun, as he stated. As for his certificate studies, he did not have to take the screening exams that are usually required by most institutions of HE (such as the psychometric entrance exam). After completing his course, he decided to enroll in educational studies at a public college and discovered that there was no need to pass any screening exam. Shahar's story serves as an example of the MoD's rehabilitative counseling perception. His narrative points out the disconnect that exists between the Rehabilitation Department in the MoD and institutions of HE in Israel since today there are many HE institutions where there is no requirement at all to take a psychometric exam and there are programs that fit DIDF veterans as well.

Once the right program in HE is chosen, the stage of enrollment and transition into the actual studies follows. The participants' documented challenges began with this transition for a plethora of reasons, as discussed below.

Challenges in the Transition into Higher Education

Many of the participants experienced difficulties in transitioning into HE and starting their student life. Not a single participant reported a trajectory that was free of challenges. The academic experiences of DIDF veterans vary greatly, although many reported on the period of adjustment upon entering college. For some of the participants, their injury changed the life route they had planned, as in the case of Uri and Sagi, who had planned to stay in the military service

(permanent military service) for a longer time. Most of the other participants said they had planned to pursue HE after their military service. In other cases, the military-related injury/illness made them think of HE as an opportunity, as in the case of Michal, Uri, and Rachel, who clearly said that their injury in the military service and eligibility for support from the MoD encouraged them to turn to HE and to become the first generation to receive HE in their family. For others, it was just part of their large life plan. As Shahar stated:

*"I'm not exceptional,
I'm like everyone else,
Everyone is after the army.*

*"אני לא חריג,
אני כמו כולם,
כולם אחרי צבא."*

Shahar referred to the national-religious sector to which he belongs which usually enters military service as part of their Israeli yeshiva program (*Hesder*), and after the army, most of the veterans go to study in different academic colleges. In this respect, Shahar felt that he was no different from other students on his campus.

The participants' major areas of study were varied and included academic programs in social sciences, education, engineering, and design. All of the participants enrolled in coursework full-time in different academic fields, and about half of them balanced work with full-time studies. All participants except for Miki (who was injured during his reserve service) began their post-secondary studies right after their injury during military service. Some of them started as undergraduate students in a college or university, while two of them went first to non-academic study settings (diploma studies), and one participant attended an academic preparatory program (*mechina*) and later on transferred to a college. Miki recently returned to study in HE for his graduate degree (M.A. in Education), several years after his injury.

Disability Policy and Registration Bureaucracy

For some of the participants, the MoD recognition process did not take place close to the time of their injury event. Moreover, in many cases, as the participants shared, the recognition process was long and complex. These circumstances can hamper transition into HE. As the delay in the recognition process created difficulties and hardships for the DIDF veterans in the beginning of their academic journey, start from the registration to academic studies, financial aid methods, and use of support resources: The participants shared their challenges regarding issues such as financial aid, coursework management, and accessibility barriers in entering their classrooms. They also talked about their feelings and implications on their integration as new students, and their ability to function in the best way. For example, some participants mentioned their feelings of missing out, having a lack of support, and disappointment from dealing with the bureaucracy. Yaron, who has a back injury, described his experience of being a student before getting recognition of his military injury:

*At that time I was not yet recognized
as a disabled IDF veteran (...)
I said that I am not waiting
for the Ministry of Defense,
not waiting for anyone,
I have tasks to finish in life,
We will manage even without their help
until we settle this issue.
I do not stop my life
for such nonsense.*

*So, I started as a regular student,
I paid the tuition,
using my military deposit benefit,
which, by the way,
is not recommended
for a disabled IDF veteran to do.*

אז עוד לא הייתי מוכר
כנכה צה"ל (...)
אני אמרתי שאני לא מחכה
למשרד הביטחון,
לא מחכה לאף אחד,
יש לי משימות לסיים בחיים,
נסתדר גם בלי העזרה שלהם
עד שנסדיר את העניין הזה,
אני לא עוצר את החיים שלי
בשביל קשקוש כזה.

אז [אני] התחלת כמו סטודנט רגיל,
[אני] שילמתי את הלימודים
דרך הפיקדון,
מה שאגב
לנכה צה"ל
לא מומלץ לעשות.

Yaron explained that he was unable to use financial aid from the MoD because he had decided to enroll rather than wait for the end of the recognition process. He paid the tuition using the deposit that all discharged IDF soldiers receive at the end of their service. Unfortunately, he later found out that he would not receive a full refund of this deposit from the MoD at the end of the recognition process. Even though Yaron was connected with the Department of Rehabilitation of the MoD during the recognition process, he received no guidance regarding his status and his intentions to enroll in HE before he was officially recognized. For Rachel, who was recognized as a DIDF veteran with PTSD, the process of recognizing and receiving financial assistance from the MoD was also postponed.

*“At the time of the bachelor's degree,
They had not yet given (it to me).
I almost finished the degree,
and only then
they gave it to me
in retrospect.”*

*”בתואר הראשון,
עוד לא נתנו,
הרי כמעט [אני] סיימתי
כבר את התואר
ורק אז נתנו לי
בדיעבד.”*

In addition, Rachel mentioned the scholarship she received from the MoD, explaining that she had received it not because not she was a disabled veteran with PTSD, but because she had been a combat soldier:

*“But I had a scholarship that I received,
and it helped me a lot,
you know. You know, it gave me some
[breathing] space ...
Because I was a combat soldier,
not because of my mental state.”*

*“אבל היה לי מלגה שקיבלתי,
וזה נורא, נורא עזר לי.
את יודעת נתן לי
איזה רווח ...
בגלל שהייתי לוחמת,
אבל לא בגלל המצב הנפשי שלי.”*

While Rachel shared her experience and emotional relief after getting the financial aid, other participants expressed their concern for their lack of support since the process of recognition was not complete. These shared narratives emphasize one of the

major issues regarding the disability policy (benefits and the rights) of DIDF veterans in comparison to other groups of people with disabilities in Israel. Shir also was only recognized as a DIDF veteran after she has started the first year of her bachelor's degree. She commented on balancing her financial support between the NII and MoD after being recognized as a DIDF veteran at the time she was already a student:

*I was actually under the roof
of the National Insurance Institute,
as a blind woman,
and I started studying neuroscience
once in the university...
and only later,
when I was still studying neuroscience,
I was recognized as a disabled IDF veteran,
and then the Ministry of Defense
took me under his wing and continued to help
me with my studies...*

*Because the Ministry of Defense
did not recognize me,
still I went to National Insurance Institute.
Then when I was recognized
by the Ministry of Defense,
the National Insurance Institute
and the Ministry of Defense compensated one
another,
such, and such refunds.*

בעצם [אני] הייתי תחת הגג
של ביטוח לאומי
כעיוורת,
ו[אני] התחלתי ללמוד מדעי המוח
פעם באוניברסיטה ...
ורק בהמשך,
כשעדיין למדתי מדעי המוח
הוכרתי כנכת צה"ל,
ואז משרד הביטחון
לקח אותי תחת חסותו והוא זה
שהמשיך לעזור לי עם הלימודים...

בגלל שמשרד הביטחון
לא הכיר בי,
עדיין [אני] הלכתי לביטוח לאומי.
אחר כך כשהוכרתי
במשרד הביטחון,
ביטוח לאומי
ומשרד הביטחון
עשו קיזוזים אחד עם השני,
החזרים כאלו ואחרים.

Moreover, Shir detailed and later described in the interview the available support services the MoD can offer as off-campus support:

*In general,
the Ministry of Defense
can only help me with
a real budgetary issue,
whether it is the studies themselves, taking
support classes,
bringing someone from outside
to escort me to class.*

בכללי,
משרד הביטחון יכול לעזור לי
אך ורק בנושא
תקציבי באמת,
בין אם זה הלימודים עצמם,
לקחת שיעורי תגבור,
להביא מישהו מבחוץ
שילווח אותי בכיתה.

*For me, it is maybe to rewrite [write] for me,
with other disabilities
for someone who may have
motor problems
it is to be more for assistance,
but this is outside the academy,
Not inside*

אצלי זה כדי לשכתב [לכתוב] בשבילי,
אצל נכויות אחרות
למי שיש לו אולי
בעיות מוטוריות
זה להיות יותר לעזר,
אבל זה מחוץ לאקדמיה.
... לא בתוך ...

This statement emphasizes the distinction between DIDF veterans and other students with disabilities in general, and especially in HE. Shir expressed her understanding of this mechanism as she stated that the MoD cannot assist her inside the academic system.

From these shared statements, we learn that the recognition process has a great impact on the transition of DIDF veterans to HE – financially and emotionally. Dalit, who has a shoulder injury, had delays in the MoD recognition process. She shared her need for financial support as she referred to her difficulty accessing her campus by public transportation. She described her discomfort riding a bus to campus, as she had difficulty in light of her shoulder injuries such as standing during the bus ride and coping with sudden stops that could cause shoulder displacement and pain:

*“I started as a student
at the university,
yet without the recognition
of the MoD.
I needed support
even before I was recognized
because I knew my disability,
I knew that it was also very difficult for me to get
around on public transportation.”*

*”[אני] התחלתי כסטודנטית
באוניברסיטה,
ללא הכרה עדיין
של משרד הביטחון.
[אני] הייתי צריכה עזרה
עוד לפני שהוכרתי,
כי [אני] הכרתי את המגבלה שלי,
[אני] ידעתי שמאד קשה לי
גם להתנייד בתחבורה ציבורית.”*

Dalit’s narrative illuminates the fact that being a student involves not just sitting in class, but also getting to the class. According to her story, it is likely that she might have used other transportation solutions if she had had financial support from the MoD.

The interviews revealed several bureaucratic difficulties that participants encountered when registering and paying tuition for their studies since their recognition process by the MoD had not ended before their school registration. While all participants shared the hard and long process of official recognition by the Rehabilitation Division of the MoD, some of them such as Yaron, Shir, and Dalit shared that the process was completed only after they started their academic studies. Therefore, they had to pay the tuition alone without any support resources.

“We Don’t Have a Box”

Disabled IDF veterans do not have to self-identify at the time of registration in many HE institutions. They enroll as regular students, and they are reimbursed by the MoD afterward. As was stated by Noa, who is recognized as a DIDF veteran with fibromyalgia:

*“I did not declare,
and no one asked either.
I mean they do not ask:
who you are? what you are? where do you come from?
You enroll for courses,
pay an advance and come to class.”*

*”[אני] לא הצהרתי
ואף אחד גם לא שאל.
זאת אומרת לא שואלים :
מי אתה? מה אתה? מאיפה אתה בא?
אתה נרשם ללימודים,
משלם מקדמה, מגיע לשיעור.”*

In addition, DIDF veterans pay the full tuition like any other student. Later on, they receive a refund from the MoD. Uzi shared his struggles to pay the full tuition and explained that he self-identified as a DIDF veteran only when he applied for a payment plan. Above the challenges of having a disability when their recognition process is delayed, they do not get the financial support they need in time to start their HE studies, and this is difficult and frustrating. Since Uzi did not have the means to pay the full tuition, to be able to make payments, he identified himself as a DIDF veteran.

*“So yes, I identified with the university,
I forwarded a letter
that will give me approval.”*

*” אז כן [אני] הזדהיתי מול האוניברסיטה,
[אני] העברתי איזשהו מכתב
שיתנו לי אישור.”*

Uzi’s shared story takes on additional significance since in Israel, there is inconsistency in the requirement for documentation and the need to identify oneself as a student with a disability at the time of registration. In most HE institutions in Israel, there is no need to identify as a person with a disability – “there is no box to sign”. As a result of these circumstances, many DIDF veterans experience disappointment and emotional uncertainty as they start their journey as students, in a new reality and facing different challenges.

Too Many Classes

Some of the participants shared a lack of guidance before they started their studies especially in planning their first semester courses; others shared their transition challenges as they needed to register for additional classes to be eligible to use the benefits of financial aid or scholarships as DIDF-veteran students.

Michal, who had already been recognized by the MoD with PTSD before she started her academic year reported that she had to take several additional courses to meet the financial aid requirements.

"I say
undergraduate support
in funding the degree,
it required me
to take a few more courses (...)
I was the only student here
who studied for five full days."

"אני אומרת
עזרה בתואר ראשון
במימון של התואר,
זה דרש ממני
לקחת קצת יותר קורסים (...)
[אני] הייתי הסטודנטית היחידה פה
שלמדה חמישה ימים מלאים."

Michal's statement points to the challenge of realizing how many courses one is capable of taking. Her statement underlines their need and use of benefits on one hand and the students' challenges to manage their studies successfully on the other hand. Yaron also commented on this issue and shared:

"When I started my studies (...),
at the university,
I made a mistake that I did not know
you should not be doing
and I just filled every day,
from morning to evening.
I completed half a degree in one year,
I didn't know
you weren't supposed to do that.
I just filled the school schedule."

"כש[אני] התחלתי את הלימודים (...)
באוניברסיטה,
[אני] עשיתי טעות
שלא ידעתי שלא עושים אותה,
ופשוט [אני] מילאתי כל יום,
מהבוקר עד הערב.
[אני] עשיתי חצי מהתואר בשנה אחת,
[אני] לא ידעתי
שלא עושים את זה.
פשוט [אני] מילאתי את המערכת."

Shir faced the same challenges as Yaron, as she failed to properly organize her schedule. Shir asserted that she failed in taking her exams during her first year because she took too many courses without considering her new disability (visual impairment), as well as her LD/ADHD background:

One of the reasons [for failing]
is that I had 42 hours a week
of studying at the university
in the program of neuroscience
because I was not well instructed at the
university ...
and the secretary... I told her:

אחת מהסיבות [שנכשלתי]
היא שהיו לי 42 שעות שבועיות
של למידה באוניברסיטה
בתוכנית של מדעי המוח
כי לא הנחו אותי טוב
באוניברסיטה ...
והמזכירה ... אמרתי לה:
'תקשיבי אולי אוכל לפרוס [את הקורסים]
ככה וככה'.

'Listen maybe I can spread [my courses] like this and like that.'
 Somehow, she managed to convince me to also take the full program and also the extra.
 At the university, it is also mandatory to take Judaism [courses], so in addition to neuroscience studies, I also have Judaism studies that I have to learn.

איכשהו היא הצליחה לשכנע אותי. לקחת גם את התוכנית המלאה וגם את התוספת. באוניברסיטה יש גם חובה של [קורסים] ביהדות אז בנוסף למדעי המוח, יש לי גם יהדות שאני צריכה ללמוד.

Yaron, Michal, and Shir cited time management as a challenge they had while transitioning. They shared the lack of guidance or any advice regarding how to better manage their course schedule during their first semester, which led them to take too many classes. There was also a lack of information regarding their rights, as well as other relevant issues involved in the transition to HE. These circumstances influenced their time management and ability to plan their day on campus due to the commitment to too many courses during the first semester, as Rachel also shared:

I had to literally build everything from scratch, Alone, Go to them and see what is there, And build for me some kind of schedule To be somehow able to do it all together. And always the exams would fall on the same date. Again, no one helped me. Regardless of the fact that I am a disabled IDF veteran. And the post-trauma I suffer from It was a thousand times harder for me.

הייתי צריכה ממש לבנות את הכול מאפס, לבד, ללכת אליהם ולראות מה יש, ולבנות לעצמי איזה שהיא מערכת שיהיה איכשהו אפשר לעשות אותה ביחד. ותמיד המבחנים היו נופלים אחד של השני. שוב, אף אחד לא עזר לי. בלי קשר לזה שאני נכת צה"ל. והפוסט טראומה שאני סובלת ממנה זה פי אלף היה לי יותר קשה.

Some of the participants felt the stress of transitioning to HE, as part of their move back to civilian life could add more challenges to beginning college or university coursework. From Yaron, Rachel, Shir, Uzi, and Dalit's narratives, we learn that their transition into HE included several important issues including awareness of the financial burden as a result of the high cost

of tuition, the need to find resources for financial support, planning the semester coursework, time management, and searching for sources of guidance and other support.

Mobility Between Institutions

During the data analysis, I found that most of the participants had attended more than one academic setting. Ten of the 13 participants were undergraduate students during the time of this study, and almost all of them had transferred to their current academic setting from other post-secondary sites (non-academic or academic). Only two of the participants (Uzi and Navit) had no previous academic experience before their current HE institution.

Yaron stated that he has been a student for about eight years:

*"I can say
that I have experience
in several academic institutions."*

*"אני יכול להגיד
שיש לי ניסיון
בכמה מוסדות אקדמיים."*

Some participants said that they had to move to a different academic setting or a different academic program after failing exams, as in the case of a Shir:

*"The transition from neuroscience
to social work...
I arrived after the first shock
In the first semester
I failed at almost everything
In all exams."*

*"המעבר ממדעי המוח
לעבודה סוציאלית ...
אני הגעתי אחרי ההלם הראשוני
בסמסטר הראשון נכשלתי כמעט בהכל
בכל המבחנים."*

Following these difficulties, Shir relocated and started to study a different discipline at another academic institution. She expanded her statement and shared her experiences of several transitions between post-secondary institutions (some academic and some certificate studies only) in light of different circumstances. Following our conversation and the topic of this study, Shir emphasized her reasoning for transferring from one academic setting to another:

*"It is important to say
That I got the support I needed,
And it was not from the place
That they did not give me the right adjustments.
It was really for personal reasons."*

*"חשוב להגיד
שאני קיבלתי את העזרות שהייתי צריכה,
וזה לא היה מהמקום
שלא נתנו לי
את ההתאמות הנכונות.
זה היה באמת מטעמים אישיים שלי."*

Shir listed two significant reasons for her transitions between institutions of HE: (1) her desire to take part in a peripheral sport during the school period, and (2) because she failed in her exams in her first year in the neuroscience studies.

Eran explained that he had lost interest in his former studies, so he moved to another academic institution. Because people around him expressed their disappointment, facing this situation was another challenge to deal with:

*"I also did not know what to choose,
I chose professions that did not fit me (...)
I did not want to tell my parents
What exactly happened,
Then they said to me
"You tried and failed, so Why are you wasting
money?"*

*"לא ידעתי גם לבחור,
בחרתי מקצועות שהם לא מתאימים לי (...)
לא רציתי לספר להורים שלי
מה בדיוק קרה,
אז הם אמרו לי
"ניסית ונכשלת, אז למה אתה מבזבז כסף?"*

The need to move between institutions (for different reasons) and experiencing the transition more than once was an additional challenge for some participants. For example, the participants shared the need to get to know the place: the class locations, parking issues, new faculty, other new academic and administrative staff, to submit documents once again to receive support services, etc. In general, the participants gave a range of reasons for selecting their specific institution (university or college), such as the location of the school, a change in their field of interest, etc. The majority who transferred between different HE institutions moved because of a shift in their field of interest, moving from undergraduate studies to graduate school, or to find a new field of study and occupation due to the aggravation of their injury.

Injury Status and the Need to Go Back to School

Additionally, the impact of an acquired disability as a result of military service at the beginning of adult life can also influence the field of interest decision, academic program options, and the field of employment. In many cases, this stage of transition to post-secondary programs is part of the rehabilitation process in preparation for independent living, especially for young DIDF veterans.

Other DIDF veterans who had already studied and were employed, in some cases, had to change their field of employment due to a military-related injury in reserve service or because of aggravation of the injury later in life (as in the case of Miki and Sagi). These participants found themselves in a situation where they had to shift their employment status due to injury aggravation. As in the cases of Sagi and Miki, the aggravation of their military injury and the difficulty of continuing their jobs led them to think about a career change and to seek a new field of study. Miki explained that although he was employed as a homeroom teacher, he recently had to think about changing his place of employment following his job responsibilities, the capabilities required, and the lack of his suitability for the job position in light of his injury status and chronic pain. Miki shared his difficulty in standing and walking, now that his pain had worsened over the years. Due to his injury, he was asked to change his role as a home teacher:

*“Because of my injury,
I was told I could not be a homeroom teacher,
'You cannot do some of the activities with them,
So we do not want you to be a homeroom teacher.'
So, I had to leave the place where I worked.”*

*”בגלל הפציעה שלי,
אמרו לי שאני לא יכול לחנך,
'אתה לא יכול לעשות איתם חלק מהפעילויות,
אז אנחנו לא רוצים שתחנך.'
אז נאלצתי לעזוב את המקום שעבדתי בו.”*

This unique situation led Miki to think about pursuing a master's degree in educational counseling to find another role in the field of education that would not depend on the state of his physical disability.

Sagi, like Miki, had to think of changing his career after he suffered from pains in both of his legs, some years after his injury. When Sagi was 20, after he finished his rehabilitation process, he decided to go to study at a post-secondary education institution. These non-academic studies provided him with an education and employment in the tourism and food industry. Sagi took these studies despite the fact that vocational counseling determined that he was qualified to pursue the career he desired in the first place (law studies):

*"Due to my job and my occupation,
I stood on my feet for many hours,
And, in general, it no longer suited me,
To my physiological condition."*

*"מתוקף העבודה שלי והעיסוקים שלי,
[אני] עמדתי הרבה שעות על הרגליים,
ובאופן כללי,
זה כבר לא התאים לי,
למצב הפיזיולוגי שלי."*

Sagi and Yaron also stated that they decided to return to school in a different setting, as they wished to acquire an education in a field which was their first wish and dream, but life events (such as marriage) or an additional field of interest led them to first study another field of knowledge. Overall, the challenging experiences of these DIDF veterans describe the variation among the participants and the meaning of their experiences as students in Israeli HE.

Neché Meshukan

A repetitive term in some of the participants' narratives was the phrase "rehabilitated disabled veteran" (Neché Meshukan). This term refers to the status of DIDF veterans who already have received significant assistance from the State of Israel (through the MoD) in setting up a business, vocational training, or academic degree studies. In terms of funding approval and assistance for DIDF veterans, the MoD's Rehabilitation Division also considers financing the studies for rehabilitated disabled veterans based on several conditions that is, if the recognized disability is aggravated, preventing him from continuing his work, or if he has quit his job for reasons beyond his control. Furthermore, it is examined whether the application for study

funding is a necessity for first-time workplace integration or continued employment in the labor market.

Following these procedures and laws, some participants had difficulty in obtaining approval to fund their recent studies. This was true for Eran:

*You have a profession,
We do not owe you anything (...)*

יש לך מקצוע,
אנחנו לא חייבים לך כלום (...)

*Once five years pass from the date of recognition,
You are considered a 'rehabilitated' disabled
veteran."*

ברגע שעוברים חמש שנים מיום ההכרה,
אתה נחשב 'נכה משוקם'.
זה לא משנה מה עברת,
מה עשית.

*It does not matter what you went through,
what you did.*

אתה נכה משוקם.

You are a rehabilitated disabled veteran.

עכשיו אתה רוצה ללמוד ...

Now you want to study ...

תתבע ותבקש ביטול של השיקום

*You need to sue and request the cancellation of the
rehabilitation program*

ותוכיח שאתה יכול [ללמוד] משהו אחר.

And prove that you can [study] something else.

Eran added that the fact that he studied in the past did not help him to get support in his current studies. For the same reason, Sagi decided not to apply for any support from the MoD and to fund his studies by himself.

Challenges Inside the Classroom

The participants shared their experiences inside their classrooms and halls, as they referred to both environmental challenges on the physical level as well as challenges at the academic level.

Hard to Be a Student, and It is Harder to be a Disabled Veteran Student

The overarching sense of the participants' challenges was chiefly expressed in the numerous situations they shared as integral to their experiences in HE or in the perception of their disability identity. The participants' narratives call attention to their overall challenges.

Some participants mentioned their feeling that it is hard to be a student, and to be a student with a disability is even harder. Uzi shared his view referring to the additional difficulties of DIDF veterans as a daily challenge:

*This is a daily struggle.
I have friends for whom I know
It's a daily struggle,
And when you add
To that this bowl or cake,
To be a student is a daily struggle,
Because it's writing papers and coursework
And mandatory attendance
And exam period (...)
So, these things might cause
Or collide
And actually collide.*

זוהי התמודדות יומיומית.
לי יש חברים שאני יודע
שזה עבורם התמודדות יומיומית,
וכשאתה מוסיף
ככה לקערה הזאת או לעוגה,
גם להיות סטודנט
זו התמודדות יומיומית,
כי זה עבודות ומטלות
ונוכחות חובה
ותקופת מבחנים (...)
אז הדברים האלה בהכרח עשויים
ועלולים להתנגש
ומתנגשים בפועל.

While the HE environment (college or university) presents challenges for all students, it poses more difficulties for students with disabilities. Uzi's statement addressed the daily challenges students with disabilities experience, as well as DIDF veterans in HE. Michal also referred to the difficulty of being a DIDF-veteran student compared to regular students, especially at the beginning of the academic year:

*"You do not know where you are going,
You do not know, what will be there,
Coping with is very massive and intense,
It's not easy, for a regular student (...)
So for us, it's even more so.*

"אתה לא יודע לאן אתה הולך,
אתה לא יודע, מה יהיה שם,
ההתמודדות היא מאוד מאסיבית ואינטנסיבית,
זה לא פשוט, לסטודנט רגיל (...)
אז לנו זה בכלל עוד יותר."

Navit described the difficulty of integrating into different settings in light of the injury or illness from the military service and the fact that each time, it is a new challenge:

*"It's not that he's just getting into a setting
For the first time,
He's getting into another setting again,
So it's hard."*

"זה לא שהוא רק נכנס למסגרת
פעם ראשונה,
הוא נכנס עוד פעם לעוד מסגרת,
אז זה קשה."

All participants who are recognized as DIDF veterans shared their challenges and feelings and how this status impacts them both physically, academically, and socially, both in and outside of the classroom.

Coping with Chronic Pain and Prolonged Sitting

Eight of the 13 participants shared their challenges of living with chronic pain and its effect on their learning experiences. They shared their challenges from different aspects such as attending or being able to enter the classroom, seating, and taking part in-class activities, as well as the impact of their impairment on their academic success. Some of them also related their experiences with pain and its impact on their routine and their different roles and status (as a mother, father, or employee). Some of the participants said that they had pain during the night that interfered with their sleep which, of course, affected their functioning during the day. As Sagi described:

*“Sometimes I get up with pains
In the middle of the night,
With my leg,
So my sleep is completely messed up.”*

*”לפעמים אני קם מכאבים
באמצע הלילה,
עם הרגל,
אז נדפקת לי השינה לגמרי.”*

Sleep is an important component in daily functioning, especially for students taking classes and exams. Additionally, several of the participants shared that they had to stay at home due to their chronic pain and the lack of ability to stand or walk out of their house. Shahar, for example, referred to his challenge to get out of his house and get to school:

*“There were days
I just did not want to get out of the house
And I had to.
There is an obligation to attend classes
In education studies.
It's not like other studies
That you can not attend [classes]
And arrive to take an exam.*

*But there were days when I did not have the
strength to leave the house.
I would only go out to get the V mark.
[That I was present in class]. ”*

*”היו ימים
שפשוט לא רציתי לצאת מהבית
והייתי חייב.
יש חובת נוכחות בלימודי חינוך.
זה לא כמו לימודים אחרים
שאתה יכול לא להגיע [לשיעורים]
ולהגיע לגשת למבחן.*

*אבל היה ימים שלא הייתי לי כוח לצאת מהבית.
הייתי יוצא רק בשביל לקבל את הסימון וי
[שהייתי נוכח בכיתה].”*

Sagi also described his need to stay home sometimes due to the physical disability that causes him severe pain.

*There were days I could not go to school,
I mean I had three or four days
That I should have stayed home ...
Because of the pain,
Because the knee was locked,
Because I could not go out,
To step on my feet.*

*Then the problem was more serious.
So I really felt my lack ...
[I was] totally missing out,
Two days of school and it's hard to get over it.*

*היו ימים שלא יכולתי לנסוע ללימודים,
זאת אומרת היו לי שלושה- ארבעה ימים
שהייתי צריך להישאר בבית ...
בגלל הכאבים,
בגלל שהברך שהייתה ננעלת,
בגלל שלא יכולתי לצאת,
לדרוך על הרגליים.*

*ואז הבעיה הייתה חמורה יותר.
אז באמת הרגשתי את החוסר שלי ...
[אני הייתי] לגמרי מפספס,
יומיים לימודים וקשה להתגבר על זה.*

Sagi said that he stayed at home more than once and suggested that the faculty should record their lectures. At that time, this option was used as a routine only in some of the courses and at a small number of campuses in Israel (before the time of COVID-19). Noa also stated that she did not attend some of her campus classes several times because of chronic pain following the symptoms of fibromyalgia that worsened during her military service.

Pains were also linked to the design of the classroom environment especially the seating arrangements at their campuses. Specifically, physical barriers existed inside the classroom and were mainly related to the issue of sitting in class sessions or in taking exams, with uncomfortable seating conditions. Yaron who has a back injury and nerve damage in his leg described sitting in class as an intense experience. He referred to the classroom chairs as *inquisition chairs*, using this metaphor to describe how difficult it was for him to sit for a long time in the classroom, particularly when taking exams:

*"I call these chairs
'Inquisition chairs'.
it's not something you can sit on for a long time...
There's nothing to do ...
Sometimes I sit on spikes
and wait for a break."*

*"אני קורא לכיסאות האלה
'כיסאות אינקוויזיציה'.
זה לא משהו שאפשר לשבת עליו הרבה זמן ...
אין מה לעשות ...
לפעמים אני יושב על קוצים
ומחכה להפסקה."*

The use of the phrase *inquisition* is a cultural concept that refers to the Spanish Inquisition, and it is used on many occasions as a way to emphasize punishment or torture that goes on for a long time. Using this metaphor during a conversation in Hebrew in Israeli culture gives it instant emotional power: Sitting in the classroom chair is painful, and it is torturous for some of these students due to their injuries. Yaron, and other students as well, further explained their struggle sitting on the chairs, especially during the time of taking exams:

*"To take an exam
When after 10 minutes max
You start to be in pain and on edge,
It is not a recipe to be too focused...
I cannot sit up straight,
And when I sit and need to bend over
And write on the desk,
I have no back support,
I have to hold myself up with my muscles,
And after a very short time, it is something
that I start to feel
Because of the pain."*

*"לגשת למבחן
שאתה אחרי גג 10 דקות
מתחיל להיות עם כאבים ועל קוצים,
זה לא מתכון להיות מרוכז יותר מדי ...
אני לא יכול לשבת זקוף,
וכשאני יושב וצריך להתכופף
ולכתוב על השולחן,
אין לי תמיכה בגב,
אני צריך להחזיק את עצמי עם השרירים,
וזה משהו שאחרי זמן מאוד קצר
אני מתחיל להרגיש את זה
בגלל הכאב."*

Other participants like Sarit and Shahar also complained about their difficulty sitting in rigid, uncomfortable chairs in the university. They explained why they could not sit for a long time in the university halls and classrooms chairs and especially in taking exams. For example, Sarit detailed:

*“This is a chair like in the cinema halls
That used to be once,
With the wood,
Which is a wooden pallet in the back,
A folding wooden pallet,
And the desk is really thin and such a long one,
Full, full as if the whole length
So you do not have that much legroom ...
Something shocking, really.”*

*“זה כיסא כמו באולמות קולנוע של פעם
עם העץ, שזה עץ בגב,
פלטת עץ מתקפלת,
והשולחן ממש דק כזה ארוך כזה,
מלא, מלא כאילו כל האורך
אין לך כל כך מקום לרגליים...
משהו מזעזע, ממש.”*

Sarit said that not all classrooms have such chairs and added that there are some new classrooms where there are new and comfortable chairs (“padded chairs” – “כיסאות מרופדים”). Sarit was badly injured during her military service and has many fractures in various organs in her body. Therefore, prolonged writing and sitting in exams was not an easy task for her:

*“I sat there during the exam,
I came out with excruciating pain
All over my body,
And with all that
I also have to concentrate on the exam
And do the exam,
That is to transcend
the physical pains
And do the exam...”*

*“ישבתי שם במבחן,
יצאתי עם כאבי תופת
בכל הגוף מהמבחן,
ועם כל זה שאני צריכה
גם להתרכז במבחן
ולעשות גם את המבחן,
זאת אומרת להתעלות
מעל הכאבים הפיזיים
ולעשות את המבחן...”*

Sarit now studies humanities subjects in contrast to her primary training in the field of science and engineering, and her current job position is as a math teacher. She indicated that the massive writing tasks make it difficult for her since she was injured in her hand.

Some other participants also complained about their difficulty sitting in rigid, uncomfortable chairs in the university. They described the physical barrier during their exams as they tried to describe the chair type. Shahar, for example, described the class chairs as plastic school chairs:

*“Chairs like school...
In short, chairs which are not good for me.
Rigid, made of plastic ...
So I would have a hard time
Sitting for a long time.”*

כיסאות כמו של בית ספר ...
בקיצור כיסאות שלא טובים לי.
נוקשים, מפלסטיק...
אז הייתי מתקשה
לשבת הרבה זמן.”

These and other narratives of the participants illustrate the discomfort they deal with during sitting in the different classes in which they study or are being tested. Sarit also mentioned her hand injury that, in addition to her difficulty in sitting, is problematic when she must write extensively in her exams.

Dalit, who was recently injured in a car accident, also described her coping with pain during her studies in several contexts:

*On Mondays, for example,
I have three lessons in a row
And I cannot sit for long
Because of the pelvic fracture,
After fifty minutes,
I'm already starting to hurt
And after an hour-and-a-half, two hours,
It's already unbearable.
I have to lie down,
Tilt the angle of the backrest of the seat,
Anything to relieve stress and strain.*

בימי שני למשל
יש לי שלושה שיעורים ברצף
ואני לא מצליחה לשבת זמן ממושך
בגלל השבר באגן,
אחרי חמישים דקות,
כבר מתחיל לכאוב לי
ואחרי שעה וחצי, שעתיים,
זה כבר בלתי נסבל.
אני חייבת לשכב,
להטות את הזווית של המשענת של הישיבה,
כל דבר כדי להוריד את הלחץ והעומס.

Dalit added that some classes took place in the evening, and she found it very hard to attend these classes as during these hours, the pain worsens.

In recent years, many institutions of higher learning have redesigned classrooms to be more “accessible.” In these classrooms, there are rows of desks with chairs attached to them, while in the first row, two places are defined and labeled as accessible seats. However, Miki, who has a knee injury, found these new sitting arrangements (attached chairs) inaccessible for him, as he explained:

*For the last six months,(...)
All these places,
In colleges and universities
Are switching to chairs
That are attached to the desk...
And it is very very uncomfortable ...
I cannot,
I have to sit in an external chair
And in a chair that will always be on the left
side where I can sit ... and straighten my leg.*

*בחצי השנה האחרונה (...)
משנים בכל המקומות,
במכללות ובאוניברסיטאות
לכיסאות כאלה
שמחוברים לשולחן ...
וזה מאוד-מאוד לא נוח,
אני לא יכול ,
אני חייב לשבת בכיסא חיצוני
ובכיסא שתמיד יהיה בצד השמאלי
שאוכל לשבת...ולישר את הרגל.*

Painkillers

In some cases, physical disability is accompanied by pain that makes it difficult to cope daily, while the pain itself may not be visible to others, as was stated by Yaron:

*“It is present [the pain],
Especially in a situation like mine
That is not visible,
[people] do not know that
I am constantly in pain,
That I am using narcotic painkillers
regularly,
And do not see it on me ...
Two degrees I did ...”*

*“זה נוכח [הכאב],
במיוחד במצב כמו שלי
שזה לא נראה,
[אנשים] לא יודעים
שאני כל הזמן עם כאבים,
שאני עם משככי כאבים נרקוטיים
על בסיס קבוע,
ולא רואים את זה עליי ...
שני תארים שעשיתי ...”*

Likewise, other participants stated that they have learned to manage their pain through the use of medications (painkillers, as well as medical cannabis). The participants indicated that the painkillers helped them to concentrate and to sleep better. Sagi and Noa each shared the use

of painkillers and their positive affect. Sagi, who has been having pain in recent years in both of his legs, stated:

*"It soothes pain
And then I can sleep,
I can concentrate more,
But it's not something specific,
It's just for pain."*

זה מרגיע כאבים
ואז אני יכול לישון,
אני יכול להתרכז יותר,
אבל זה לא משהו שספציפי,
זה רק לכאבים."

Shahar also reported that he has a medical cannabis license, and that cannabis helps him deal with his pain. Noa also stated that she uses painkillers to keep going and function during the day:

*"Most of the time,
I take two pills
and move on."*

"רוב הפעמים,
אני דוחפת איזה שני כדורים
וממשיכה (...)."

Noa described the use of painkillers as a means of not surrendering to fibromyalgia and continuing her life. A few of the participants shared that they prefer not to take painkillers, as it badly affects their ability to concentrate and study. Yaron, for example, used to take painkillers until recently as he acknowledged their bad effect on him:

*"Until last April,
I would regularly
Take very strong painkillers
That would make me fall asleep
If I was static for a few minutes,
And it hurt my concentration and my alertness.
This is the price I paid
So as not to suffer from pain,
And I decided to stop it
Because it was too heavy a price."*

"עד אפריל האחרון,
הייתי באופן קבוע
לוקח משככי כאבים מאד קשים
שהיו גורמים לי להירדם
אם הייתי סטטי כמה דקות,
וזה פגע בריכוז, ובעיירות שלי.
זה המחיר ששילמתי
כדי לא לסבול מכאבים,
והחלטתי להפסיק עם זה
כי זה היה מחיר כבד מדי."

Additional participants like Dalit revealed the difficulty of coping with pain and its effect on daily functioning and academic studies. Dalit explained that she needed help with basic

actions such as dressing, combing her hair, and showering after her injury in the military because of movement limitation and pain. Now, following her recent accident, she has her spouse's support and is also using painkillers that assist her in managing in everyday tasks and even in studying. Dalit described dealing with the pain as a difficult and exhausting experience, and she added that while the use of painkillers does help her, the drugs also cause tiredness.

Dealing with PTSD

Six participants indicated that they were recognized as DIDF veterans with PTSD and shared difficulties related to their disability during their academic studies. Rachel shared her challenges:

*"I was not so available for school
Because I messed around a lot.
Try to calm down myself,
If you try to get along with the departments,
If I try to motivate myself to study
All these are things that are extremely difficult to do."*

*"לא כל כך הייתי פנויה ללימודים
כי התעסקתי המון עם המסביב.
לנסות להרגיע את עצמי,
אם לנסות להסתדר עם המחלקות,
אם לנסות להניע את עצמי ללמוד
כל זה דברים שנורא קשה לעשות."*

Beyond the personal difficulty, there is a lack of awareness of veterans with PTSD and the effects of their injury, both in Israeli society in general, and in HE institutions in particular, as Shahar stated:

*"(...) Most of the people I know
are not there ...
They do not understand
the functional level. "*

*"(...) רוב האנשים שאני מכיר
זה לא שם ...
הם לא מבינים
את הרמה התפקודית."*

Shahar claimed that even people who know about some of the difficulties of people with PTSD, like dealing with sleep problems, do not understand the consequences of living with the condition. Eran described a few examples from his daily challenges as a DIDF veteran with PTSD, addressing several incidents in which he experienced anxiety during a school day, as well as difficulty concentrating due to his PTSD:

*"I am here and now,
The reality is this,
But sometimes you do not read reality correctly,
You need to calm yourself down ...
It's something I'm more concerned with
understanding it (...)
The ability to concentrate
And not to move to all kinds of thoughts and
thingsit helps."*

*"אני נמצא כאן ועכשיו,
המציאות היא כזאת,
אבל לפעמים אתה לא קורא נכון את המציאות,
אתה צריך להרגיע את עצמך ...
זה משהו שיותר אני מתעסק איתו
בלהבין את זה (...)
היכולת להתרכז
ולא לזוז לכל מיני מחשבות
ודברים זה עוזר."*

Eran shared a few incidents of everyday life in which there was no threat, but he interpreted the situation as a threatening event and felt anxiety. For example, the appearance of several IDF soldiers on campus before he had an exam or a faculty member who placed his hand in a friendly manner on his shoulder. These events affected Eran badly and harmed his functioning, resulting in failure on his exam and unwillingness to attend classes for several days. Eran expanded on sharing and added:

*Maybe because it's mental and not just
physical,
So it has a very high weight,
There are many times you give up on yourself,
And there are times when you are not focused
enough
To even get up in the morning and go out,
There are times you function
Just because you're a robot,
You do it in the form of a robot,
And then everyone thinks everything's fine,
But you're a robot.*

*אולי בגלל שזה נפשי ולא רק פיזי,
אז יש לזה משקל מאוד גבוה,
יש הרבה פעמים שאתה מוותר לעצמך,
ויש פעמים שאתה לא מספיק מרוכז
כדי אפילו לקום בבוקר ולצאת,
יש פעמים שאתה מתפקד
רק כי אתה רובוט,
אתה עושה את זה בצורה של רובוט,
ואז כולם חושבים שהכל בסדר,
אבל אתה רובוט.*

Eran used the word robot several times throughout the interview, and he also compared himself to a vehicle, a "Toyota car." Following my question asking what his great challenge was, Eran replied:

*To enjoy the ride,
Even though it's not a car
That you are used to me (...)*

להנות מהנסיעה,
למרות שזה לא אוטו
שאתה רגיל אליו (...)

*If you're not in this exact vehicle
That has all the parts
Showing that it's a Toyota
So you're just some zero
Who arranged a few things ...*

אם אתה לא ברכב המדויק הזה
שיש לו את כל החלקים
שמראים שזה טויוטה
אז אתה סתם איזה אפס
שחיבר כמה דברים ...

*People look at you from the side
And say you're driving badly,
Because you're not used to looking,
You're not used to the way the engine works,
You are not used to the type of plastic there is ...*

אנשים מסתכלים עלייך מהצד
ואומרים שאת נהגת גרועה,
כי את לא רגילה למראות,
את לא רגילה לדרך שבה המנוע מתפקד,
את לא רגילה לסוג הפלסטיק שיש ...

Eran's narratives are powerful as he used the metaphor of a vehicle (Toyota) that went through some event, an accident, to illustrate his personal feeling after his injury. Moreover, he referred to the way other people see him as he functions differently.

Academic Skills Challenges

All 13 participants discussed how their impairments affected their learning experiences during their HE journey. In some cases, the combination of a few functional impairments increased the participants' sense of coping during their coursework. The participants' military-related disabilities such as physical disability, loss of vision, and PTSD impacted their experiences inside the classroom. In addition, some participants shared challenges that may be related to more than one disability and in different situations.

The participants discussed their academic challenges, referring to taking notes during class sessions, reading, and writing through the course, and taking exams. For some of them, the task of following the lecture and the ability to take notes was much more complex. For example, Shir's visual impairment was a great challenge for her as she was trying to focus on the instructor's presentation:

*It really takes effort from me
To follow the lesson,
Because I have to really
hold a lot of time now
The CCTV in this way
With the hand to see what is written on the
board,
Or because now I have to
try to figure out some exercise ...
And also because I am with ADHD
And without Ritalin (...)*

זה דורש ממני ממש מאמץ
לעקוב אחרי השיעור,
כי אני צריכה עכשיו ממש
להחזיק הרבה זמן
את הטמ"ס בצורה כזאת עם היד
כדי לראות מה כתוב על הלוח,
או כי עכשיו אני צריכה
לנסות להבין איזה תרגיל ...
וגם כי אני עם הפרעות קשב
ובלי ריטלין (...)

*In classes with computational assignments,
I write down the notes,
exercises, answers for me
While he [the professor]
explains some exercise,
This I do for myself.*

שיעורים שהם יותר חישוביים,
אני רושמת לעצמי את ההערות,
תרגילים, פותרת לעצמי
תוך כדי שהוא [המרצה]
מסביר איזשהו תרגיל,
זה אני עושה לעצמי.

*Lessons that are more text-heavy,
With more summaries that need to be done,
There I write a note here and there to stay
focused, but not really as a summary.
Summaries for a lot of text,
I later just take off the internet, photocopy
from classmates (...)*

שיעורים שהם יותר טקסט,
יותר סיכומים שצריך לעשות,
זה אני רושמת הערה פה הערה שם
כדי להישאר מרוכזת,
אבל לא באמת בשביל לסכם.
סיכומים לטקסט רב
אני פשוט מוציאה אחר כך מהאינטרנט,
מצלמת מחברים לכיתה (...)

Shir described in detail her use of assistive technology to increase her participation and explained her logistics for following the instructor and classwork. She was aware of her impairments (impaired vision and ADHD) and the fact that she missed a lot of material. Eventually, Shir learned how to productively use the assistive technology as well as other support, which helped her to keep track of the class session and enhanced her ability to take notes during her classes. Despite her visual impairment and learning disability, she used different strategies and invested much effort in following the lecturer. She also noted that she used other

resources to gather as much information as she could about the content being taught in the lessons during the course.

Michal, who was recognized with PTSD and also diagnosed with a learning disability, shared her experiences and challenges in taking notes at class:

*The difficulties really were in the organization,
In how to deal in class,
With the class notes.
Say I would write everything during the class session,
But students knew that everything was messy,
So they took my notes,
Someone was sitting and editing them
And sent to everyone.
By the way, I would not learn from myself,
I would take from others,
Because I did not know how to deal with my own.*

הקשיים באמת היו בארגון,
באיך להתמודד בכיתה,
בסיכומים.
נגיד אני הייתי כותבת הכל בהרצאות,
אבל סטודנטים ידעו שהכל אצלי מבולגן,
אז לקחו את ההרצאות שלי,
מישהי ישבה וערכה אותן
ושלחה לכולם.
דרך אגב, [אני] לא הייתי לומדת ממני,
הייתי לוקחת מאחרים,
כי לא ידעתי איך להתמודד עם שלי.

Michal stated that despite her PTSD and her ADHD symptoms, she managed to take notes in class but needed someone else to edit her notes so that she could read and review them before taking the exam. Rachel shared that she needed to take her own class notes in order to remember what she had learned in class:

*“But I cannot take like summaries of someone else. No way, I cannot.
It must be what I wrote,
Otherwise, it is not recorded in my memory.”*

“אני לא יכולה לקחת נגיד סיכומים של מישהו אחר.
אין מצב, אני לא יכולה.
זה חייב להיות מה שאני כתבתי,
אחרת, זה לא נרשם לי בזיכרון.”

Sagi said that he does not summarize at all during his classes; he only listens and follows the lecturer. Then before the course exam, he also relies on the notes of his classmates.

The participants faced several difficulties in class sessions, and each of them had their own personal learning strategies and style. Apart from taking notes during the class sessions, the participants stated other academic challenges, such as taking exams and writing papers as part of

their coursework. Sarit, for example, shared her challenge of taking exams with open-ended questions following her military-related injury:

*My wrist is broken
I mean the whole hand was broken,
When I write a lot,
My hand hurts terribly.
There are a lot of close-set exams
So that is no problem,
Just mark the answer.
But there are exams with open-ended questions,
and it hurts."*

שורש כף היד שלי נשבר
זאת אומרת כל היד נשברה,
כשאני כותבת הרבה,
כואבת לי נורא היד.
יש הרבה מבחנים שהם אמריקאים
אז אין בעיה,
רק לסמן תשובה.
אבל יש מבחנים עם שאלות פתוחות,
וזה כואב."

Following Sarit's narrative of her challenge in exams with open-ended questions, on the contrary, Miki claimed that:

*"Close-set exams
Are harder to deal with
When you have a linguistic problem
Or a problem with attention and concentration."*

"מבחנים אמריקאים
יותר קשים להתמודד
כשיש לך בעיה לשונית
או בעיית קשב וריכוז."

Both Sarit and Miki reported on their learning disability and ADHD, in addition to their military-related injury. During their academic studies, as can be seen, each of them faced diverse challenges and discovered different sources of support, as presented in the following sections. Overall, Sarit and Miki's narratives illustrate the need for a holistic view and understanding of each student's specific challenges.

Dalit described her challenges regarding her military-related injury, as well as her other challenges related to her learning disability. First, she referred to prolonged writing, which causes her shoulder pain and, therefore, makes it difficult for her to write during class, especially now, after her recent injury. Dalit added and discussed in length her difficulties in studying Statistics, as well as her struggle in reading academic articles in English. Dalit mainly referred to

her struggle in reading the course materials of her various classes, especially now in her graduate program:

*"I did three times
the course [Statistics]
And exams
Regular date and on a later date."*

*"עשיתי שלוש פעמים
את הקורס [בסטטיסטיקה]
ומבחנים
מועדי א' וב'."*

Following her recent injury, Dalit revealed another academic challenge:

*"Because of the concussion,
I have some difficulty reading,
It's fresh, because of the accident.
Before that, I had no problem reading,
But now I have some difficulty reading more."*

*"בגלל הזעזוע מוח,
יש לי קצת קושי לקרוא,
זה טרי, בגלל התאונה.
לפני כן, לא הייתה לי בעיה לקרוא,
אבל עכשיו יש לי קצת קושי לקרוא יותר."*

Eran who also shared his experiences of dealing with PTSD and ADHD shared his difficulty taking an exam in class when there is noise. Eran described the situation during an exam when all the students in the class were moving their rulers, and he could not concentrate as a result.

A majority of the participants faced several academic challenges, and some of them did not seek formal support or assistance to address them. The academic challenges and the availability of relevant support are discussed at length in the reply to the fourth research question.

Challenges Outside the Classroom

The participants faced many challenges in parking on campus and in getting to their class location. They also shared several occasions of absence and missing classes in the context of their military-related injury. The participants stated experiencing difficulties studying at home and their need for accommodations at home as well.

Parking

Several participants discussed challenges related to campus accessibility and the built environment of their campus. The most frequent responses related to class location, walking around the campus, and distant parking spaces. The authorization to enter the campus with a vehicle and obtain a handicap parking permit needs to be administratively approved by the security department (public safety) in HE settings rather than through disability support offices.

Many participants shared their frustration regarding the lack of disabled parking spaces on their campus or their distant location from their classrooms. They admitted that sometimes when disabled parking was not available, they parked in prohibited parking spaces, and they were careful not to block anything. They stated that they believed that they would not receive a fine, and in case they did, they indicated that they would apply for a refund from the

Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization. Uzi stated for example:

*Specifically, the [building of the] faculty (...)
There is beneath it
Some [parking] area of red and white
[mark of illegal parking on the curbside]*

*ספציפית [בנין] הפקולטה (...)
יש מתחתיו
איזשהו אזור [חנייה] של אדום לבן.*

*There is no disabled parking there,
No disabled parking God forbid,
Not really not.
[I parked in] red and white
And I was not afraid,
I am not afraid to put the vehicle in red and
white,
Because I trust that with the disability tag, they
will not give me a parking ticket.*

*לא חניות נכים חלילה,
לא ממש לא.
[חניתי ב] אדום לבן
ואני לא פחדתי,
אני לא פוחד לשים את הרכב באדום לבן,
כי אני סומך על התו נכה שלי,
שלא יתנו לי דו"ח.*

Uzi detailed and shared the complexity of studying in two faculties and its connection to the parking issue on a big campus:

*I have a disability parking badge...
I did not get permission
to enter from all the gates
even though I am a dual major student.
It could have helped me a lot ...*

יש לי תו נכה ...
לא קיבלתי אישור
להיכנס מכל השערים
למרות שאני תלמיד דו-חוג.
זה היה יכול מאוד לעזור לי ...

*Also, the fact that I had to park
At a pretty busy time of day at the university,
I would drive around in the car
for quite a bit of time looking for parking,
And sometimes, I would park
far from the classroom.*

גם העובדה שזה חניה
בשעה די עמוסה באוניברסיטה,
הייתי מסתובב
לא מעט זמן לחפש חניה,
ולעיתים, הייתי חונה
רחוק מהכיתה.

Yaron described his mobility challenges at the time he was an undergraduate student in his former academic institution:

*(...) at first, before I got the parking permit,
And even when I got the permit
It was to a relatively distant parking lot,
I had to walk quite a lot.*

"(...) לפני שקיבלתי את האישור כניסה,
וגם כשקיבלתי את האישור כניסה
זה היה לחניון יחסית מרוחק,
הייתי צריך ללכת די הרבה."

Sarit stated clearly that there are not enough parking spaces for students with disabilities:

*Faculty is given the option to park in the lot
And the university pays for them,
disabled people are not.
I pray a lot before I get there.
I do not just say this,
and I'm not really joking.
I try to request that I will come like this,
I do guided imagery that I will have parking.
To park far away and then walk,
It hurts, it upsets.
It is annoying every single time.*

יש למרצים אפשרות לחנות בחניה שבעצם
האוניברסיטה משלמת להם את החניון הזה,
נכים לא.
אני מתפללת הרבה לפני שאני מגיעה לשם.
באמת אני לא אומרת סתם,
ואני לא צוחקת.
אני מנסה לבקש, שאני אגיע ככה,
[אני] עושה דמיון מודרך שיהיה לי חניה.
להחנות רחוק ואחר כך ללכת ברגל,
זה פוגע, זה מרגיז,
זה כל פעם מחדש מרגיז.

Sarit expressed her disappointment and frustration at this situation and shared her strategy of positive thoughts for finding a parking space to overcome her need to walk.

In other cases, simply getting around campus may be a challenge as well. Noa who suffers from daily pain because of her fibromyalgia shared her experience of mobility limitations and lack of accessibility at her campus:

*Many buildings in the college
are without an elevator,
only with stairs.
The college is relatively large.
There are long distances to walk.
Sometimes I just have to stop,
then keep going later. Climb stairs.
Only in the main building is there an elevator,
But you do not always study in the main building.*

הרבה בניינים במכללה
הם בלי מעלית,
רק עם מדרגות.
המכללה היא יחסית גדולה.
יש מרחקים ארוכים ללכת.
לפעמים אני נאלצת פשוט לעצור,
להמשיך אחר כך. לעלות מדרגות.
רק בבניין המרכזי יש מעלית,
עכשיו לא תמיד לומדים בבניין המרכזי.

Class Location

Participants with physical disabilities and mobility limitations described their class location as a challenge. Miki shared his need for a specific class location, close to the parking lot, and with not many stairs. According to Miki, he applied and reapplied to change his class location a few times during his studies. For his specific request, Miki chose to contact the secretary of his department instead of contacting the office for support services:

*They moved our class down.
Our class location was the lowest,
Which means going down and up a lot of stairs.
They did not think about it,
About me with my disabilities in class.
But when I asked and told them
It was hard for me,
Then immediately,
Within a week they transferred our class ...
When we came to complete courses
or a summer course,
Again they had taken us
to distant classes with stairs
And I had to ask
And then they changed it.*

העבירו את הכיתה שלנו למטה.
הכיתה שלנו הייתה הכי למטה,
שזה אומר לרדת ולעלות הרבה מדרגות.
הם לא חשבו על זה,
עליי עם המוגבלות שלי בכיתה.
אבל כשביקשתי ואמרתי להם
שזה קשה לי
מיד, שבוע אחרי,
העבירו אותנו כיתה ...
כשבאנו להשלמות
או קורס קיץ,
עוד הפעם לקחו אותנו
לכיתות רחוקות, עם מדרגות
והייתי צריך לבקש
ואז שינו.

Dalit following her recent injury also addressed the issue of class location, as well as the need for a close parking space near to the class. She said that she received permission to enter with car, and permission to park on campus. Her husband used to bring her to her class and then he had to search for a parking space in one of the nearby parking lots.

Participants generally reported that parking and access problems on campus were solvable for the most part but handling them required an appeal to the public safety department and often required repeat appeals each new semester/year.

Studying at Home

For several DIDF veterans, home learning activities were found to be challenging due to their chronic pain, use of painkillers, PTSD symptoms, and other learning disabilities,

Yaron describes the challenges of studying at home, while he suffered from chronic pain:

*“I would just fall asleep
when I would try to write the course assignments
because either I would sit,
Or lie down more precisely with pain,
And then I could not concentrate,
Or I would take painkillers,
And then it makes you sleepy.”*

*”הייתי פשוט נרדם
כשהייתי מנסה להכין עבודות
כי זה או שהייתי יושב,
שוכב ליתר דיוק עם כאבים,
ואז לא הייתי יכול להתרכז,
או שהייתי לוקח משככי כאבים,
ואז זה מרדים אותך.”*

According to Yaron, as a result of this situation, it took him a long time to finish his master's degree, and only after he had received an extension to submit his assignments.

Shir addressed her challenge of studying at home by herself without support:

*“We had to submit a certain exercise
on a certain date,
And I did not manage to do it,
Not because I did not have time or anything,
Just the mentor
who was supposed to work with me on it could not help
me before that time,
So I could not do it.”*

*” היינו צריכים להגיש תרגיל מסוים
בתאריך מסוים,
ולא הספקתי,
לא כי לא היה לי זמן או משהו,
פשוט החונך
שהיה אמור לעבוד איתי על זה
לא יכול היה (לעזור) לפני,
אז לא יכולתי.”*

Shir appreciated the academic mentor who assisted her during her home learning activities. This specific support was critical to her, and without it, she found it very hard to study by herself. According to Shir, this issue was not well understood by the faculty.

Shahar shared that he had difficulties studying at home, as well as in the classroom. He explained his difficulty as he described his struggles which are related to his military injury and the PTSD symptoms:

*When I went back to the study style
after the injury,
I saw that there are considerable learning
difficulties,
It is difficult to concentrate for a long time
on certain things,
The difficulty to sit and study alone at home
And also to concentrate on the lecturer and sit to
study assignments ...
Many times, again,
I could not sit, I always had to be
in motion and moving,
Unable to sit and concentrate.
And turn off all the distractions,

So I had trouble submitting the class assignments,
Also memory level
And a lot of things I would read,
I would not remember after that,
And I had to put sentence to sentence,
So it was really much more challenging
in many courses.*

כשחזרתי שוב לסטייל לימודים
אחרי הפציעה,
ראיתי שיש קשיים לימודיים ניכרים,
אם זה הקושי להתרכז זמן ארוך
בדברים מסוימים,
הקושי לשבת וללמוד לבד בבית
וגם להתרכז בדברי המרצה
וגם לשבת ללמוד, מטלות ...
הרבה פעמים, שוב,
לא הייתי מצליח להושיב את עצמי,
הייתי צריך תמיד להיות
בתנועה ותזוזה,
לא יכול לשבת ולהתרכז

ולכבות את כל המסיחים,
אז הייתי מתקשה בלהגיש מטלות,
גם רמה של הזיכרון
וגם הרבה דברים שהייתי קורא,
לא הייתי זוכר אחרי זה,
והייתי צריך לחבר משפט למשפט,
אז זה היה באמת מאתגר
בהרבה קורסים.

Shahar indicated that he had not experienced any learning difficulties during his K-12 education, and he specified that he did not have an LD or ADHD. His descriptions show the challenges of veterans with PTSD, which in many cases appear to be similar to those of students with LDs or ADHD.

Eran also noted that it took him longer to study for his exams compared to his classmates. Eran referred especially to the fact that he was older than the average student.

Social Challenges

HE settings provide an opportunity for all students to meet new people and build new social connections. Several DIDF veterans shared their difficulty in connecting with other students on campus. This difficulty was revealed as meaningful both in transitioning into HE, at the beginning of the academic year, and during their coursework.

Self-Perception and Social Relationships

Some participants found it hard to make social connections with their classmates and find support. Michal described her first day's experience on campus in attempting to get her classmates' attention and sympathy. She tried to use her military background as a way to find a link to other students on her campus:

*I would come with those torn shirts
of the army,
And with such sandals and such,*

[אני] הייתי באה עם החולצות קרועות
כאלה של הצבא,
וככה עם סנדלים כאלה וזה,

*I did not know what was going on here.
I could not separate from it,
Because the military identity
was very much a part of me.
I did not want to let go of it ...
Part of it was like
'Let me connect with you through this.'*

[אני] מאוד לא ידעתי מה קורה כאן.
[אני] לא יכולתי להיפרד מזה,
כי הזהות הצבאית
הייתה מאוד חלק ממני.
[אני] לא רציתי להיפרד ממנה ...
חלק מזה היה כאילו
'תנו לי להתחבר אליכם דרך זה.'

Michal used to arrive at her campus wearing military clothing to show her identity as a former soldier, thinking of military apparel as an element to connect with other students and to be like everybody else. Her identity at that time was directly related to her military service, as she was also extremely proud of her achievements as a combat woman. Michal's experience

provides an opportunity to see that the disconnection from military identity had not ended for some of the Israeli veterans, and especially DIDF veterans.

Eran referred to the fact that returning to a routine and entering HE after her injury and rehabilitation were not easy:

*"You come back after you were isolated,
You go back to the so-called real life,
You come back when you're older,
Luckily I do not look older,
But it has an effect."*

*"אתה חוזר אחרי שהיית מבודד,
אתה חוזר לחיים האמיתיים כביכול,
אתה חוזר כשאתה יותר זקן,
למזלי אני לא נראה יותר זקן,
אבל יש לזה השפעה."*

Eran expanded his statement and shared his experiences of being older than his peers and described his efforts to connect with his classmates:

*I am someone who needs to study,
And I also started school quite late.
The average student there is 24 years old...
In school, you do not know
How to behave,
You behave like a 19-year-old child Because
that is what is left.
You do not know things,
You're actually re-learning*

*אני מישהו שצריך ללמוד,
ואני גם התחלתי דיי מאוחר את הלימודים. תלמיד
ממוצע שם בן 24 ...
בלימודים אתה לא יודע
איך להתנהג,
אתה מתנהג כמו ילד בן 19
כי זה מה שנשאר.
אתה לא מכיר את הדברים,
אתה בעצם לומד מחדש*

*How to be a student,
You are re-learning
to be someone's [female] friend,
You are learning these codes,
And these are codes of social behavior ... there
are certain codes
That I am not aware of,
I really was not aware of them.*

*להיות תלמיד,
אתה לומד מחדש
להיות חבר של מישהי,
אתה לומד את הקודים האלה,
וזה קודי התנהגות ...
יש קודים מסוימים
שאני לא מודע אליהם,
באמת לא הייתי מודע אליהם.*

Michal and Eran both described the need to adjust to a new situation, another organization, their desire to make new friends, and the need to acquire a different code system due to age and gender differences. In describing his social challenges, Eran referred to his age of injury (19) and his feelings of being different from his peers, and the need to learn new codes to

adjust. In doing so, he used the second-person voice. Eran's statement is meaningful as although in some cases students in Israel start their HE studies relatively late, DIDF veterans are maybe even older due to the time spent in rehabilitation and the recognition process by the MoD.

In this case, DIDF veteran students might have more obligations (work and family) than traditional undergraduate students. Eran specifically referred to both age and gender differences regarding his relationships with his classmates since most of the students in his program were young women.

Other participants described different situations that indicated a link between the military injury and the social connection with their peers. For example, Rachel described her experience as an undergraduate student, referring first to the influential effects of her PTSD on social relationships with her classmates:

*It was a dual major program,
It was very, very difficult ...
I suffer from PTSD,
It is not something physical but like that...
It is a disability that definitely impacts,*

זה היה תואר דו- חוגי,
היה מאוד מאוד קשה ...
אני סובלת מפוסט-טראומה,
זה לא משהו פיזי אבל ככה ...
זה נכות שהיא בהחלט משפיעה,

*And it was a period when I was fainting a lot.
And I had a very, very hard time,
I had serious anxiety attacks.
And really, wow, I passed by the skin of my
teeth, That's the way I felt.*

וזה היה תקופה שהייתי מתעלפת המון.
והיה לי מאוד מאוד קשה,
היה לי התקפי חרדה רציניים.
וממש וואו בשיניים עברתי אותו,
ככה הרגשתי.

*I could not connect with anyone...
I was very much within myself.
I was terribly stressed.
I had a very, very hard time.*

לא הצלחתי ליצור קשר עם אף אחד ...
הייתי מאוד בתוך עצמי.
הייתי נורא בלחץ.
היה לי מאוד קשה מאוד.

Rachel's narrative reveals the difficulty of dealing with PTSD (an invisible disability) and its accompanying symptoms (fainting events) that reveal some sort of problem, combined with

the desire to be like everyone else. These circumstances and the workload created further challenges for Rachel and made it difficult for her to connect with other students.

On this issue, Eran added and stated very clearly.

*“The people there, they did military service,
Now, they are doing their studies,
And they do not let anyone who is different
[anomaly] from them slow them down ...
I was pretty introverted.
I did not have anyone
Who helped me to socialize into the group.”*

*”האנשים שם הלכו, עשו צבא,
הם עכשיו עושים לימודים,
והם לא נותנים למישהו שהוא חריג מהם
להוריד את הקצב שלהם ...
הייתי דיי מסוגר.
לא היה לי מישהו
שעזר לי להיכנס חברתית לתוך החבר'ה.”*

Eran commented on his functioning as different and unusual compared to his classmates and voiced his feelings regarding his lack of social relationships, which retains the idea that disability is an abnormal phenomenon, a deficiency concerning one's functioning in normative society. Eran added and addressed his off-campus social circle, and how much his injury affected his life management and the creation of social interactions (as he mentioned, his therapy appointments and his feeling that the PTSD scares others away). He added that there were even friends from the past who had distanced themselves from him after hearing about his injury. In addition to the comparison that Eran made to his peer students, he compared his position to where his past friends from his age group currently were. He felt that they seemed to be underestimating him for being a student at this point in time and for the field he had chosen.

Shahar who also was diagnosed with PTSD shared his experiences and needs regarding social connections:

*“There are times that it is really, really
significant,
And I need a lot of time alone,
Upset...
Do not like so much to leave the house
or meet new friends.”*

*”יש זמנים שזה ממש ממש משמעותי,
ואני צריך הרבה זמן לבד,
מצוברח ...
לא כל-כך אוהב לצאת מהבית
או להיפגש עם חברים חדשים.”*

The desire to not make any social contact in the case of Shahar comes from his moodiness and need to deal alone with the feelings that accompany him as a result of his PTSD.

Navit, who was diagnosed with skin cancer and its consequences, shared her experience with her peers:

*“They do not understand how it is related,
Like my illness
and disability and the military service ...”*

*”הם לא מבינים איך זה קשור,
כאילו המחלה שלי
והנכות והשירות הצבאי ...”*

Navit expressed her difficulty in coping as a student who was recognized as a DIDF veteran, and her peers' lack of understanding the link between her illness and her disability. Her statement indicates that the use of different descriptions about individuals' experiences often creates a certain social construction. For example, DIDF veterans are usually perceived as physically injured in battle, war, or an accident, but there is little discourse about those who became ill as a result of their military service.

Dalit who had recently suffered another injury also described how her new injuries were affecting her social life:

*In other courses, there are new students,
And I was a little less sociable unfortunately
Because of the limitation of the chair [wheelchair].
So, I feel very weird about it,
It's quite challenging for me.
Usually, I am very sociable and
From the beginning, I communicate with everyone.
This time, I also come with my spouse ...*

*בקורסים האחרים זה סטודנטים חדשים,
והייתי קצת פחות חברותית לצערי
בגלל המגבלה של הכיסא (גלגלים).
אז אני מרגישה מאוד מוזר עם זה,
זה דיי מאתגר בשבילי.
בדרך כלל, אני מאוד חברותית
וישר מתקשרת עם כולם.
הפעם גם אני מגיעה עם בן זוגי ...*

*I am very sore.
So, as soon as class is over,
I do not have time to chat a bit
with my [female] classmates around me,
And he comes and picks me up
And another pill [painkiller].
[I am] very dependent on him
And very close to him,
So there is less contact
with the people around me.*

ואני מאוד כאובה.
אז בזמן שנגמר השיעור,
אין לי זמן לפטפט קצת
עם החברות שסביבי,
ומהר הוא בא ולקח אותי
ועוד כדור [נגד כאבים].
[אני] מאוד תלויה בו
ומאוד צמודה אליו,
אז פחות נוצר קשר
עם האנשים שמסביבי.

Rachel, likewise, noted that her disability affected her social experiences. She indicated that while she was accepted into a desired academic program in Israel, she felt that because she was a DIDF veteran with PTSD, she had to prove her abilities to feel equal among her peers. Moreover, Rachel cited that when she shared with her peers that she suffered from PTSD, she received no support and attention.

*I do not know what to tell you
Because many times
You are accepted to places,
So you have to show
how good you are,
It's a little hard to come and say:
'I have this problem.
Help me,
Because then they will not accept you.
As if it's a closed clique,
As if every place wants to say*

אני לא יודעת מה להגיד לך
כי הרבה פעמים
שאת מתקבלת למקומות,
אז את כאילו צריכה
להראות כמה את טובה,
קצת קשה לבוא ולומר:
יש לי את הבעיה הזאת.
תעזרו לי,
כי אז הם לא יקבלו אותך.
כאילו מן 'קליקה' סגורה כזאת,
כאילו כל מקום רוצה להגיד

*It has its best
And then if you have some limitation or
something,
They cannot be the best.
So, like back then, when I confessed
that I was suffering from PTSD,
and instead of accepting me,
They just did not even respond.
So, you like always
have to show that you are fine.*

יש לו את הטובים ביותר
ואז אם יש לך איזושהי מגבלה
או איזושהו משהו,
שהם לא יכולים להיות הטוב ביותר.
אז, כמו אז שהתוודיתי
שאני סובלת מפוסט טראומה
ובמקום לקבל אותי,
הם פשוט לא הגיבו אפילו.
אז את כאילו כל הזמן
צריכה להראות שאת בסדר.

On the social level, military identity was used, on one hand, as a bridge for building social relationships on campus (as a former combat soldier), yet, on the other hand, it influenced building social relationships (as DIDF veterans). The research participants' narratives show that their difficulty in developing social relationships extended beyond the transition period. Several interviewees also shared their social relationship challenges and the link to their academic challenges, their course assignments, and the lack of peer support. These issues will be described in detail in the next sections, especially regarding the support resources DIDF veterans received from their classmates. Overall, these shared narratives show how military-related injuries or additional injuries can impact DIDF veteran students' social life, along with their mobility and academic challenges in functioning.

Conclusion

This research question sought to discover the challenges, needs, and barriers DIDF-veteran students face in the Israeli HE system. The data suggest that the participants often encountered unique challenges as students in HE institutions, and this was especially true when they experience more than one impairment. The topics that emerged from their shared experiences include challenges in transitioning to HE, physical barriers, academic practices and barriers, social experiences, and organizational barriers.

The participants shared diverse academic challenges during their studies, both inside and outside the classroom. First, the participants described how their impairments affected their academic practices. They specifically shared their experiences in struggling inside the classroom with taking notes during class sessions, taking exams, meeting course requirements, completing assignments on time, and collaborating with other students. It should be stated here that in Israeli HE institutions, there is no support service like note-taking, and live transcription (Cart

Captioning) is not easily obtained. Therefore, most students either take their notes independently or ask for help from their classmates. Second, the participants described how the campus environment had a direct impact on their experience in terms of their mobility, presence, and participation in the classroom. They shared their pain and their struggles in sitting, studying, and concentrating both during class sessions and in taking exams. The participants' descriptions show that DIDF veterans' barriers include uncomfortable furniture or furniture that is not adapted to their needs. Since chronic pain tends to be overbearing and dominant, the participants described living with chronic pain as a vivid and all-encompassing experience that affects both the individual and their surroundings. In addition, several participants spoke about their overall experiences as students with more than one disability, reporting other physical disabilities related to additional injury during their army service that were not recognized, aggravation of their recognized injury, or receiving another injury after military service such as in a car accident. In addition, more than half of the participants reported learning disabilities or symptoms of ADHD. The social challenges the participants experienced were mainly related and connected to the transition to HE after the injury in their military service, time of rehabilitation, and the fact that they had to deal with disability at a later age. Also, many of those who shared their social difficulties were DIDF veterans experiencing PTSD. Overall, the participants were diverse and their challenges and experiences in HE were equally varied. Their differences were often referred to as daily struggles in light of their impairments, as well as coping with environmental barriers, class assignments, disability awareness, and awareness of support services, including disability policy and public perceptions and stigma.

In summary, the data analysis of the second research question revealed that: (a) DIDF veterans are not a homogeneous group that experiences disability status similarly in general,

especially in HE; (b) other personal idiosyncrasies come into play regarding impairments that impact DIDF-veteran students' functionality such as other injuries, age, etc.; (c) HE institutions do not provide a disability-friendly environment in general, and especially for DIDF-veteran students; and (d) there is a gap between promoting accessibility on Israeli campuses today and the lack of references for DIDF veterans. See Figure 6 which summarizes the findings of this research question.

Figure 6

Participants' Challenges

Challenges in the Transition into Higher Education	Challenges Inside the Classroom	Challenges Outside the Classroom	Social Connections
Disability Policy and Registration	Hard to Be a Student. And it is Harder to be a Disabled Veteran Student	Parking	Self-Perception and Social Relationships
Mobility Between Institutions	Coping with Chronic Pain and Prolonged Sitting	Class Location	
	Dealing with PTSD	Studying at Home	
	Academic Skills Challenges		

Question 3: Disability Identity Management Strategies

The analysis of the third research question came out of the desire to examine the management of the participants' disclosure as DIFV-veteran students in their academic institutions. Participants discussed their views on disability in general and in the context of their personal experiences, as well as the different ways and strategies in which they chose to manage and disclose their disability identity as students on their campuses. Not all the participants chose to officially reveal the fact that they were recognized by the MoD as DIFV veterans during their time as students.

Surprisingly, only four participants self-identified as DIFV-veteran students with no other impairment through this study. Nine participants were identified as DIFV veterans, as well as students with LD/ADHD; of those, three indicated they also had another health condition not recognized by the MoD. In addition, several participants indicated through the interviews that the condition of their military-related injury/illness had worsened over the years. Following these findings, in the following sub-sections, I present participants' tactics and the factors that may influence their self-perception and self-disclosure as DIFV-veteran students or students with other disabilities on their campuses. Categories and sub-categories were developed regarding the following: the complexity of disability identity and visibility, disclosure as DIFV-veteran students, selective disclosure as students with disabilities, concealment of their military-related injury, and self-management as a strategy (almost passing as non-disabled).

The Complexity of Disability Identity and Visibility

The definition of disability identity may vary along several dimensions including legal definition, medical diagnosis, and the extent to which the disability is noticeable. All 13 participants in this study shared that their recognized disability by the MoD (military

injury/illness) had affected their HE experience in some way or another. In addition to the heterogeneity of their military-related injury cause and type of impairment(s), there was also some variation concerning the visibility of the impairment(s), and the way the participants perceived their disability visibility or how they felt that it was perceived by others.

(In)visibility: Accounts of Embodiment

In some cases, students can be identified as disabled veteran students entering their campus or their classroom due to limping while walking, a disabled parking permit on their car, or a guide dog. In this study, the participants provided some examples of the different ways they perceived their impairment's visibility in various circumstances during their studies. For example, when explaining why his military-related disability is often neglected, Yaron, who had a back injury stated:

"It is not seen on me"

"לא רואים את זה עליי"

Yaron restated several times throughout the interview that although he has a physical disability, it is invisible to others. On the contrary, Uzi who also has a physical disability indicated that his disability is visible:

"I have some kind of mild limping."

"יש לי איזושהי צליעה קלה."

In Uzi's case, he was discussing mainly his physical injury. Interestingly, he did not share any experience or perceptions regarding his PTSD diagnosis and its implications.

In other circumstances, participants revealed their disability to others or chose to disclose as DIDF veterans in specific situations. As Shir, who has a sensory disability, and was identified with a visual impairment, explained:

*"I'm not usually perceived as blind ...
And it was the first time,
They saw that I have a guide dog,
It can be seen that there is something here."*

*"לא רואים עליי בדרך כלל שאני עיוורת...
וזה היה בפעם הראשונה,
שרואים שיש לי כלב עזר,
רואים שיש פה איזשהו משהו."*

Student veterans with various injuries due to their military service, from mild to severe, can be seen externally as people without disabilities. Moreover, as was expressed by some participants, even if the disability is visible, the self-experience of those people in some cases is that their disability is hidden. However, the subjective feeling is also influenced by public attitudes and stigma that guide them in terms of their self-identification and management in the public space, as well as interaction with other people, as Shir stated:

*"I have no problem telling others
That I'm blind,
I'm very open about it.
But it is the first impression
Of a blind man,
It means reference accordingly,
There are a lot of things around. "*

*"אין לי בעיה לספר לאחרים
שאני עיוורת,
אני מאוד פתוחה לגבי זה.
אבל זה כן רושם ראשוני
של אדם עיוור,
זה אומר התייחסות בהתאם,
יש הרבה דברים מסביב."*

In the case of Navit, who was diagnosed with skin cancer following her exposure to the sun during her military service, the visibility of her disability has a different meaning. According to Navit, even though her disability is not visible to others, it has a physical state as it still affects her life. Navit linked the physical presence of her disability to its visibility in a unique way.

*"My disability is not necessarily physical,
Yes, it is physical
but no one can notice it
Because it's not something you can see
in the limbs or something too noticeable in the
body,
But it is as if it is
very personal to me,
Because I really have a fear of the sun."*

*"הנכות שלי היא לא פיזית בהכרח.
היא כן פיזית ...
אבל אף אחד לא יכול לשים לב לזה
כי זה לא משהו שאפשר לראות את זה
בגפיים או משהו יותר מידי בולט בגוף,
אבל היא כן כאילו
מאוד אישית אצלי,
כי יש לי באמת פחד מהשמש."*

As a consequence, Navit's narrative and that of other participants illustrate the issue of the embodiment of a disability. As a consequence, after her graduation, Navit decided to live outside of Israel, in a country with a different climate and to have less sun exposure.

Regarding the military-related injuries that are usually categorized as hidden, Michal shared that her PTSD does gain visibility when cope with difficulty in certain circumstances. As she explains:

*"It's an injury
you can't see,
It also comes suddenly,
and it's something that can provoke it."*

*"זוה פציעה
שאי אפשר לראות אותה,
גם היא באה פתאום,
וזוה משהו שיכול
להדליק את זה."*

According to Michal, although PTSD is an invisible disability, it can present as physical symptoms in the body in some circumstances.

Eran also pointed out the complexity of PTSD and its impact on his life as a student. He repeated several times during the interview that his disability is hidden. At the same time, he admitted:

*"People see it and are scared.
I'm getting to the point where I
do not even understand what I'm saying,
I just get into such craziness there.
There are cases where you (...)*

*"אנשים רואים את זה ומפחדים.
אני מגיע למצב שאני
אפילו לא מבין מה אני אומר,
אני פשוט נכנס לשיגעונות כאלו שם.
יש מקרים שאתה (...)*

*People stand aside
'He's not really okay.'"*

*אנשים עומדים מהצד
'הוא לא ממש בסדר.'"*

The physical symptoms of PTSD can be expressed and appear suddenly following a specific event or interaction that triggers the injury memory. All of the participants who were diagnosed with PTSD shared some of their experiences of coping with the physical symptoms of their PTSD during class sessions, exams, and even in the difficulty in leaving their home.

The examples provided in this section illuminate the meaning and impact of the military-related injury on students' life and its instability, and the temporality of visibility of disability during their HE experience. In the following sub-sections, the participants' narratives further express the complexity of their disability identity and its impact on their student life.

Group Affiliation, Ethos, and Social Identity

DIDF veterans are perceived by many people in Israel as the ideal of heroic sacrifice for the good of the nation. In many cases, a physical disability that is visible at first glance may prompt pity on one hand, but also evoke respect and appreciation for the combat soldier and his heroism (*'Homeric Hero'*). In some cases, the ethos of DIDF veterans is connected in society's values with the Zionist ideology and the importance of military service in Israel ("לשמור על" – "Take care of the country, the home, the family") – "על המשפחה", על הבית, על המדינה, על השמירה, על המשפחה".

Uzi for example highlighted the connection between the visibility of his leg injury and the social perception of a DIDF veteran in Israeli society in general, and specifically in HE:

*"When I meet a new person,
Already the first or second time
I sit with him
I'll already tell him about it, and I will detail it...
And again, visually it stands out,
it has an external presence.
And yes, it accompanies me."
"By the way, even at the everyday level,
In the nicknames they (friends)
give me,
It's a little unpleasant...
The guys call me the 'disabled' (...)"
"My injury is very visual,
I have scars all over my leg,
It is very noticeable (...)
I like very much
to wear shorts in the summer,
Because then [other students]
ask me questions
and I am thus portrayed as a hero."*

*"כשאני מכיר אדם חדש,
כבר בפעם הראשונה או השנייה
שאני אשב איתו
אני כבר אספר על זה ואפרט...
ושוב, גם ויזואלית זה בולט,
כלומר, יש לזה נוכחות חיצונית.
וכן, זה מלווה אותי:"
"אגב גם ברמת היומיום,
בכינויים שהם (החברים)
נותנים לי,
קצת לא נעים...
בחבריה קוראים לי הנכה' (...)"
"הפגיעה שלי היא ויזואלית מאוד,
יש לי צלקות לאורך כל הרגל,
היא מאוד בולטת [...]
אני מאוד אוהב ללכת
עם מכנסיים קצרים בקיץ,
כי אז [סטודנטים אחרים]
שואלים אותי את השאלות
ואני ככה מצטייר כגיבור."*

At the end of his statement, Uzi was laughing, perhaps due to the reference to the ethos around DIDF veterans and stigma along with the fact that he was injured in training and not in battle.

Having a disability has distinct social implications in Israeli society. As Shir, who lost her vision during her military service described in her words:

*“There is some issue
when you say
that you are a disabled IDF veteran,
People handle it
with a little more respect.”*

”יש איזשהו קטע
כשאתה אומר
שאתה נכה צה”ל,
אנשים מתייחסים לזה
קצת יותר בכבוד.”

Shir like Uzi mentioned the view that DIDF veterans receive a more positive attitude than non-IDF disabled people. Shir stated that there was also a positive institutional attitude toward DIDF veterans as students, a respectful attitude. She specifically admitted that in new places, she deliberately revealed her disability and specifically the fact that she was a DIDF veteran to get the privileges she felt she deserved:

*“In new places
Where I need to receive the benefits (...)
I make sure to say that
I am a disabled IDF veteran (...)
It's not stated everywhere,
But it generates a different consideration.”*

”במקומות חדשים
שאני צריכה לקבל את ההטבות (...)
אני כן דואגת להגיד
שאני נכה צה”ל (...).
זה לא מוצהר בכל מקום,
אבל יש התייחסות שונה.”

In Dalit's case, her military-related injury was not visible to others, but following her most recent injury, and her mobility limitation, she disclosed her disability identity in her interactions with others, and especially her classmates.

"Because others see me in a [wheel] chair
 So I did not feel the need to say anything,
 But they did ask,
 And when they asked,
 [I] introduced myself
 As a disabled IDF veteran
 And with an [additional] temporary disability
 following a car accident."

"בגלל שרואים אותי בכיסא [גלגלים]
 אז לא הרגשתי צורך לומר כלום,
 אבל הם שאלו,
 וכשהם שאלו,
 [אני] הצגתי את עצמי
 כנכת צה"ל
 ועם מוגבלות זמנית [נוספת]
 בעקבות תאונת דרכים."

Dalit's choice may stem from her perception that by describing herself as a DIDF veteran, she adds additional value to the complex situation she has recently encountered.

Social Benefits and Stigma

Overall, few of the participants in this study disclosed their disability identity as DIDF veterans to other people on their campuses mainly because of the social stigma associated with their benefits and rights. When I asked Eran what it means for him to be a DIDF veteran in HE, he replied:

"It's better not to say this (...)
 People have a prejudice about this thing.
 Because (...) what can he drive in a jeep
 if he wants to (...)"
 Even though that's not true, okay?"

"שעדיף לא להגיד את זה (...)
 יש לאנשים דעה קדומה
 על הדבר הזה.
 כי (...) הוא יכול לנהוג בג'יפ
 אם הוא רוצה,
 למרות שזה לא נכון, אוקיי?"

"People ask, for instance:
 Where do you get money from? (...)
 Are you on welfare?
 I once spewed it out
 That I get some kind of pension
 And [people] treat you differently."

"אנשים שואלים נגיד:
 מאיפה יש לך כסף? (...)
 אתה מקבל קצבה?
 פעם אחת פלטתי את זה
 שאני מקבל איזושהי קצבה
 ומתייחסים אלייך אחרת."

"Stigma,
 It's just not something
 That I prefer not to tell."

"סטיגמה,
 זה פשוט
 לא משהו שאני מעדיף לספר."

Several of those who identified as DIDF-veteran students shared different incidents where they had to show their official DIDF identity card on campus or were exposed by it. For

example, when I asked Sarit about her identification or the appearance of her disability during her studies in HE, she raised the issue of having a brand-new car (a ‘medical car’) and a disability parking permit. “A vehicle used by the disabled veteran for his mobility. The Rehabilitation Division assists in its acquisition, maintenance, and replacement.” (Disabled IDF veterans’ Benefits, Medical vehicle, 2003).

Sarit was badly wounded in an accident in her military service and had had many fractures in her body. Today, as she walks, others can notice her limp and difficulty in walking. Despite this, when I asked her if her military-related disability came up in conversation with others, she only referred to the fact that people understand that she was a DIDF veteran when they saw her vehicle. Like in Eran’s case, it seems that Sarit preferred not to reveal her identity as a DIDF veteran broadly.

Miki spoke openly and freely about the common views in Israel towards DIDF veterans and their benefits:

*“Most of the public in the country thinks
That disabled IDF veterans live
on a tray of silver
That they get everything
And no one violates them or their rights.”*

*”רוב הציבור בארץ חושב
שנכי צה”ל חיים
על מגש של כסף
שהם מקבלים הכול
ואף אחד לא פוגע בהם ולא בזכויות שלהם.”*

*“They are not aware of what is really going on.
No one really knows what's going on
And no one has confidence
That it will not happen tomorrow to his child
Then he will understand what is happening ...”*

*”הם לא מודעים למה קורה באמת.
אף אחד באמת לא יודע מה קורה
ואף אחד אין לו ביטחון
שזה לא יקרה מחר לילד שלו
ואז הוא יבין מה קורה ...”*

Yaron also mentioned the issue of his eligibility for a new vehicle and referred to the existing stigma in Israeli society regarding DIDF veterans and their benefits.

*“[People] think
that being a disabled IDF veteran,
It is a lot of benefits,
And it is not true (...)*

”[אנשים] חושבים
שלהיות נכה צה”ל
זה הרבה מאד הטבות,
וזה לא נכון (...)

*Four months ago,
I got a new car
from the Ministry of Defense
My friends saw and said ‘Congratulations’,
And it seems like we're really set up.”*

לפני ארבעה חודשים,
[אני] קיבלתי מכונית חדשה
ממשרד הביטחון,
חברים שלי ראו ואמרו
’תתחדש’
”זה נראה כאילו באמת אנחנו מסודרים.”

Yaron referred to how the rights of DIDF veterans are often presented in comparison with the social benefits that other groups with disabilities in Israel receive. Yaron further explained the economic challenges facing DIDF veterans, including those who are entitled to broader benefits such as a medical vehicle. He detailed that even though he is entitled to a medical vehicle due to his military-related injury, he paid part of its cost, and the maintenance expenses are not fully covered by the MoD.

Navit also expressed this issue of the social benefits and stigma referring to her need of support to cover her apartment rent:

*“The stigma of people
when you tell them
you are a disabled IDF veteran,
(...) You tell them –
a disabled IDF veteran
so they say,
Oh well, so you have money to live on.
This is the perception,
and this is the reaction I would get.”*

”הסטיגמה של אנשים
כשאת אומרת להם
שאת נכת צה”ל,
(...) את אומרת להם –
נכת צה”ל
אז הם אומרים,
’אה טוב, אז יש לך כסף לחיות.
זו התפיסה,
וזו התגובה שהייתי מקבלת.”

*“Okay, so you have the means to pay rent,
They do not understand,
They do not understand at all
what the process is,
They do not think about the process
I went through to be recognized as
a disabled IDF veteran,
They think economically mostly.
I have yet to come across anyone
who went into
the so-called mental details with me.”*

*”אוקי, אז יש לך איך לשלם שכר דירה,
הם לא מבינים,
הם לא מבינים בכלל
מה התהליך,
הם לא חושבים על התהליך ש[אני]
עשיתי כדי להיות מוכרת
כנכת צה"ל,
הם חושבים מבחינה כלכלית בעיקר.
לא נתקלתי במישהו
שנכנס איתי לפרטים
המה שנקרא נפשיים.”*

These quotes show that DIDF veterans are aware of the stigma associated with their benefits and their group affiliation, especially their financial benefits. Although in some cases, the attitude of Israeli society towards DIDF veterans includes sympathy and respect, as was stated earlier, in other cases, DIDF veterans are viewed as people who are defined as one unified group. Several participants referred to their financial situation in the context of their financial benefits as DIDF veterans. In this context, it is important to note that most of the participants in this study had less than fifty percent recognized disability, which did not entitle them to a new car (a medical car) or high payments (rewards and subsistence fees) from the MoD.

Rachel also experienced stigma when she applied to graduate school. According to her narrative, when she applied for the first time, she shared her injury story and the fact that she is a DIDF veteran. After her application was denied for the first time, when she applied again, she decided not to share her military-related injury story in her application statement, and then she was accepted. She said:

*“It brings me down,
like you're being looked
at with some stigma.”*

*”זה מבאס אותי,
כאילו שמסתכלים עלייך
באיזה שהיא סטיגמה.”*

While the participants acknowledged the benefits they received, thanks to their military-related disability, some of them also recognized that, at least in some cases, these benefits could be accompanied by social stigma, even in a society that views DIDF veterans as contributing members to society (or “heroes”). This stigma was one of the factors that influenced participants’ decision not to disclose their disability.

Time of Injury and Disability Disclosure

The participants’ narratives revealed the influence of time on their disclosure. Several participants referred to the time elapsed since their injury as a significant factor in deciding whether to disclose their disability identity and ask for support on their campuses. Shahar who was injured in the summer of 2014 (about three-and-a-half years before the interview) commented:

*“The further away you get,
It's decreasing,
Because really in the first years ...
It was actually a significant part of my life,
In the weekly schedule,
And slowly as I moved away from it
then the title was taken down,
It is less noticeable (...)”*

*”ככל שמתרחקים
זה הולך ופוחת,
כי באמת בשנים הראשונות ...
זה ממש היה חלק משמעותי בחיי,
בלו”ז השבועי,
ולאט לאט ככל שהתרחקתי מזה
אז הטייטל ירד,
כבר פחות בא לידי ביטוי (...).”*

*“Really in the first years,
When I had to introduce myself,
So then it was part of the headlines,
But the farther I got away from it
In the last two years ...
I prefer not to talk,
not to tell.”*

*”באמת בשנים הראשונות,
כשהייתי צריך להציג את עצמי,
אז זה היה חלק מהכותרות,
אבל ככל שהתרחקתי מזה
בשנה שנתיים האחרונות ...
אני מעדיף שלא לדבר,
לא לספר.”*

The move away from the injury event was reflected in Sagi’s narrative as well. Sagi, who was injured more than 30 years ago, said:

*"Even if I thought
That I should do it
[contact for support],
I would not do that.
I mean,
I'm not in this place at all.
That's far from me. "*

*"גם אם הייתי חושב
שאני צריך לעשות את זה
[לפנות לקבל תמיכה],
לא הייתי עושה את זה.
זאת אומרת,
אני לא במקום הזה בכלל.
זה רחוק ממני."*

According to Sagi, his current self-identity had changed since his injury, and therefore, he does not see himself disclosing and asking for any support. These two examples illuminate the influence of the length of time that has elapsed since the injury on self-perception and self-disclosure of DIDF veterans. Time was only one of the factors that affected DIDF-veteran students' disclosure.

Disclosure as a Disabled IDF Veteran

Awareness of services and especially previous experience in other HE institutions naturally affected participants' disclosure, and the specific people and service providers to whom they chose to disclose.

Formal Disclosure and Support Seeking

Participants' formal disability disclosure as DIDF veterans occurred when filling out a registration form, applying for academic accommodations and assistive technology, or requesting certain benefits from the public safety department such as an on-campus parking permit or entering the campus with a guide dog.

Registration Office. The registration form and the registration office personnel are the initial formal points of contact with the university or college. Several participants talked about how they identified as DIDF veterans at the time of their enrollment. Rachel remembered that she checked the "disability box" question in her registration form during the registration process for both of her academic degrees, at two different HE institutions. In both instances, the question

contained a reference to military background, individual functioning, and self-identification as a person with a disability. As indicated by other participants' shared narratives, this specific practice does not exist in all HE institutions in Israel.

Dalit emphasized that she self-disclosed as a DIDF veteran only after she moved to a new campus of the same university when she had to add some more courses to receive financial aid from the MoD. Sarit recalled that she disclosed when she registered for her studies, but it did not bring the anticipated result:

*"On the registration form for the university,
they ask – It's written there!
And I marked: disabled IDF veteran
82 percent disability.
I was really sure
that it is what I wrote down,
That someone sees it ...
no one referred to it."*

*"בטופס הרישום לאוניברסיטה,
שואלים – רשום שם!
ו[אני] סימנתי נכת צה"ל
82 אחוזי נכות.
אני ממש הייתי בטוחה
שזה מה שרשמתי,
שמישהו רואה את זה ...
אף אחד לא התייחס לזה."*

Given the lack of uniformity in the request to identify oneself as a student with a disability or as a DIDF veteran at the time of registration, along with the MoD policy not to share this information, some participants believed that their status and disability identification as DIDF veterans was unknown. In this context, it should be emphasized that disabled IDF veterans' records are not transferred from the Rehabilitation Division of the Ministry of Defense to other institutions in general, and specifically not to higher education institutions. Consequently, they could not get support on their campuses, as Sagi stated:

"They do not know, and no one can help."

"לא יודעים, ואף אחד לא יכול לעזור."

Sagi raised the issue of information management, as he believed that the academic system was not aware of his identity as a DIDF veteran.

In addition, Sarit expressed her frustration and disappointment with on-campus information management since the information did not pass to any relevant personnel on her campus, and this led to several challenging and exhausting situations during the time of her studies:

*“Why did they ask
That I write down that I am disabled
If no one knows I'm disabled?
Like it's written somewhere on their computers?
Student card? I do not know...”*

*”למה הם ביקשו
שאני אכתוב שאני נכה
אם אף אחד לא יודע שאני נכה?
כאילו זה כתוב איפשהו במחשבים שלהם?
כרטיס סטודנט? לא יודעת...”*

*“What's the problem with putting an asterisk,
Some kind of sign just like that,
That everyone who opens...[the computer]
Just like that woman from English
[from the department secretary]
or the one from some other course,
As she opens the computer,
my card shows up and [it's] there.
Is there anything simpler than that?”*

*”מה הבעיה לשים איזה כוכבית,
איזשהו סימן סתם ככה,
שכל אחד שפותח ... [את המחשב]
סתם ההיא מהאנגלית
[מהמזכירות של החוג]
או ההיא מאיזה קורס,
פותחת את המחשב,
הכרטיס שלי ושם [זה] מופיע.
כאילו אין יותר פשוט מזה?”*

Sarit, like some other participants, assumed that disclosing a disability on the application form meant that they would be contacted by their institution's administrators and that their professors would be informed so that this would facilitate the academic routine during their studies.

Public Safety Unit. Accessibility and on-campus parking were other challenges the participants had to manage on campus. In some cases, the external identifier (a DIDF-veteran certificate or a DIDF-veteran parking permit) assisted the participants to disclose actively and formally. It should be noted (a) while all the participants in this study are recognized as DIDF veterans by the MoD, not all of them qualified to receive a subsidized vehicle known as a medical vehicle or a disabled parking permit; and (b) In most HE institutes in Israel, students are not eligible to park in on-campus parking lots. There are off-campus parking opportunities such

as private and public parking lots. Institutions of HE in Israel are usually fenced, and the entry to the campus is only through gates manned by security guards. In addition, there are few disabled parking spaces on most campuses, and many of these are far from the class location.

Several participants shared that they have a disability parking permit and that they are officially recognized by the public safety unit on their campus to have permission to enter with their private vehicles. Uzi described what he had to do to obtain this permission:

*“At the administrative level
I had to receive
Permission to enter the university
with the vehicle,
And I had to go to the public safety unit
And declare that I am
a disabled IDF veteran
And to fill out forms
And to present a disability certificate.”*

*”ברמה המנהלתית
הייתי צריך לקבל
אישור כניסה לאוניברסיטה
עם הרכב,
והייתי צריך ללכת לביטחון
ולהצהיר שאני
נכה צה”ל
ולמלא טפסים
ולהציג תעודת נכה.”*

In talking about the parking permit, Yaron reported that only now during his current studies, did he have an official parking permit to enter the campus for free. Yaron had only recently received his official disabled parking badge from the MoD.

*”So for the college of
[name of college],
I have a permit
To enter with the vehicle.”*

*”אז במכללה
[שם המכללה],
יש לי אישור
כניסה עם הרכב.”*

A disabled parking permit is provided by MoD to a disabled veteran with a leg injury whose degree of disability is 30% or more for this disability only or a blind disabled veteran are both entitled to a parking permit (Disabled IDF veterans’ Benefits, Medical vehicle, ,2003).

During the interview, Yaron often compared between the college where he had studied most recently with the university where he had studied in the past (where he was presently working as a staff member). He pointed out that he now officially uses the parking space for

people with disabilities who are employees at the university, which was not available to him as an undergraduate student. He had to park off-campus, far from his class location.

Similar to Yaron, Sarit also discussed her experiences with on-campus parking and her need to disclose her disability to formally acquire her parking permit. She shared that she was given a warning sticker on her car after she parked in the staff disabled parking lot rather than in the student parking lot. Sarit was surprised to find that there was a distinction between faculty and students with disabilities regarding disabled parking spaces. Only after this event, did she formally disclose her disability identity, so she could receive her parking permit:

*“Then I checked and realized
That if I study in a permanent place,
Over a certain number of days per week
Then the academic institution
has to provide me with parking
with my [license] number.
I did not know that at first,
I only knew it during the year after
As I had the event,
and then I demanded
that I have a parking place with my number
And they really arranged my parking.”*

*“But once again,
I had to go through
some event
For I will know that I can ask for it
Nobody came and told me you can ...”*

*”ואז [אני] בדקתי והבנתי
שאם אני לומדת
במקום קבוע,
מעל כמות מסוימת
של ימים בשבוע
אז המוסד האקדמי
צריך לדאוג לי לחניה
עם המספר שלי [הרישוי].
אני לא ידעתי את זה בהתחלה,
ידעתי את זה רק בשנה אחרי
כשהיה לי את האירוע,
ואז דרשתי שתהיה לי
חניה עם המספר שלי
והם באמת עשו לי חניה.”*

*”אבל עוד פעם,
הייתי צריכה לעבור
איזשהו אירוע
בשביל שאני אדע
שאני יכולה לבקש את זה.
אף אחד לא בא ואמר לי את יכולה...”*

Sarit’s narrative illustrates that some of the participants were not aware of essential services like on-campus parking and learned about them only after they had some kind of incident.

Shir shared the need to show an official certificate as a blind student so she could enter her campus with her dog.

“(…) Dogs are not allowed in the academy,
So straight first
All certificates and such [...]
First of all, I presented
a blind certificate
To the guard.

” (...) אסור כלבים באקדמיה,
אז ישר קודם
כל רק אישורים וכאלו [...]
קודם כל הצגתי
תעודת עיוור
אצל השומר.”

“At some point
Because there were a lot of difficulties,
I personally approached
The University Security Center
And I said to them:
'Listen, this is my dog,
This is me,
My name is such and such.”

” באיזשהו שלב
מרוב שהיה הרבה קושי,
אישית ניגשתי
למרכז אבטחה באוניברסיטה
ואמרתי להם:
'תקשיבו, זה הכלב שלי,
זאת אני,
קוראים לי ככה וככה.”

Following that statement, Shir had additional motivations for her disclosure:

“The truth is I love to share as much as possible (...) (...)
I have a lot of patience towards people
With a lack of awareness
and very unkind behaviors on the one hand,
And on the other hand, I also do not feel
my blindness as a 'burden'
Compared to many other blind people.”

” האמת אני אוהבת לשתף כמה שיותר (...) (...)
לי יש הרבה סבלנות כלפי אנשים
עם חוסר מודעות
והתנהגויות מאוד לא יפות מצד אחד,
ומצד שני אני גם לא מרגישה
את העיוורון שלי כ'תיק'
בניגוד להרבה עיוורים אחרים.”

“I also feel a kind of self-commitment towards the
world of blind people.
Let's put it this way...
Because it's easy for me to talk about my blindness,
So at least I can help
other people understand
What I need,
And also in general what others need.”

” אני גם מרגישה סוג של מחויבות עצמית
כלפי עולם העיוורי.
נגיד את זה ככה...
כי כבר קל לי לדבר על העיוורון שלי,
אז לפחות כן לעזור
לאנשים אחרים להבין
גם מה אני צריכה,
וגם באופן כללי מה אחרים צריכים.”

“So I share with anyone who asks
I share because I come with the dog
so constantly people ask about the dog
Why do I have it?
Then a dialogue begins –
that I am blind, and the dog helps me ...
And it accompanies me.”

” אז אני משתפת כל מי ששואל
אני משתפת בגלל שאני מגיעה עם הכלב
אז כל הזמן שואלים על הכלב,
בשביל מה הוא?
אז מתחיל דו שיח –
שאני עיוורת, והוא עוזר לי...
והוא מלווה אותי.”

Shir's narrative demonstrates some participants' decision to disclose their impairment not only to faculty or disability support services, but to other people on campus like their peers.

Program Administrative Staff. Participants chose to identify themselves as DIDF veterans mainly when they interacted with the administrative staff of their program. They stated that they preferred to ask for assistance from them rather than to submit a formal application at the public safety or the disability support services office. For example, this is what Miki used to do when he needed a parking space on campus, closer to his class location:

*“I presented the disabled veteran certificate
to the secretary there,
the one who was in charge of the master's degree.
That was enough
And I got everything I needed.”*

“הצגתי את התעודת נכה
למוזכרה שמה,
לאחראית של התואר השני.
זה הספיק
וקיבלתי כל מה שאני צריך.”

*“I said that I am a disabled IDF veteran,
I have a mobility problem,
I showed the certificate and that's it.
I had to identify,
Because even if I accept it,
It does not solve my problem.”*

“אמרתי שאני נכה צה״ל,
שיש לי בעיה של ניידות,
הראיתי את התעודה וזהו.
הייתי צריך להזדהות,
כי גם אם אני משלים עם זה,
זה לא פותר לי את הבעיה.”

Dalit also raised the need to present her disability identity to the administration staff of her program when she had to register for additional courses to receive the MoD's financial support. Dalit specified that she disclosed as a DIDF veteran shortly after she was recognized by the MoD and started her school year:

*“To enroll in four courses
In a semester at the university
You need to ask for special approval.
So that was the first time
That I introduced myself
as a disabled IDF veteran
With the certificate
and with the limitation,
And I actually went to
the secretary [of the program]
at first,*

”כדי להירשם לארבעה קורסים
בסמסטר באוניברסיטה
צריך לבקש אישור מיוחד.
אז שם זו הייתה הפעם הראשונה
שהצגתי את עצמי
כנכת צה״ל
עם התעודה
ועם המגבלה,
וממש פניתי
למוזכרה [של החוג]
בהתחלה,

*And she immediately introduced me
to the campus manager (...)”*

והיא ישר הכניסה אותי
למנהלת של קמפוס (...).”

In addition, Dalit revealed that she shared the information regarding her military-related disability with the head of her academic program, who was also teaching her in two of her classes. Dalit did not elaborate on the circumstances in which she revealed her disability identity to the program director, but in the same breath, she noted that she did not share this information with other faculty members.

Disability Support Services – Accommodation Seeking. Several participants approached the disability support services office to seek support, but only a few of them stated that they shared their military-related injury with the personnel there. For example, Navit stated that:

*"They knew,
And I was among the few
that were disabled IDF veterans,
There were not many more [females],
But yes,
they knew at the accessibility center. "*

*"הם ידעו,
ואני הייתי בין היחידות
שהן נכות צה"ל,
לא היו שם עוד הרבה,
אבל כן,
הם ידעו במרכז נגישות."*

Navit's evidence reflects the reality in other institutions of Israeli HE, where the percentage of DIDF veterans is low among all other students with disabilities.

In Yaron's case, although he asked for support services for his military-related injury, he emphasized that he preferred not to disclose as a DIDF veteran, but as a student with a disability in general, a student with a back injury:

*"I did not submit it as a disabled IDF veteran,
as a student with a disability ...*

*"לא הגשתי את זה כנכה צה"ל,
כסטודנט עם מגבלה ...*

*I have a limitation in the spine,
these are the certificates from my doctors ...
It should not matter to anyone from where ..."*

*יש לי מגבלה בעמוד שדרה,
אלה האישורים מהרופאים שלי ...
זה לא עניין אף אחד מאיפה..."*

Yaron strongly felt that the context and details of his injury should not concern the support services office. Yaron's narrative demonstrates the disability identity complexity of DIDF veterans and the way some of them choose to identify themselves on campus. Yaron's statement can be viewed as another tactic, as he revealed his disability status while he preferred not to share his DIDF-veteran status or to provide a more contextual disclosure of his disability type. The strategy that Yaron chose is comparable to what was defined by Wood (2017) as "Strategic genericism." Yaron's narrative and his act for self-advocacy reflect the choices of many of this study's participants, who applied for support services from the disability support services office without disclosing their DIDF-veteran identity, as elaborated below.

Time and Circumstances of Disclosure. The participants addressed the time dimension of their disclosure in the context of their past and present academic experience as students in HE, as well as the circumstances that led to their disclosure (during registration, before the exam season, difficulty in mobility on campus, etc.). Of all the participants, nine were undergraduate students (five men and four women), three were studying for their master's degree (one man and two women), and one woman was a doctoral student. Additionally, eight participants (three men and five women) had previous experience at different academic institutions, and the other two had been students (men) in post-secondary institutions before they started their current academic degrees. These circumstances were significant in terms of disclosing, support seeking, and the value of support. For example, Michal, who is now a Ph.D. student, shared that she sought disability support services and used accommodations on her campus only during her undergraduate degree.

In general, in terms of self-disclosure, and applying to the disability support services office on their campus, the participants were divided into those who applied for the disability

support at the beginning of their studies, compared with those who applied only after experiencing difficulty or crisis during their studies. Shir, like Yaron, said clearly that she officially contacted the disability support services office on her campus in search of accommodations regarding her recognized military-related disability at the beginning of her studies, right after she registered for her studies. However, even in Shir's case, as a recognized D IDF veteran due to loss of her vision during her military service, disclosure was inconsistent: She stated that in one academic setting, she chose to identify herself as just a blind woman, whereas, at another academic institution, she associated her disability to her military-related injury.

*"So specifically at the University of (...),
I identified in the beginning
just as a blind woman,
Here at the University of (...),
I identified myself
as a disabled IDF blind veteran woman."*

*"אז דווקא באוניברסיטת (...),
הזדהיתי די בהתחלה
כ-רק עיוורת.
פה באוניברסיטה (...),
הזדהיתי
כנכת צהל עיוורת."*

Shir learned how to navigate and adjust to various environments, and to cope with her academic challenges despite her inability to see. Her disability needs were critical both during her classroom activity on campus and while studying at home. She disclosed and applied for academic accommodations and assistive technology during her academic studies in different academic settings.

Yaron shared his process of disclosing his disability over time, both during his past and current studies. He emphasized that he applied right after he started his first school year and before the exam's session. In Yaron's case, he asked for accommodations in light of his back injury during his military service and his chronic pain that made it challenging to sit and write during an exam. He described his need to be tested on the computer rather than on paper:

"I can not sit upright
 And when I sit down and have to bend over and
 write on the table,
 I have no back support,
 I have to hold myself with my muscles ,
 And this is something that after a very short time
 I'm starting to feel it because of the pain.
 And when I test on the computer,
 There are better chairs than here
 [the classroom where we are conducting the
 interview].
 These are office chairs
 that I just lean back all the way,
 Holding the keyboard,
 Rotate the screen towards me,
 Raise my legs on the table,
 And just sit like that."

"אני לא יכול לשבת זקוף
 וכשאני יושב וצריך להתכופף
 ולכתוב על השולחן,
 אין לי תמיכה בגב,
 אני צריך להחזיק את עצמי עם השרירים,
 וזה משהו שאחרי זמן מאד קצר
 אני מתחיל להרגיש את זה בגלל הכאב.
 וכשאני נבחן על המחשב,
 יש כסאות יותר טובים מפה
 [בכיתה בה נערך הראיון].
 אלה כיסאות משרדיים
 שאני פשוט נשען עד הסוף אחורה,
 מחזיק את המקלדת,
 מסובב את המסך אליי,
 מרים את הרגליים על השולחן,
 ופשוט יושב ככה."

The circumstances of Yaron's disclosure and accommodation request are unique and interesting since he requested computer accommodations – a request that is usually relevant for students with learning disabilities. Yaron explained that he had applied for support services during his former undergraduate studies at the university. In his current studies, his accommodation request was approved based on approval he had received from the previous university some years ago.

Dalit was injured in her upper limbs during her military service, and in her case, the military-related injury would cause her pain while she was writing.

"The fact that I am a disabled IDF veteran
 Is expressed in this respect of
 The exams themselves.
 In terms of ease [accommodations],
 In case I need to type in the test ...
 That I will need Heaven forbid
 [because of dislocate of my shoulder]
 to use a computer
 Or talk to someone
 that will write for me ..."

"העובדה שאני נכת צה"ל
 באה לידי ביטוי מהבחינה הזו
 של המבחנים עצמם.
 מבחינת ההקלות [התאמות],
 במקרה שאצטרך להקליד במבחן ...
 שאצטרך חס וחלילה
 [בגלל פריקה של הכתף]
 להיעזר במחשב
 או לדבר עם מישהו
 שיכתוב עבורי..."

Although Dalit did not elaborate on her formal disclosure, she revealed that the staff in the disability support services office knew about her military-related injury and her use of a brace to protect her shoulder. Dalit stated that she did not use any support services concerning the military-related injury because she did not have any shoulder dislocation at the time of her undergraduate studies.

Informal Disclosure – By Situation

This section presents participants' narratives related to cases of their informal disclosure for various reasons on campus, such as in their interactions with faculty, administrative staff members, and peers. The informal self-disclosure sometimes occurred as a result of a particular need, a particular interaction, or an event that led students to reveal that they were DIDF veterans.

Administrative Staff. Some participants commented on sharing their disability identity informally with administrative staff for various reasons. They stated that they revealed their military-related disability/illness when they interacted with staff members such as their department secretary or the registrar.

Uzi referred to his unofficial disclosure in the context of his wish to take an exam at a later date (in higher education institutions in Israel, students can have more than one exam date for each course).

*"Another source where I identified,
Again this is an informal place,
It's in front of the faculty secretary
To get some easement,
Another exam date.
But it was informal ... "*

*"מקור נוסף שבו הזדהיתי,
שוב זה מקום א-פורמלי,
זה מול מזכירת הפקולטה
כדי לקבל איזושהי הקלה,
מועד ג'.
אבל זה היה א-פורמאלי ..."*

In Miki's case, he preferred to contact the secretary to regulate the issue of access to his class location rather than contact the disability support services office.

"I said I am a disabled IDF veteran,
I have a mobility problem.
I showed the certificate and that's it.
With mobility, yes, I have a problem
So I had to disclose.
Because even if I accept it,
It does not solve my problem.
I can not deal with it,
So that's why I disclosed it. "

"אמרתי שאני נכה צה"ל,
שיש לי בעיה של ניידות.
הראיתי את התעודה וזהו.
עם הניידות, כן, יש לי בעיה
ולכן הייתי צריך להודות.
כי גם אם אני משלים עם זה,
זה לא פותר לי את הבעיה.
אני לא יכול להתמודד איתה,
אז לכן כן הודיתי. "

Miki decided not to share his needs with the disability support services office due to his pain. He chose to approach the secretary of his program and asked to have the location of the class changed. Furthermore, he acknowledged that, unfortunately, he had to do this again and again at the beginning of each semester.

In these narratives, the participants described several situations in which they identified themselves as DIDF veterans to receive specific services, such as coordinating tuition payments, managing class locations, and requesting alternative exam dates.

Faculty. Likewise, more than half of the participants chose to disclose their identity as DIDF veterans when they interacted with faculty members at different time points during their academic studies for various needs or requests. For example, Miki said that he spoke to some of his faculty members concerning his mobility difficulties and off-campus school activity:

"I talked to other faculty (...)
That I will not need to run around
To institutions that are too far away
Or things like that,
And [they] accommodated and agreed to grant
all sorts of things to me
That they less often approve
for other students
Because of the mobility issue."

"אני דברתי עם מרצים אחרים (...)
שאני לא אצטרך להתרוצץ
במוסדות יותר מידי רחוקים

או דברים כאלה,
ו[הם] באו לקראתי
או הסכימו לאשר לי כל מיני דברים
שפחות מאשרים אותם
לסטודנטים אחרים
בגלל המצב של הניידות."

Other participants decided to disclose to faculty following their challenges of sitting for a long time during the class sessions. As Yaron commented:

"I do not disclose it immediately,
 Only if, as I said,
 some need arises ...
 I say I have some kind of spinal injury,
 affecting the leg,
 And that's it ... not too many details
 Unless it's necessary,
 That is, if there is relevance to it.
 If, for example, it is prolonged sitting or
 something like that,
 I say I cannot
 Sit a lot on chairs at a right angle (...)"

"אני לא פותח את זה מיד,
 רק אם כמו שאמרתי,
 מתעורר איזשהו צורך ...
 אני אומר שיש לי
 איזשהי פגיעה בעמוד השדרה,
 שמשפיעה על הרגל,
 וזהו ... לא מפרט יותר מדי,
 אלא, אם כן צריך,
 זאת אומרת אם יש רלוונטיות לזה.
 אם, לדוגמה, מדובר בישיבה ממושכת
 או משהו כזה
 אני אומר אני לא יכול
 לשבת הרבה על כסאות בזווית ישרה (...)"

Yaron explained that there were cases where he contacted his faculty at the beginning of his class and explained his actions during the class especially in his classes held later in the day. He felt comfortable contacting the faculty when needed, and he added that they did not ask for any medical documentation including in cases when he needed more time submitting class papers. Like Yaron, Shahar also decided to share his injury story only when he needed an extension in submitting a seminar paper:

"I also approached one instructor with the story.
 It really was for a seminar paper.
 There were a lot of deadlines
 and a bit of a rough time,
 I could not meet the deadlines. "

"למרצה אחד גם פניתי עם הסיפור.
 זה באמת היה עבודה סמינריונית.
 היו הרבה מועדים
 ותקופה קצת קשה,
 לא הצלחתי לעמוד במועדים."

Other participants chose to minimize their disclosure only to certain people, such as a particular faculty member or just to the head of their program. Dalit shared that in her current studies only one faculty member knew about her shoulder injury:

"And about the shoulder limitation,
 the head of the school knows,
 Or the head of our department
 Who also teaches me in two courses,
 And he knows. "

"(...) על מגבלת הכתפיים,
 יודע ראש המגמה,
 או ראש החוג שלנו
 שהוא מלמד אותי גם בשני קורסים,
 והוא יודע."

Similarly, Rachel revealed her story to only one faculty member during her undergraduate studies:

*"I think there was maybe only one instructor,
who taught psychophysiology
So I shared that with her (...)"*

*"אני חושבת שהייתה אולי רק מרצה אחת,
לפסיכו-פיזיולוגי
שככה [אני] שיתפתי אותה (...)"*

In contrast, when Rachel was in her graduate program, a more supportive setting, she felt she could share her story more broadly and openly.

Michal also shared her story only with one faculty member. She added that she applied to the disability support service office only after she shared her challenges with that faculty member, who turned out to be a significant source of support for her during her undergraduate studies and encouraged her to approach that office.

When Eran had a stressful situation while he was taking an exam, he also shared his about his disability with only one of his instructors. Eran revealed that this faculty member shared with him some of his personal information in return:

*"(...) I took some documents,
I turned it,
Like I censored it
And I let him see the evaluation and everything,
And it turns out that he too [the lecturer]
has a daughter who was a disabled IDF veteran."*

*"(...) לקחתי איזשהו מסמך,
העברתי אותו,
כאילו צנזרתי אותו
ונתתי לו לראות את האבחנות והכל,
ומסתבר שגם לו [למרצה]
יש גם ילדה שהיא נכת צה"ל."*

Eran chose to self-disclose information about the fact that he is a disabled IDF veteran, but he did not detail the circumstances and the fact that he was recognized with PTSD.

Similarly, Uzi, who was diagnosed with a physical disability and PTSD did not share this diagnosis with other individuals during his studies. The same was true for the two female participants (Rachel and Michal) who were also diagnosed with PTSD.

Peers. The exposure of their story to peers and dealing with impact of the military-related injury occurred informally in various circumstances and situations. For instance, utilizing the

legal parking permit for parking on campus could sometimes lead to informal disclosure. Uzi pointed out that his private car served as a means of informal self-disclosure:

*“And most likely, my friends,
Those who studied with me
very quickly discovered
that I am a disabled IDF veteran.”*

*”ומן הסתם חברים שלי,
שלמדו איתי
מהר מאוד גילו
שאני נכה צה"ל.”*

*“Also for technical reasons
Because they saw
I was entering with my vehicle
Something that no one else can do,
Then they asked why, and you explain.
And then yes, everyone knew (...)”*

*”גם מסיבות טכניות
כי הם ראו
שאני נכנס עם הרכב
מה שאף אחד לא יכול,
ואז שואלים למה ואתה מסביר.
ואז כן, אבל כולם ידעו (...).”*

Eran provided another distinctive example in which his disability identity was revealed by one of his classmates when she was riding with him in his car. On the way, she saw an official document from the MoD related to his diagnosis as a DIDF veteran, and later she spread this sensitive information to other students in their class. This incident significantly hurt Eran as he had not wished to share any information regarding his military-related injury with his classmates.

Some of the participants who stated that their disability was invisible to others shared during the interviews that their disability management strategies often led to informal disclosure of their disability identity to their classmates. As Yaron stated:

*“I usually do not
Come out and speak about it
And tell everyone who meets me.”*

*”אני בדרך כלל
לא כל כך בא ומוציא את זה
ומספר לכל מי שפוגש אותי.”*

*“Some friends see
That I'm taking a pill in the middle of a class
Or that I bring a pillow to sit on,
And they ask why, so I explain.”*

*”יש חברים שרואים
שאני לוקח כדור באמצע שיעור
או שאני מביא כרית כדי לשבת,
ושואלים למה, אז אני מסביר.”*

*“This is not something that I hide
But I also do not externalize it.”*

*”זה לא משהו שאני מסתיר אותו
אבל אני גם לא מחציץ את זה.”*

Several students shared that the disability associated with their military service was discovered during some activities involving the classroom space. For example, Dalit shared two incidents that happened in her classes that led her to share her disability identity: In the first, she chose to share her military-related injury story with one of her classmates when:

*“We had to arrange the class in a circle,
Or to move chairs,
It's something I cannot do,
So I tried a bit somehow with my feet.
It felt very cumbersome.
Then someone asked me –
If anything had happened.
What are your problems? in other words,
So I shared it
And she immediately helped me,
And that was something
That I tried very hard to hide and avoid.
I wanted to arrange the class
like everyone else.”*

*”היינו צריכים לסדר את הכיתה במעגל,
או להזיז כסאות,
זה משהו שאני לא יכולה,
אז ניסיתי קצת איכשהו עם הרגליים.
זה הרגיש מאוד מסורבל.
ואז מישהי שאלה אותי –
אם קרה משהו.
מה הבעיות שלך? במילים אחרות,
אז שיתפתי אותה
והיא מיד עזרה לי,
וזה היה משהו
שמאוד ניסיתי להסתיר ולהימנע ממנו.
רציתי לסדר את הכיתה
כמו כולם.”*

In contrast, Dalit shared a second incident in which she was asked to shut down the air-conditioning system in her class. In this case, she just said that she had a problem with her shoulder. Without providing detailed information regarding the circumstances of her injury, she apologized and asked for help. In other words, even for the same participant, disclosure decisions were situation specific.

A few other participants commented and shared their experiences of informally disclosing as DIDF veterans to their peers. Specifically, Rachel and Michal commented on the visibility of their PTSD symptoms to their classmates. As Michal stated:

"On June 1st [date of injury],
Something always happens to me,
And I was vomiting here,
Sitting and crying,
These were very tough days.
At some point, I have to tell people what
happened to me,
Like why I
was acting like that. "

"בראשון ביוני [יום הפציעה],
תמיד קורה לי משהו,
והייתי מקיאה פה,
יושבת ובוכה,
זה היה ימים מאוד קשים.
באיזה שלב הייתי צריכה לספר לאנשים
מה קרה לי,
כאילו למה אני
ככה מתנהגת."

Rachel described two incidents in which she fainted, once during a less supportive undergraduate program and another time in her recent Master's degree studies. She described these traumatic incidents and the unfortunate way in which her disability was revealed to her classmates.

"During the first degree,
I fainted in the middle of an exam ...
So it felt truly very bad
Because I fainted in the middle of the exam.
Then they stopped it
And called an ambulance,
And they took me.
It was incredibly unpleasant."

"בתואר הראשון
שהתעלפתי, המבחן ...
אז זה הרגיש לי באמת רע מאוד
כי התעלפתי באמצע מבחן.
ואז עצרו את המבחן
והזמינו לי אמבולנס,
ולקחו אותי.
זה היה ממש לא נעים."

"It was awful, awful, terribly hard.
Nobody understood what I wanted either ...
No one understood what had happened to me.
It was terribly surprising to everyone.
It was awfully weird."

"היה נורא, נורא, נורא קשה.
אף אחד לא הבין מה אני רוצה ...
אף אחד לא הבין מה קרה לי.
זה היה נורא מפתיע לכולם.
זה היה נורא מוזר."

Rachel's narrative reflects the fact that there is a general lack of awareness of DIDF veterans with PTSD, especially women with this condition. Eran also commented on the visibility of his PTSD to his peers, in particular, in some situations when he felt stressed during interactions with other people:

"They see you
Sometimes stutter to yourself,
See you're scared of voices (...)"

"רואים אותך
מגמגם לפעמים לעצמך,
רואים אותך נבהל מקולות (...)"

These descriptions show that the military-related disability is informally exposed to others such as peers, even when the disability is transparent and invisible by its definition. Additional participants shared that they informally disclosed their military-related injury and their disability identity as part of social activity on their campus. Shahar disclosed his story of injury and challenges during an on-campus social activity as part of the events on the Day of Remembrance for the Wounded of the Israeli Military and Victims of Terrorist Acts. At that event, Shahar and other DIDF veterans shared their stories of injury in a creative way.

<p><i>"In movement and with music, Without much text. And we managed to convey that experience yet, Of coping, of difficulty, Of feeling that I'm transparent, That [others] do not see ... A lot of the experiences I have had. "</i></p>	<p><i>"בתנועה ועם מוזיקה, בלי הרבה מלל. והצלחנו להעביר את החוויה הזאת עדיין, של התמודדות, של קושי, של הרגשה שאני שקוף, ש[אחרים] לא רואים ... הרבה מאוד מהחוויות ש[אני] חוויתי."</i></p>
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Shahar said that many of the students came to watch, and they were excited and empathetic. Shahar also added that, in general, some of his classmates heard his story and others did not, as some of them came with him from the military service, so they knew. Miki also shared that he gave a lecture in one of the classes on DIDF veterans, especially about his activities in an association that works with veterans with PTSD.

In some cases, the participants used personal strategies to avoid having to ask for support. For example, Yaron stated that he used a pillow and painkillers to relieve his pain during sitting and avoided asking others for help. These self-management strategies can be viewed as a form of non-disclosure, and as an "almost passing" tactic.

Almost Passing: Self-Management as a Strategy

Being a student with a disability, and especially with a military-related injury or illness is sometimes problematic. From time to time, the participants found it hard to share their military-

related injuries due to the associated stigma toward DIDF veterans in Israeli society, as well as the lack of awareness of veterans with invisible injuries, especially with PTSD.

In their academic settings, most participants elected not to disclose their injuries to their faculty, staff, or disability support services personnel. Participants addressed how the in/visibility of their military-related disability condition facilitated some sense of integration, as it served them as a way to be like other students, along with using self-management and being able to “pass” as able-bodied.

Participants' narratives, especially of those who perceived their disability as “hidden,” can be viewed as disability passing, comparable to Samuels' (2003) explanations regarding queer narratives and their identity discourse. The majority of the participants had a physical disability. Some of them had been diagnosed with PTSD, and a few had both a physical disability and PTSD. One participant had a sensory disability and identified as blind, and two others had illnesses (skin cancer and fibromyalgia). For several participants who had hidden impairments, the invisibility allowed them to “pass” as non-disabled in some situations.

In their daily experiences, and especially during their time as students, some participants described their self-strategies and passing (e.g., nondisclosure), which particularly helped them to facilitate their integration within their HE settings. Passing includes hiding pain, hiding difficulty with body functionality, and hiding cognitive and emotional difficulties related to their injury. Passing may require different strategies and behaviors in different contexts.

Environmental Challenges and Self-Strategies

In speaking about their passing behavior, some participants referred problems with their mobility and accessibility on campus, while others mentioned their challenges in covering up their pain and the difficulty of prolonged sitting during their class sessions.

Sitting in Class. More than half of the total group of study participants shared their challenges of having pain and needing to sit for a prolonged period of time. Participants expressed many complex ways in which they experienced the effect of their disability across situations, and especially during their class sessions. Some participants had shared their strategies with their faculty or their peers. For example, Yaron stated that he approached some of his faculty members and explained his method of managing his pain during class sessions:

*"I would approach the lecturer
at the beginning of class
and tell him,
Listen, I have a spinal injury,
I'm taking pretty serious painkillers,
I might be deliberately sitting on the edge [of
the class],
Maybe I'm going to stand up for a while,
or if you see me falling asleep,
It's not because you are boring me,
but because of side effects.
I never had a problem with that,
Even if I had some really, really hard times,
So I always got extensions for class papers."*

*"הייתי ניגש למרצה
בתחילת השיעור
ואומר לו, תשמע,
יש לי פגיעה בעמוד שדרה,
אני לוקח משככי כאבים די רציניים,
יכול להיות שאני אשב בכוונה בקצה
[הכיתה],
יכול להיות שאני אעמוד קצת,
או אם אתה רואה שאני נרדם,
לא בגלל שאתה משעמם,
אלא בגלל תופעות לוואי.
אף פעם לא הייתה לי בעיה עם זה,
גם אם היו תקופות שהיה לי באמת מאד
קשה,
אז תמיד קיבלתי ארכות לעבודות."*

Shahar also described his strategies to manage pain while sitting in class:

*"I had a hard time sitting for a long time,
So either I would hang around a lot,
Or I would stand up,
Or I would bring another chair with me,
Every year, I dealt with it differently (...)
Go out to make coffee,
Go to the restroom,
Go out for a walk "*

*"הייתי מתקשה לשבת הרבה זמן,
אז או שהייתי מסתובב הרבה,
או שהייתי עומד,
או שהייתי מביא לי כיסא אחר,
כל שנה, התמודדתי עם זה אחרת (...)
יוצא להכין קפה,
יוצא לשירותים,
יוצא להסתובב...."*

Likewise, Noa had selected the route of non-disclosure about fibromyalgia in her college and said:

"I get up and stand at the end of the class.
This is what often happens to me.
I get up, walk, stand at the end of the class,
Move a little and get back in place."

"אני קמה ועומדת בסוף הכיתה.
זה מה שהרבה פעמים קורה לי.
[אני] קמה, הולכת, נעמדת בסוף הכיתה,
זזה קצת וחוזרת למקום."

Following our conversation about his pain and challenges in class, Uzi stated that:

"(...) on long tests,
I had to get up
And a little to go to the restroom."

"(...) במבחנים ארוכים,
הייתי צריך לקום
וקצת ללכת לשירותים."

Uzi preferred not to disclose, but to manage pain in his life. He compared the challenge of coping with his pain during his studies to other situations in his life, like traveling and taking a flight. He argued that, likewise, he did not disclose his disability status and his identity as a DIDF-veteran student.

Yaron also used other self-strategies to support himself such as taking medication or bringing an accessory that would assist him in his classes:

"I take a pill in the middle of class,
Or I bring a pillow to sit on (...)"

"שאני לוקח כדור באמצע שיעור,
או שאני מביא כרית כדי לשבת (...)"

Other participants reported the use of painkillers as part of their daily functioning, especially to be able to attend their academic studies, as Noa who lives with a chronic fibromyalgia indicated:

"Most of the time,
I take some two pills and move on (...)."

"רוב הפעמים,
אני דוחפת איזה שני כדורים וממשיכה (...)."

These strategies were similarly mentioned by additional participants, who preferred to "waste" their learning time or time of taking exams rather than turn to someone and seek assistance. One motivation was to fit in, to integrate into the classroom, and be like all other students. As Miki stated when I asked why he did not ask for a better chair:

"I did not think about it
[ask for a more comfortable chair],
I wanted to be like everyone else ..."

"לא חשבתי על זה
[לבקש כיסא נוח יותר],
אני רוצה להיות כמו כולם..."

Miki also said that he would get up, leave the classroom, and come back, giving his foot time to rest, or just stand at the end of class.

Several participants had difficulty in self-managing themselves in light of their disability, particularly during days when they had severe pain or emotional difficulty related to their PTSD diagnosis. In these circumstances, some of them chose to stay home and missed their classes.

Sagi reported his need to stay home and self-manage when his pain flared up:

"It's [the knee pain]
Gave me another problem,
There were days when I could not go to school,
I mean, I had days,
Three to four days
That I had to stay home."

"זה [הכאבים בברכיים]
עשה לי בעיה אחרת,
היו ימים שלא יכולתי לנסוע ללימודים,
זאת אומרת, היו לי ימים,
שלושה- ארבעה ימים
שהייתי צריך להישאר בבית."

Similarly, Shahar shared his unwillingness to go to class when felt depressed and did not have the strength to study:

"There were days
when I did not have the strength
to leave the house.
I would only go out to get the V check,
I either had a sad face,
Or would go in and out of class."

"היו ימים
שלא היה לי כוח
לצאת מהבית.
[אני] הייתי יוצא
רק בשביל לקבל את הסימון וי,
[אני] הייתי או עם פנים נפולות,
או יוצא ונכנס מהכיתה."

Several times, Sagi addressed the need to find solutions for those students who were absent from school due to personal, medical circumstances:

"E-learning lectures,
recorded lectures –
I can access them through the computer
And see what is happening in class."

"הרצאות מתוקשבות,
הרצאות מצולמות –
שאני יכול להיכנס אליהם דרך המחשב
ולראות מה קורה בכיתה.
זה מה שהיה חסר לי במיוחד."

That's what I was particularly lacking. "

Here, it is important to point out that before COVID-19, recording of class instruction was uncommon in Israeli HE.

Accessibility and Parking on Campus. Uzi had chosen not to disclose information about his military-related injury and not to apply for any support services. He explained his choice:

*"There was nothing to request
because I found a solution myself.
Maybe if I did not find solutions,
then I would have."*

*"לא היה מה לדרוש
כי מצאתי פתרון בעצמי.
יכול להיות שאם לא הייתי מוצא פתרונות,
אז הייתי עושה."*

Uzi referred to his difficulty in mobility within the campus, the problem of on-campus parking, and the distance from the classrooms in which he studied. He said that while he was aware of the lack of accessibility on his campus, he chose to study there as it was a preferred university. Uzi's solution was to park his car in a place where parking was prohibited, with the understanding that he would later cope with a fine if he received one. He was not the only participant who admitted to parking illegally.

Noa stated that she had some trouble with the on-campus parking as well. In her case, when I asked about formal disclosure as a DIDF veteran with the need for a parking space on campus, she said:

*"I did not think it was possible.
I got the sticker
because my mother is a teacher
in this county (name of the county)."*

*"אני לא חושבת שזה אפשרי.
קבלתי את המדבקה
כי אימא שלי מורה
במועצה (שם המועצה)."*

Although Noa did not closely examine the issue of parking at her college, she decided that DIDF veterans were not allowed to have on-campus parking, and she chose to contact an

outside party and obtain an entry permit using her mother's professional status. Noa, whose walking ability is limited due to fibromyalgia, said that the parking permit helped her a lot since the college buildings were located in a large space, and the permit allowed her to park inside the college not too far from the building where she took her classes. Noa added and described the large campus of the college and the fact that, in many of the buildings, there was a lack of accessibility (only stairs, no elevator).

Sarit also shared some experiences related to her identity as a woman with a physical disability and the parking on-campus issue. During the interview, she described her parking experience at two university campuses where she currently studies. At one location, the disabled parking badge on her car was acceptable, and the guards at the gate let her enter with her car. However, at the other campus, she found it difficult to park her car, as there was no parking lot for students, only for faculty. So each time she came to her classes there, she did not know if she would have a parking spot. Sarit said she prayed a lot before she got to campus and used guided imagery as a way to handle this situation.

Academic Challenges and Self-Strategies

The participants talked about their military-related injuries/illnesses that affected their academic performance, and if and how they encountered any disruption during their studies. Most of them had decided not to disclose their difficulties, the story of their injury/illness during their military service, or their status as DIDF veterans.

Note Taking. Dalit, who was injured in her shoulders during her basic training at the beginning of her military service, shared her strategy of using her iPad during her classes instead of handwriting. The iPad served her well as a tool to take class notes. Following my question

asking if she had tried to apply for disability support and accommodations during her studies, she said:

*"I guess
a computer could have made it very easy (...)
I can actually rest my elbows
Then the shoulder is looser
And more focused
And I can type."*

*"אני מניחה
שמחשב היה יכול מאד להקל (...)
אני יכולה להשעין את המרפקים בעצם
ואז הכתף יותר רפויה
ויותר ממוקדת
ואני יכולה להקליד."*

*"At University
[name of the university]
It's like a class at school,
Chair with a table.
It was very convenient ...
In terms of writing.
Sometimes, I sat and leaned back,
With knees folded,
And I put the iPad on my lap,
And so I typed
to protect the angle of the shoulder."*

*"באוניברסיטה
[שם האוניברסיטה]
זה כמו בכיתה בבית הספר,
כסא עם שולחן.
זה היה מאד נוח...
מבחינת הכתיבה.
לפעמים, ישבתי נשענתי אחורה,
עם הברכיים מקופלות,
והנחתי את האייפד על הברכיים,
וככה הקלדתי
כדי להגן על הזווית של הכתף."*

Dalit said that despite her difficulty in writing, she did not insist on accepting accommodations. During her classes, she decided to use her iPad instead of asking for accommodations in a broader manner which could have made it easier for her both during her classes and in taking the course exams. Dalit's explanation illustrated here the connection between the quality of sitting and writing.

Likewise, Sarit, who was injured in her palms, reported that she has pain when she wrote for a long period. She said that she could take some notes during her classes, but she only summarized the main topics, and mostly focused on the professor, while listening very carefully.

*"I can sum up,
I'm not one to sum it all up,
I summarize the main things,
But mostly I listen in class,
I really, really listen during the class sessions."*

*"אני מצליחה לסכם,
אני לא מאלה שמסכמים ככה את הכל,
אני מסכמת את הדברים העיקריים,
אבל בעיקר אני מקשיבה בשיעורים,
אני מאד מאד מקשיבה בשיעורים."*

Using an iPad was very convenient for Dalit, both in terms of carrying it and in the ability to easily record the course of the lesson. After the lesson ended, she could listen to the recording and complete the writing.

*"I had an iPad,
I just took it in my bag
In order not to carry a lot of weight (...) (...)
in terms of its size and weight,
It was the maximum,
That I could carry with me.
During the lessons,
I would record the lectures
And transcribe them at home
What I did not manage
to type with the iPad during the class."*

*"היה לי אייפד,
לקחתי רק אותו בתיק
כדי לא לשאת הרבה משקל
מבחינת הגודל והמשקל שלו,
זה היה המקסימום,
שיכולתי לשאת איתי.
במהלך השיעורים,
הייתי מקליטה את ההרצאות
ומתמללת בבית
את מה שלא הספקתי
להקליד באייפד בשיעור."*

Rachel said that she turned to her faculty members and asked for their help in light of her difficulty in writing over time:

*"I did not use it
That I'm like a disabled IDF veteran but ...
Almost to all the lecturers
I would turn to them in advance,
Tell them –
'I can get all the presentations'
I would print,
And I would sit
Write about the presentations."*

*"לא השתמשתי בזה
שאני כאילו נכת צה"ל אבל..
כמעט לכל המרצים
הייתי פונה אליהם מראש,
אומרת להם -
'אני יכולה לקבל את כל המצגות!'
[אני] הייתי מדפיסה,
ו[אני] הייתי יושבת
כותבת על המצגות."*

Rachel said she had done this in her undergraduate studies, as well as during her current studies in her Master's degree studies. She stated clearly that she had chosen not to disclose her disability identity as a DIDF veteran. This was in spite of the cases in which her disability identity had been revealed several times during the period of her academic studies (as cited earlier).

Taking Exams. Shahar, who was recently badly injured during a battle and was diagnosed with a physical disability and PTSD, stated:

"I was sitting by myself,
I managed,
I read whatever I could,
And sometimes I arrived a little unprepared (...)
[It requires] a lot of effort
And some of the courses, I just wanted to pass."

"הייתי יושב לבד,
הסתדרתי,
קראתי מה שאפשר,
ולפעמים הגעתי קצת גם לא מוכן (...)
[זה דורש] הרבה מאמץ
וגם חלק מהקורסים
פשוט רציתי, רק לעבור."

Shahar referred to his difficulty in studying, which requires memory abilities, dealing with a lot of information, and writing tasks. At the time of the interview, he was nearing the end of his degree, and in retrospect, despite these efforts, he commented that:

"I would not do that,
Not yet, because again,
I managed.
I'm not comfortable holding this title...
I'm not comfortable having ...
That I will be perceived as...
Sometimes, slip under the radar ... "

"לא הייתי עושה את זה,
עדיין לא, כי שוב,
הצלחתי להסתדר.
פשוט לא נוח לי להחזיק את הטייטל הזה...
לא נוח לי שיהיה לי...
שימסגרו אותי בתור...
לפעמים לחמוק מתחת לרדאר..."

Despite the many difficulties Shahar addressed both in terms of classroom learning, homework preparation, and taking exams, he preferred to "slip under the radar" rather than identify as a student with a disability, or as a DIDF veteran.

Concealment of Military-Related Injury

Disabled IDF veterans report mixed feelings about whether they should disclose that they are disabled veterans to their professors, staff, and peers in their HE setting. Most participants had selected the route of non-disclosure about their military-related injury/illness. They preferred to assimilate on their campus rather than to share their disability identity as DIDF veterans. They wanted to maintain a positive image and ensure effective and easy integration, like they were able-bodied, out of a desire to be like regular students.

In most cases, the participants had managed their self-identity according to the visibility of their disability and their needs during HE. Moreover, some of them distinctly referred to the information about their military-related injury/illness as “private information.”

This is My Private Matter

Participants gave several reasons for not disclosing their disability identity: maintaining their privacy, finding it hard to share their disability identity, and avoiding the title of disabled IDF veterans, or more specifically disabled veterans with PTSD. For example, Yaron cited his privacy as a reason:

“I just don't like to talk about it because it's my private matter.”

“אני פשוט לא אוהב לדבר על זה כי זה ענין פרטי שלי.”

In his remarks, Yaron referred to various circumstances during his studies in which he had dealt with pain during class or struggled to concentrate due to taking the painkillers. He further elaborated:

*“(…) There are clear procedures
What things you need to bring to get
the consideration [accommodations] you ask for
I do not think it has so much value,
And it might even harm (...)
I do not like, for example,
To start opening up and telling
[about] all the things I have
To ordinary people
Whom I need to meet once,
And I'll probably never meet again,
And they need to grant me
something technical.
That's not something I really like to open.”*

*“(…) יש נהלים ברורים
ל-מה אתה צריך להביא כדי לקבל
את ההקלות [התאמות] שאתה מבקש
אני לא חושב שיש לזה כל כך ערך,
ואולי אפילו זה עשוי להזיק (...)
אני לא אוהב, לדוגמא,
להתחיל לפתוח ולספר [על]
את כל הדברים שיש לי
לסתם אנשים
שאני צריך לפגוש פעם אחת,
ולא אפגוש אותם כנראה אף פעם,
וצריכים לאשר לי
איזשהו משהו טכני.
זה לא משהו שאני כל כך אוהב לפתוח אותו.”*

Yaron's words revealed that he views disclosing his identity as a DIDF veteran as potentially harmful. From his perspective, the disability support services, and the

accommodations are perceived as facilitation, as a comfort, to make things easy and not as an equitable service. Finally, his perception of the staff of the disability support office was of ordinary people and not as professionals or meaningful individuals who can assist him.

Like Yaron, Sarit also stated that she did not like to talk about her military-related injury:

*"I tell like (...)
I do not go into too much detail,
do not like too much
to talk about it."*

*"אני מספרת כאילו (...)
לא יותר מדי נכנסת לפרטים,
לא יותר מדי אוהבת
לדבר על זה."*

The discourse around the disability identity and non-disclosure of the disability associated with military service was more difficult in cases of DIDF veterans who were diagnosed with PTSD. Dalit also indicated that she usually had not shared her disability identity with others during her academic studies.

*"(...) on the IDF's disability,
I only tell close friends.
Not in the context of studies,
But just people who know me,
Who accompanied me during the army,
Or really close friends (...)"*

*"(...) על הנכות של צה"ל,
אני מספרת רק לחברים קרובים.
לא בהקשר של לימודים,
אלא פשוט אנשים שמכירים אותי,
שלוו אותי בתקופת הצבא,
או חברים ממש קרובים (...)"*

Despite the functional difficulty in writing by hand, Dalit found it difficult to share the fact that she was a DIDF veteran during her academic studies.

Likewise, Sagi stated that despite his knee injury getting worse and suffering from intense pain, he chose not to disclose:

*"I'm that type,
Who was not exposed to these things,
I do not ask,
Do not demand things.
I mean I get along with what's there
And I know how to thrive it (...)"*

*"אני טיפוס כזה,
שלא נחשף בדברים האלה,
אני כזה שלא מבקש,
לא דורש דברים.
זאת אומרת אני מסתדר עם מה שיש
ואני יודע לצלוח את זה (...)"*

"I believe it is the antithesis

*"אני מאמין שזה אנטייתזה
למה שאני בעצמי."*

of what I am myself.”

Sagi said that he preferred not to reveal the fact that he is a disabled IDF veteran and managed on his own. Moreover, he identifies a request for support as a weakness that turns against his sense of self.

The Difficulty of Disclosing PTSD

In cases of traumatic injuries, the dramatic story of acquiring the impairment may be vital in choosing to disclose or not disclose the story, the diagnoses, or the needs. The participants who were diagnosed with PTSD felt that there was not enough public awareness in general, and specifically at their academic institution, of the difficulties experienced by student veterans with PTSD. Rachel stated:

*"Nowhere do they not understand
what PTSD is.
In the Department of Education,
In the Department of Rehabilitation [of MoD],
In institutions [of higher education].
As if again,
What you do not see, does not exist."*

*"בשום מקום לא מבינים
מה זה פוסט טראומה.
באגף החינוך,
באגף השיקום [של משב"ט],
במוסדות [להשכלה גבוהה].
כאילו שוב,
מה שלא רואים, לא קיים."*

For her part, Rachel shared and proactively informed others about her diagnosis as a disabled veteran with PTSD only during her Master's degree, but not during her undergraduate studies. Rachel addressed the need for service providers to be aware of this population and to give them accommodations without them having to ask for support proactively:

*"Because a person in particular
who is post-traumatic
is not capable ...
[of asking for support/accommodations]."*

*"כי אדם במיוחד
שהוא פוסט טראומתי
לא מסוגל ...
[לבקש עזרה/התאמות]."*

*“You do not see it on him
Nor is it like a hearing disability, physical
limitation,
It's not something that you see.”*

”לא רואים את זה עליו
וגם זה לא כמו
מגבלה שמיעתית,
פיזית-גופנית,
זה לא משהו שרואים.”

*“And it's something very, very disturbing.
Interfering with daily manner.”*

”וזה משהו מאוד מאוד מפריע,
מפריע להתנהלות היום היומית (...).”

Commenting upon the invisibility of his disability and his challenges in HE, Shahar who was recognized as a DIDF veteran with PTSD stated that disclosure was not an option for him:

*“I had a letter
That the psychiatrist wrote for me,
Addressed to the college [name of college],
'Help him with any difficulties
that may arise', etc.
But I have never used it (...)
This title goes with me
To too many places,
I wanted to start with a clean slate in one place.”*

”היה לי מכתב
שהפסיכיאטר כתב לי (...),
לכבוד מכללת [שם המכללה],
’תעזרו לו עם כל הקשיים
שיכולים לצוץ וכו’.
אבל לא השתמשתי בו מעולם (...)
הטייטל הזה הולך איתי
ליותר מידי מקומות,
רציתי במקום אחד לפתוח דף חדש.”

Similar to Shahar, Eran also chose not to self-disclose about his PTSD diagnosis:

*“They knew I had some difficulty
Especially in taking exams.
I brought ...
I had letters prepared in advance
Of certain things (...)
I could have used the letter
the psychiatrist gave me
To explain the situation
To give me another chance,
[I] chose not to use it.
I tried to take care of myself,
Rather than to take care of the environment.”*

”הם ידעו שיש לי איזשהו קושי
בעיקר במבחנים.
הבאתי ...
היו לי מכתבים מוכנים מראש
של דברים מסוימים (...)
יכולתי להשתמש במכתב
שנתן לי הפסיכיאטר
שיסביר את המצב
ושיתנו לי עוד הזדמנות,
[אני] בחרתי לא להשתמש בזה.
אני משתדל לטפל בעצמי,
מאשר לטפל בסביבה.”

In his words, it was Shahar’s desire to integrate and be like everyone else.

Rachel and Michal discussed the role of gender and their disability identity as women with PTSD. Michal said:

*"It always comes down to it somehow
That I have to tell
That I am a disabled IDF veteran
With PTSD,
And people do not know
how to handle it."*

*"תמיד איכשהו זה מגיע לזה
שאני צריכה לספר
שאני נכת צה"ל
עם פוסט טראומה,
ואנשים לא כל כך יודעים
להכיל את זה."*

For both of these students, the disclosure of their disability identity was not a free choice, but rather followed an event that focused on their unique status as women who served as combat soldiers, were injured, and were recognized as DIDF veterans with PTSD.

Disability is a Fluid State

Some other participants stated that they had experienced a change in the medical condition of their military-related injury/illness, and reported an aggravation in chronic pain. Discussing the difficulty to manage on-campus with chronic pain, and having the opportunity to ask for support, some participants explained their choice not to disclose as DIDF-veteran students.

Most of the participants hesitated to disclose their difficulties, they delayed their disclosure or chose not to disclose during their academic studies or chose to be identified with other disabilities. As Michal said:

*"I'm not talking about post-trauma,
I say about the knee injury,
I share what was there if they want,
I do it mostly with groups of the army."*

*"אני לא מדברת על הפוסט טראומה,
אני אומרת על הפציעה בברכיים,
אני משתפת על מה שהיה שם אם הם רוצים,
אני עושה את זה בעיקר עם קבוצות של צבא."*

As a Ph.D. student, Michal was also teaching at her university. Some of her students were soldiers who came to study for an academic degree while they were in their military service. Michal decided to share her disability identity as a DIDF veteran by using a knee injury (which was not recognized by the MoD) that had occurred before her significant injury.

Dalit said that in terms of disclosure to her faculty members, she preferred not to report on her military-related disability, but only about her recent accident and medical information, as this was more urgent for her. Her story is an example of the fluidity of embodiment and the change that can affect the daily functioning of each of us throughout our life. In light of Dalit's recent car accident and severe injury, when I asked her if she had applied for any accommodation services at the disability support office, she replied:

*"The truth is I haven't gotten to that yet.
The accident was recent,
the studies began several weeks ago."*

*"האמת שעדיין לא הגעתי לזה.
התאונה הייתה טריה,
הלימודים התחילו לפני מספר שבועות."*

Dalit recently had begun her Master's degree at a different academic institution than where she had studied for her bachelor's degree. Her discourse in her current studies was in regard to her latest injury and not about her military-related injury. Dalit preferred to first address her physical needs, like entering the campus with her car, and the class location. As a young woman with a disability, Dalit perceived the fluid state of her disability status and how it impacted her daily life in general, and specifically as a student in HE. She admitted that in light of her recent injury, physical disability, and accessibility challenges, she had not turned to the disability support office to apply for any academic accommodations. In addition, she stated very clearly that she did not want others to know about her military-related injury, as she wished to be like any other student.

*"The other injury of the shoulders,
I make every effort in the world
To appear normal,
So they will not see
and they will not know ..."*

*"את הפציעה האחרת של הכתפיים,
אני עושה את כל המאמצים שבעולם
כדי להראות נורמאלית,
ושלא יראו
ושלא ידעו ..."*

Dalit was aware of the disability support services office, as she used their support during her undergraduate studies because she was also diagnosed with a learning disability. Dealing with the recent injury and the physical and emotional strain led Dalit to worry first and foremost about things related to her entry with a vehicle to campus and her ability to get to class:

*“Could very well be
That if there was not all [the last] injury,
[I] might have found out about
the learning disabilities
To get an extension of time in exams.
Then maybe I would have been exposed to all
the other areas [services],
it could be.”*

*”יכול מאוד להיות
שאם לא הייתה כל הפגיעה [האחרונה],
יכול להיות ש[אני] הייתי מבררת על
הלקויות למידה
כדי לקבל הארכת זמן בבחינות.
ואז אולי הייתי נחשפת
לכל שאר התחומים [השירותים],
זה יכול להיות.”*

When we discussed the choice to disclose and apply for disability support services with more than one impairment and specific needs like that for extended time in submitting the course papers, Dalit said that she was too shy to ask for more accommodations at the beginning of her school year and new degree. Dalit's narrative tells a story about the complexities of disability identity and the need to be flexible both personally and systemically – in order to know how to give the most appropriate support service in light of the most current personal struggles and obstacles both concerning physical, environmental barriers, and especially academically.

The disclosure of the participants' disability identity as disabled IDF veterans was found to be more complex and related to other personal characteristics or events that the participants had experienced. Their disability identity disclosure seemed to be fluid and changing.

Selective Disclosure: Disclosure (only) as Students with Disabilities

Most participants moved between their identity as DIDF veterans and their identity as students with learning disabilities or ADHD. Even participants who first stated in the survey that they self-identified as students without disabilities on their campuses, later during the interview

sessions, revealed their academic challenges and needs as students who had other impairments not connected to their recognition as DIDF veterans.

As was noted earlier, in the online survey, six out of 13 participants (four men and two women) had picked the choice of “student without disabilities.” Two of the four men and the two women later in the interview sessions shared that they had been officially diagnosed with LD/ADHD before or during their academic studies. In this sub-section, I present the participants’ shared narratives regarding their first choice to disclose their LD/ADHD symptoms rather than their military-related disability. In most cases, the disclosure as students with learning disabilities came as a result of a particular difficulty or specific situation in their academic education.

Learning Disability as a Common Disability

Today in Israel, a learning disability is the most common disability in the educational system, including HE. That prevalence was also reflected in this study, with nine out of the 13 participants self-identifying themselves as students with LD/ADHD. Most of these participants (7/9) reported that these difficulties occurred before their military service, during primary or secondary school. Only four of them had been officially diagnosed before their military service, whereas the other three were diagnosed just before entering HE or during their had first year as students. In addition, the participants recalled their experiences of having learning difficulties during K-12, before they had been officially diagnosed or received any remedial help. Many participants did not know how to clearly define their learning disability and used the terms of LD/ADHD interchangeably. For example, Shir who had lost her sight during her military service shared her learning disabilities:

"So before the army, at school
Although I had ADHD
I was not recognized [at school]
[they] just accepted
the learning disabilities I have
And I had some kind of accommodations
[in taking exams]:
Extending time, reading out aloud, writing."

"אז לפני הצבא, בבית ספר
אמנם היה לי הפרעות קשב וריכוז
אבל לא הייתי מוכרת [בבית הספר]
[הם] רק הכירו
בלקויות למידה שיש לי
והיו לי סוג של התאמות
[במבחנים]:
הארכת זמן, הקראה, הכתבה."

Navit also had learning difficulties at a young age, but unlike Shir, she was diagnosed during elementary school. Despite this, Navit was not able to specify a diagnosis:

"After second grade,
My mother noticed something was off
And thought to take me for a diagnosis,
and it took her a while.
So only in the fourth grade,
I did a diagnostic test.
Then there was something,
they tried to help ...
Then in 11th grade, they again took me for a
diagnosis and saw the problem
That I'm dyslexic or so called,
I do not remember how it is defined."

"אחרי כיתה ב',
אמא שלי שמה לב לאיזה משהו
וחשבה לקחת אותי לאבחון,
ולקח לה קצת זמן.
אז רק בכיתה ד',
עשיתי אבחון.
ואז היה איזה משהו,
ניסו לעזור ...
ואז בכיתה יא'
שוב לקחו אותי לאבחון
וראו את הבעיה
שאני דיסלקטית או מה שנקרא,
אני לא זוכרת איך מגדירים את זה."

Referring to her academic studies, Navit stated:

"(...) there were lecturers who would
understand,
I do not think they knew
That I am a disabled IDF veteran,
But they knew
That there are people
with learning disabilities in the classroom
And they would stop for them,
And re-explain the subject again
In front of the student."

"(...) היו מרצים שהיו מבינים,
לא נראה לי שהם ידעו
שאני נכת צה"ל,
אבל הם ידעו
שיש אנשים
עם לקויות למידה בכיתה
והם היו עוצרים בשבילם,
וחוזרים ומסבירים שוב את הנושא
מול הסטודנט."

Navit referred to the fact that she was not the only student with a learning disability in the classroom, and that her professors tried to accommodate them.

Dalit was officially diagnosed only during her undergraduate studies after she failed her exam in statistics. Her diagnosis validated her high school experiences:

"(...) It gave me some kind of approval with myself

*That I finally understood
Why it has been so hard for me all those years,
When my girlfriends would do
Everything very easily and very quickly
And I had to stay home for many hours,
And sit down and invest ...
Get help from private teachers
To get a full matriculation certificate."*

*" (...) זה נתן לי מן
אישור כזה עם עצמי
שסוף סוף הבנתי
למה היה לי כל כך קשה כל השנים,
שחברות שלי היו עושות
את הכל מאד בקלות ומאד מהר
ואני צריכה להישאר בבית הרבה שעות,
ולשבת ולהשקיע. ..
להיעזר במורים פרטים
כדי לקבל תעודת בגרות מלאה."*

Sarit indicated that she knew she had a learning disability and was aware of the procedure for getting accommodations. Sarit explicitly indicated that she had applied for accommodations during her academic studies, but as a student with a learning disability and not as a DIDF-veteran woman:

*"I went to do a diagnostic test
as a [woman] with language impairment ...*

*I came knowing that I was inadequate
And I just needed that approval
to get the accommodations,
And during the diagnosing, it came up
That I am also a disabled IDF veteran
and I also have an injury.
I did not come as a disabled veteran and then ask
for a diagnostic test ...
I came as one who has difficulty with English,
Who understands that if I do not get this diagnosis
There is no chance that I will pass the course."*

*"הלכתי לעשות אבחון
כ [אשה] לקויה שפתית ...
באתי בידיעה שאני יודעת שאני לקויה
ואני רק צריכה את האישור הזה
כדי לקבל את ההתאמות,
ותוך כדי האבחון זה עלה
שאני גם נכת צה"ל
ויש לי גם פציעה .
לא באתי כנכה ואז לבקש אבחון ...
באתי כאחות שמתקשה באנגלית,
שמבינה שאם אני לא אקבל את האבחון הזה
אין סיכוי שאני אצליח את הקורס."*

Sarit said that she used to have a diagnosis from a test done 20 years ago, but she had not kept it. So when asked if she had a formal diagnosis, she had replied that she did not have one. Thus, during her past studies, she once again had a diagnostic test to identify her learning difficulties.

Michal, who is now a Ph.D. student, shared that she had turned to the disability support services and used accommodations on her campus only during her undergraduate degree. Even though she is aware that she still needs the support services (especially because of her LD/ADHD) she had not tried to apply for any accommodations or related services.

Selective Disclosing Concerning Academic Tasks. Michal, who was recognized as a disabled veteran woman with PTSD, also described her first disclosure interaction and sharing her learning disability with one of her faculty members:

*"It was right at the beginning
[of undergraduate studies],
When I entered a Political Philosophy class
and wanted to know –
what Plato would say
about learning disabilities,
Like how he would treat such people?"*

*"זה היה ממש בהתחלה
[של הלימודים לתואר ראשון],
כשנכנסתי לשיעור מחשבה מדינית של פילוסופיה,
ורציתי לדעת –
"מה אפלטון יגיד על לקויות למידה,
כאילו איך הוא היה מתייחס לאנשים כאלה?"*

*And he [the lecturer] said
He had never been asked that question,
And we started talking about my story like that,
And his level of solidarity
Was very big for me."*

*והוא [המרצה] אמר
שאף פעם לא שאלו אותו את השאלה הזאת,
והתחלנו ככה לדבר על הסיפור שלי,
ורמת הסולידריות שלו
הייתה מאוד גדולה איתי."*

Michal stated that she had applied for disability support services and asked for accommodations only after she had shared her story with that faculty member.

*"I approached one of the faculty members,
And he told me there was 'Social Involvement,'
[Support Center]
To go there and
Find out what I deserve."*

*ניגשתי לאחד המרצים,
והוא אמר לי שיש מעורבות חברתית,
[מרכז התמיכה]
ללכת לשמה,
לברר מה מגיע לי."*

This narrative also demonstrates how the support centers at Israel's various institutions have varied names. Michal also added that she had not shared the same information with any other faculty members.

Sarit recounted the accommodations of recorded materials for the English exam that she had previously received when she was studying at a vocational training institution more than 20 years ago:

"In English, I received [accommodations] to listen with a Walkman I had to bring the Walkman, Back then, there was not all the internet and all the software as possible today, And I just heard the test on the Walkman, And it was the first time That I passed an exam in English."

"באנגלית, קיבלתי [התאמות] לשמוע ממש עם ווקמן הייתי צריכה להביא ווקמן, אז לא היה את כל האינטרנט וכל התוכנות שאפשר היום, ופשוט [אני] שמעתי את המבחן על ווקמן, וזה היה הפעם הראשונה שהצלחתי במבחן באנגלית."

In her current studies, Sarit's main challenge was in writing class papers, especially more demanding papers like research papers.

Miki admitted that he learned to manage his ADHD symptoms by taking medications:

"For me, I feel like I'm in a normal place And it gets quiet ... The fluorescents bother me, The noise they make ... The air conditioners, everything disrupts my concentration. I need a noise that will mask... Music, things like that, And Ritalin puts you in a kind of... I feel like in an aquarium, It's something that envelops you And screens the noises for you, And it's easier for you to focus on the things you hear, And it makes learning easier for you."

"מבחינתי אני מרגיש שאני נמצא במקום רגיל ונהיה שקט... מפריע לי הפלורוסנטים, הרעש שהם עושים... המזגנים, כל דבר מפריע לי להתרכז. אני צריך רעש שימסך לי... מוזיקות, דברים כאלה, והריטלין מכניס אותך למעין... אני מרגיש כאילו באקווריום כזה, זה משהו שעוטף אותך וממסך לך את הרעשים, ויותר קל לך להתמקד בדברים שאתה שומע, וזה מקל עלייך את הלמידה."

Other participants also shared their use of medications like Ritalin. Eran pointed out that the MoD does not provide this medication.

Selective Disclosure, Peer Support, and Group Learning

Several participants shared that they asked their peers for their class notes (handwritten or computer files) to complete the material learned in class. As Noa said:

*"Today everything is on the computers,
you click.
You just ask, and they send you a summary."*

*"היום כבר הכול במחשבים,
עושים קליק.
את רק מבקשת, ושולחים לך סיכום."*

Shir, who has both a vision disability and ADHD, stated how she partially relied on her peers' notes:

*"In the more computational lessons,
I take notes.
Exercises, [I] solve for myself
While he [the lecturer] explains an exercise,
This is what I do for myself."*

*"שיעורים שהם יותר חישוביים,
אני רושמת לעצמי את ההערות,
תרגילים, [אני] פותרת לעצמי
תוך כדי שהוא [המרצה] מסביר איזשהו תרגיל,
זה אני עושה לעצמי."*

*Lessons that are more text-heavy,
More summaries to be made,
I write a note here and there
To stay focused,
But not really to sum up.
Subsequent summaries for multi-texts
I just get off the internet,
I photocopy my classmates' notes (...)"*

*שיעורים שהם יותר טקסט,
יותר סיכומים שצריך לעשות,
זה אני רושמת הערה פה הערה שם
כדי להישאר מרוכזת,
אבל לא באמת בשביל לסכם.
סיכומים אחר כך לטקסט רב
אני פשוט מוציאה מהאינטרנט,
מצלמת מחברים לכיתה (...)"*

The study group was a strategy used by several DIDF-veteran students. Sarit, for example, indicated that only her peers knew about her LD. During their studies together and practice for their exams, Sarit assumed the role of the student who read aloud:

*"I read aloud!
Reading in the heart (silent reading) is
difficult for me,
I read aloud.
When we study in groups before exams,
When we study together, I usually read."*

*"אני קוראת בקול רם!
לקרוא בלב (קריאה דמומה) קשה לי,
אני קוראת בקול רם.
כשאנחנו לומדים בקבוצות לפני מבחנים,
כשאנחנו לומדים ביחד, בדרך כלל, אני המקריאה."*

Other circumstances that caused the participants to reveal their learning disabilities

occurred during group learning with peers. As Dalit and Sarit reported:

*“About the story of my learning disabilities
I tell,
when learning sessions are organized,
So I do some sort of expectations
and [I] explain (...),
And that's only when I feel comfortable enough,
And it is a small group.”*

*“על הסיפור של לקויות הלמידה
אני מספרת,
כשמתארגנים מפגשים של למידה,
אז אני עושה
מין תיאום ציפיות
ו[אני] מסבירה (...),
וזה רק כשאני מרגישה מספיק בנוח
וזאת קבוצה קטנה.”*

The disclosure to the study group members provided the participants with a significant source of support.

Conclusions

This research question sought to discover how DIDF veterans managed their disability identity on their campuses. The data suggest that DIDF veterans bring with them different experiences of living with a disability and different perspectives of self on disability identity to HE institutions. Moreover, this can involve self-perceptions, views towards disability disclosure, and support seeking. Additionally, many DIDF veterans may be unaware of their rights as a student with a disability in HE.

In general, the findings in regard to this research question, suggest that: (a) the participants' disability identity is complex, both in Israeli society and on-campus. Visibility of an impairment is not a fixed category and being a DIDF veteran includes social stigma and ethos that can impact the DIDF veteran's willingness to disclose; (b) disability identity management strategies take many forms beyond simple disability disclosure or concealment. Many of the participants preferred to disclose their LD or ADHD over a military-related disability because LD/ADHD is a common justification for asking for support services; (c) participants' disability identity management strategies are varied, and they referred both to environmental barriers as

well as academic practices and needs; (d) several participants found it challenging to disclose their military-related injury and to ask for support from the disability support centers; (e) self-advocating and self-awareness are important components in searching for support resources. Several participants stated that they did not know about the available support resources on their campus.

In general, disability identity management was found to be related to the way that the participants perceived their impairment, experience in HE, and their needs as students, especially following the way their impairment impacted their learning practices and overall needs as students. See Figure 7 which summarizes the findings of this research question.

Figure 7

Disability Identity Management Strategies

The Complexity of Disability Identity and Visibility	Disclosure as Disabled IDF Veteran	Almost Passing: Self-Management as a Strategy	Concealment of Military-Related Injury	Selective Disclosure: Disclosure (only) as students with disabilities
(In)visibility: Accounts of Embodiment	Formal Disclosure and Support Seeking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration Office • Public Safety Unit • Program Administrative Staff 	Environmental Challenges and Self Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting in Class • Accessibility and Parking On-Campus 	This is my Private Matter	Learning Disability as a Common Disability
Group Affiliation, Ethos, and Social Identity	Informal Disclosure By Situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Staff • Faculty • Peers 	Academic Challenges and Self Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note Taking • Taking Exams 	The Difficulty of Disclosing the PTSD	Selective Disclosure and Peers' Support, and Groups Learning
Time of Injury and Disability Disclosure			Disability is a Fluid State	

Research Question 4: Resources of Support

DIDF veteran students' experience in Israeli HE was rich and varied. In the previous sections, the research participants' challenges, needs, and barriers, as well as their disclosure strategies were analyzed. This section discusses the support resources the participants used during their academic journey (current and past academic studies) on-campus and off-campus, as well as their perceptions of those supports (positive or negative).

On-Campus Support Resources

There are several significant agents providing on-campus formal support to students. On-campus resources the participants approached in search of support included the disability support and public safety offices, in addition to other administrative staff such as the program secretary or registration office, faculty, and peers.

Disability Support Services Office

The disability support services center is the institution's primary agent for ensuring that students can access and participate in all aspects of campus life, including academic learning. The disability support services office helps students with different impairments based on medical condition reports as well as students with a diagnosed learning disability or ADHD. However, there is no office of support that provides specific services for IDF veterans or DIDF veterans (such the Veterans Resource Center in HE institutions in the US).

The disability support services also serve as a mediating factor between the students with disabilities and various entities at the college/university (faculty, secretaries, and others). These offices provide several services such as accommodations, assistive technology, workshops, emotional support, and assistance with situations involving the academic and administrative staff.

Most of the support used by the participants was in the context of accommodations for course assignments, and particularly for exams. Eight participants (Yaron, Shir, Dalit, Eran, Sarit, Rachel, Navit, Michal) applied for accommodations and other services from the disability support services office at different times in their academic studies (past and current studies). However, only two of them (Yaron and Shir) applied for support services in light of a need that was related directly to their military-related injury/illness. For many of the participants, the fact that the injury/illness event occurred during adulthood may have been the reason behind their decision not to seek support in a formal and declared manner. As Shahar, who was recently injured on the battlefield, said:

*"I was incapable, nor did I want to.
[Ask for help from the support office]
I think it's harder to
Get used to asking for help
When the injury occurs
in the middle of life."*

*"אני גם לא הייתי מסוגל וגם לא רציתי.
[לבקש עזרה ממשרד התמיכה]
אני חושב שיותר קשה
להתרגל לבקש עזרה
כשהפציעה באה
באמצע החיים."*

Shahar was aware of the disability support services and that it was his responsibility to contact them. Likewise, Sagi claimed that he chose not to seek any support, as this was his impairment, and he felt that no one should help him to deal with it.

Six participants (Dalit, Eran, Sarit, Rachel, Navit, Michal) formally applied for accommodations and services from the disability support services office in light of their LD/ADHD symptoms during their academic studies at different times and settings. As was mentioned before, only one participant (Miki) out of the total nine participants who stated they had LD or ADHD did not apply for any support services from the disability support office as he preferred to manage on his own.

Some participants used the disability support services only at one institution (in their undergraduate studies), while others also applied and requested accommodations later in their academic studies (for a Master's degree or another program at another institution). It is worth noting that throughout almost all the interviews, the participants used the word "easements"/"considerations" (הקלות), instead of the correct term "accommodations" (התאמות). The common use of this word in the Hebrew language may be related to the prejudice dominant public attitude toward academic accommodations, especially for students with learning disabilities or attention deficit disorder.

Service Awareness. Only a few participants were aware of the availability of the disability support services and checked what support services they could receive before starting their academic studies. Other participants like Miki were not aware of these services:

*"No, there was no information ...
I did not have information
on their accessibility website,
I did not know anything
about accessibility..."*

*"לא, לא היה מידע...
לא היה לי מידע
על אתר נגישות שלהם,
לא ידעתי כלום
על נגישות..."*

*To this day, I do not know
If there is any accessibility office or not
(....) I did not encounter that."*

*עד היום אני לא יודע
אם יש שמה בכלל משרד נגישות או לא
(....) אני לא נפגשתי עם זה."*

Most of the participants stated that they did not receive any guidance or information about the availability of support resources from the MoD before they started their studies. Uri also said with a smile:

*"I did not even know it existed.
Good to know, for the next degree ..."*

*"לא ידעתי שזה קיים אפילו.
טוב לדעת, לתואר הבא ..."*

Other participants claimed that they had learned about the availability of the disability support services office only after they had experienced some difficulty that arose during their

academic studies or through another person like a fellow student or a faculty member, or by seeing some information on the institution's website. For example, Yaron said that he learned about the disability support services from one of his friends on campus:

*“At the university, in my studies [in the past],
I happened to find out,
I do not remember even how I discovered that
there is such a thing at all...
I think a student who was my friend,
Who had a learning disability told me
That there was such a thing
So I said I would check.
Maybe I can get assistance from them too.”*

*“באוניברסיטה, בלימודים שלי [בעבר],
במקרה גיליתי,
לא זוכר איך אפילו גיליתי
שיש דבר כזה בכלל...
אני חושב שסטודנטית חברה שהייתה לי,
שהייתה לקוית למידה אמרה לי
שיש דבר כזה
אז אמרתי שאבדוק.
אולי אם אני גם יכול להיעזר בזה.”*

Likewise, Michal said that only after sharing her complex disability with one of her faculty members at the beginning of her academic studies did she apply for accommodations from the disability support service office on her campus:

*“Everything was so big for me,
and I got lost here at first,
And I went to one of the lecturers
And he told me there is ‘social involvement’
[This is the name of the disability support office
on that campus]
To go there,
To find out what I can have (...)”*

*“הכל היה לי גדול כזה,
והלכתי לאיבוד פה בהתחלה,
וניגשתי לאחד המרצים
והוא אמר לי שיש ‘מעורבות חברתית’
[זה השם של יחידת מרכז התמיכה
באותו קמפוס]
ללכת לשמה,
לברר מה מגיע לי (...)”*

Regarding the availability of the information on the academic institution website, Dalit said in the second interview session that:

*“Only after we talked
Did I think there might be such a site,
I did not imagine that there is such a site,
Because there are so many tabs
On the university's website ...”*

*“רק אחרי שדיברנו
בכלל חשבתי שיכול להיות שיש אתר כזה,
לא תיארתי לעצמי שיש אתר כזה,
כי יש כל כך הרבה לשוניות
באתר של האוניברסיטה ...”*

Some participants shared other circumstances of how they found out about the disability support office services. Like many other participants, Noa had not applied for any support services and tried to manage by herself. However, as she shared the loss of her spouse in a car accident, she said that at that time, many people on her campus approached her and offered support. That's when she learned about disability support services. Following the loss of her spouse, Noa took a break for one semester from her studies. She planned to register for the next semester and change to another discipline. She said that her awareness of the disability support services will most likely serve her in her future studies.

Despite his lack of familiarity with the support offices at the beginning of his studies, Uzi said that he had an indirect connection with this office as part of his volunteering activity on his campus:

*"About the middle of the school program
[I was exposed to the support office],
But not due to my disability,
but because I volunteered at the Clinic
for the Rights of People with Disabilities
... and then I heard about it."*

*"בערך באמצע הלימודים
[נחשפתי למשרד התמיכה],
אבל לא עקב נכותי,
אלא כי התנדבתי בקליניקה
לזכויות אנשים עם מוגבלות
... ואז שמעתי על זה."*

Some participants who had experienced post-secondary studies before their current academic studies had some knowledge about support services and accommodations. For example, Yaron claimed that he received the accommodations he needed without any difficulty at his current institution since he brought a certificate he had received from the university where he had previously studied. Other participants also stated that their accommodations certificates from their former post-secondary education institutions served them well in their current studies. Participants who had a prior higher education background were generally more aware of the accessibility issues and the disability support services and had better skills of self-advocacy.

Eran, for example, who used the disability support service in his pre-academic program, thoroughly checked his eligibility for accommodations:

*"Before I started studying
I checked what the accommodations were
And how I could produce them."*

*"לפני שהתחלתי ללמוד
בדקתי מה ההתאמות
ואיך אני יכול לייצר אותן."*

*"I brought a certificate for the exams
so that I would have accommodations,
I have all the accommodations."*

*"הבאתי אישור לבחינות
שיהיה לי התאמות,
יש לי את כל ההתאמות."*

The accommodations Eran described included disregarding spelling errors, extending test time, writing on a computer, and testing orally.

Dalit had started her Master's studies shortly before the interview. She was familiar with the disability support services office due to her shoulder injury during her military service.

However, a more recent injury made her concerned first and foremost about her physical accessibility and mobility:

*"I got to the disability department
Of the more physical impairments,
And there I got permits
To get subsidized tutoring for learning
And also, the accessibility of classrooms,
i.e., by the next semester,
All the classes will be tailored for me.
They will bring classes closer (...)"*

*"הגעתי לאגף של הנכויות
של המגבלות הפיזיות יותר,
ושם קיבלתי אישורים
לקבל שיעורי עזר מסובסדים למידה
וגם הגנשה של כיתות,
כלומר, בסמסטר הבא כבר
יתאימו את כל הכיתות אליי,
יקרבו כיתות (...)"*

*"It could very well be
If not for the [last] injury,
I might have found out
about the learning disabilities
To get an extension of time in exams.
Then maybe I would have been exposed
To all the other areas
[additional accommodations]."*

*"יכול מאוד להיות
שאם לא כל הפציעה [האחרונה],
יכול להיות שהייתי מבררת
על הלקויות למידה
כדי לקבל הארכת זמן בבחינות
ואז אולי הייתי נחשפת
לכל שאר התחומים...
[ההתאמות הנוספות]."*

Dalit expressed her plans and next steps for using more support services in her new academic setting.

Even some participants who were aware of the disability services office on their campus sometimes were not aware of the specific services they needed. For example, Shir stated that her first semester in her prior academic institution had been the most challenging concerning her disability needs:

*"I think that there it was the hardest part
Concerning accessibility
And understanding what I needed.
Because let's say at the university
[name of the university]
They were very nice
They said,
'Everything you need, we'll bring you.'
That's nice, but I do not know what I need.
I'm newly blind,
I do not know,
I have no blind friends,
I did not come from a setting
[of blind people],
Like it's completely new to me."*

*"אני חושבת ששם היה הכי קשה
מהבחינה הזאת של ההנגשה
ולחבין בכלל גם מה אני צריכה.
כי נגיד באוניברסיטת
[שם האוניברסיטה]
היו מאוד נחמדים'
אמרו,
'כל דבר שאת צריכה, אנחנו נביא לך'.
שזה נחמד, אבל אני לא יודעת מה אני צריכה.
אני עיוורת חדשה,
אני לא מכירה,
אין לי חברים עיוורים,
אני לא באתי ממסגרת
[של אנשים עיוורים],
כאילו זה חדש לי לחלוטין."*

Shir needed assistive technology to support herself during her class sessions both for nearsighted and farsighted vision. However, she was not initially aware that these were the proper accommodations for her situation. She elaborated:

*“Now, I already know what to ask for
 Even before [the beginning of the semester].
 So, first of all, at the university
 I turn to the accessibility department.
 [I] send them the courses
 That I'm going to be [studying],
 And they take care of it.
 Basically, when I get to the first class
 I already have a magnifying device waiting for me.
 It awaits me in class,
 A [magnifying] device with a laptop,
 Which is waiting there for my use,
 And I do not have to bring anything,
 It's already there.”*

“עכשיו אני כבר יודעת לבקש דברים
 כבר לפני זה [התחלת הסמסטר].
 אז קודם כל באוניברסיטה
 אני פונה למדור נגישות,
 [אני] שולחת להם את הקורסים
 שאני הולכת להיות [ללמוד],
 והם כבר דואגים.
 בעצם שאני מגיעה לשיעור הראשון
 כבר יש לי שם מכשיר הגדלה שמחכה לי.
 מגיע לי לכיתה,
 מכשיר [הגדלה] עם מחשב נייד,
 שמחכה לי שם לשימוש שלי,
 ואני לא צריכה להביא כלום,
 זה פשוט נמצא שם.”

Shir referred to a closed-circuit television (CCTV) device that enlarges either the classroom board or the screen of the classroom presentations, as well as printed texts and digital books

Exam Accommodations, Physical Environment, and Technology. Disability support services on most academic campuses provide services both for course activities and home studying. However, most of the academic accommodations required by the participants were for their exams. Most of the participants who were diagnosed with LD/ADHD were aware of the support services and accommodations for which they were eligible. The participants discussed their use of various accommodation services that included the ability to take exams orally, use a computer instead of handwriting answers, have a text read aloud, use dictation, receive extra time, take an exam at a later date, and photocopy classmates' notes and summaries before an exam.

Dalit indicated that in studying for her bachelor's degree, the disability support services office personnel were aware of her military-related disability, along with her needs as a student with a learning disability:

"The fact that I am a disabled IDF veteran
 Was expressed in the fact that ...
 The exams themselves.
 In terms of easements
 In case I needed to type the test ...
 Because God forbid [shoulder] dislocation
 I'll have to use a computer
 Or talk to someone who will write for me. "

"העובדה שאני נכת צה"ל
 באה לידי ביטוי מהבחינה הזו של ...
 המבחנים עצמם,
 מבחינת ההקלות,
 במקרה שאצטרך להקליד במבחן ...
 בגלל חס וחלילה פריקה
 אני אצטרך להיעזר במחשב
 או לדבר עם מישהו שהוא יכתוב עבורי."

Dalit said she never had to use this service as she did not have any shoulder dislocates during that time. She added that a computer as an accommodation service could have greatly facilitated her exam taking. She indicated that she used to type on her iPad in light of her difficulty writing for long periods.

Following the recommendation Michal received from one of her professors, she applied for exam accommodations regarding her learning disability needs. She also received the ability to take an oral exam as her accommodation instead of writing her exams by hand.

Eran too had the option to take an oral exam, and in his case, he could verbally explain his answers instead of sketching some of the exam tasks. The value of this accommodation and its contribution to a student like Michal is given in the following example:

"One day I did a closed-response exam,
 I got a 60 – it's a subject I'm a champion at.
 I went to the lecturer and said that I had an oral
 [exam accommodation] and so on.
 We did an oral exam, and I got a 90.
 He told me, 'That's just crazy.'
 I told him, 'Yes, that's probably my impairment,
 That I fail to express myself in writing.'"

"יום אחד עשיתי בחינה אמריקאית,
 קיבלתי 60 זה מקצוע שאני אלופה בו.
 ניגשתי למרצה ואמרתי שיש לי [התאמות]
 להיבחנות] בעל פה וכיו.
 עשינו את הבחינה בע"פ וקיבלתי 90.
 הוא אמר לי, 'זה פשוט מטורף.'
 אמרתי לו, 'כן, זה כנראה הלקות שלי,
 שאני לא מצליחה לבטא את עצמי בכתב.'"

Michal and Eran were the only ones who spoke about the option of oral exam accommodation. Rachel applied for disability services and was diagnosed only after she had some difficulties in taking exams. Although she remembers having difficulties in school, she

stated that she was not so aware that there she had any real problem like LD/ADHD. When we discussed the available exam accommodation formats, Rachel said she was not aware of the oral examination format.

After Yaron became aware of the existence of the disability support services office on his campus, he applied for exam accommodations. The support given to Yaron was very unique and was tailored to his personal needs. He received accommodations for his military-related injury in light of his pain and difficulty in sitting and writing, not because of a learning disability.

Yaron explained that prolonged sitting during a test and the angle of sitting in the classroom chairs while he was writing made it difficult for him, causing him severe pain.

*“Because, at the end of the day,
I suffered a lot while taking exams...
So, I just approached it [the support office]
And since then, I know that such a thing exists,
And to look for it when I got to [my current]
college.”*

*”כי בסופו של דבר,
הייתי מאד סובל במבחנים...
אז פשוט ניגשתי לזה [למשרד תמיכה]
ומאז ידעתי שבכלל קיים דבר כזה,
ולחפש את זה גם כשהגעתי למכללה
[שאני לומד בה עכשיו].”*

The exam accommodation that was given to Yaron, to take an exam while using a computer, also meant taking it in a separate classroom with more comfortable chairs and allowing him to have extra time (even though he admitted he did not need it). Extra time to write an exam is usually the most common accommodation given.

Several participants recounted that they had received accommodations for taking exams in particular courses that were tougher for them. For example, Sarit received reading aloud accommodations in English (which is a compulsory course in all academic institutions in Israel)

*" I received support in English.
That was really where the difficulty was (...)
I have a linguistic impairment,
especially with languages
So in English, I received [accommodation]
to hear (...) with a Walkman
I had to bring a Walkman,
Back then, we didn't have the internet
and all the software that is there today,
And I just listened to the exam on my Walkman
And that was the first time
I passed the English exam (...)"*

*"קיבלתי עזרה באנגלית.
שזה היה פה באמת הקושי (...)
יש לי ליקוי שפתי,
בעיקר לשפות
אז באנגלית קיבלתי [התאמות]
לשמוע (...) עם ווקמן
הייתי צריכה להביא ווקמן,
אז לא, היה את כל האינטרנט
וכל התוכנות שיש היום,
ופשוט שמעתי את המבחן על ווקמן
וזה היה הפעם הראשונה
שהצלחתי במבחן באנגלית (...)"*

Sarit spoke about accommodations she received during her studies about 20 years ago.

She emphasized that in her current studies, she also uses similar accommodations (screen reading technology – text to speech) but again, only for her English course assignments and exams:

*"Regarding reading
Only in English,
I do get the easements
[accommodations]*

*"לגבי הקראה
רק באנגלית,
אני מקבלת את ההקלות
[התאמות]*

*Because that's where
It's most important for me ..."*

*כי שם זה בעצם
הכי חשוב לי.."*

Another subject that several participants struggled with was statistics. Courses in statistics might be even more challenging for students with learning disabilities, and especially for students diagnosed with dyscalculia. Dalit described her experience of being diagnosed with a learning disability and its connection to her course of statistics:

*"Academically, I have always had difficulty,
I was diagnosed [as a student with a learning disability]
only at university
When I failed for the first time
A statistics exam,
So I did not understand what was going on,
I decided to finally have a diagnostic test (...)"*

*"מבחינה לימודית היה לי תמיד קושי,
אובחנתי [כלקויית למידה]
רק באוניברסיטה
כשלא הצלחתי בפעם הראשונה
לעבור את המבחן בסטטיסטיקה,
אז לא הבנתי מה קורה,
החלטתי לעשות סוף סוף אבחון (...)"*

Once she was diagnosed, Dalit received a host of services, including time extension during exams with the possibility to leave the classroom during them. She was accommodated in a small quiet room with fewer students during exams, with the possibility of having someone write for her if her shoulder was problematic during the exam. However, this holistic approach was prescribed only if she was having physical problems (shoulder dislocations), and not regularly. This meant that if she was having difficulties and pain, she was supposed to ask for the examiner's assistance.

Mentors, Workshops, and Reinforcement Classes. Several participants shared that they were registered for some workshops on learning strategies, time management, and academic skills that were offered by the disability support services on their campuses. Michal mentioned her attendance in such a workshop, but she stated her disappointment:

*"It was suitable for everyone,
I mean,
It was not specific to me. "*

*"זה היה מותאם לכולם,
זאת אומרת,
זה לא היה משהו שהוא ספציפית לי."*

Dalit's experience, however, was different:

*"Workshops have been offered to me, a lot.
I went to all of them,
One-on-one individual lectures,
On how to deal with my specific disabilities
Following the diagnosis
and the diagnostic test results in itself,
I sat down with a teacher who specializes in this
(...)
And he sat together with the diagnosis
and together I got the techniques
that were more appropriate for me in learning."*

*"סדנאות כן הוצעו לי, הרבה.
הלכתי לכולן,
הרצאות פרטניות של אחד על אחד,
של כיצד להתמודד עם הלקויות הספציפיות שלי
בהתאמה לאבחון
ולממצאים באבחון עצמו,
ממש ישבתי עם מרצה שמתמקד בזה (...)*

*וישב יחד עם האבחון
וביחד קיבלתי את הטכניקות
שיותר מתאימות לי בלמידה."*

*"In terms of statistics,
[We were offered to study in]
very small classes for reinforcement
In addition to the regular classes,
Practice classes too."*

*"מבחינת הסטטיסטיקה,
הציעו לנו [ללמוד ב]
כיתות מאד קטנות של תגבור
בנוסף לשיעורים הרגילים,
גם שיעורי תרגול."*

Along with these services, some of the participants shared their experiences with private lessons (by a faculty member) or academic mentorship (by students) projects on their campuses. Four of the eight participants who applied for formal support from the disability support services office used the assistance of an academic mentor. In most cases, this assistance was provided by another student on campus.

Dalit shared that in addition to exam accommodations, workshops, and some private lessons on campus, she had also received an academic mentor. She became aware of this service only in her current graduate studies, as the service was not available at her previous academic institution. Dalit emphasized that in her undergraduate studies, she read the available Hebrew translations of the academic articles rather than the original ones in English.

Academic institutions are not obligated by law to provide mentoring services; therefore, in some academic institutions, this service does not exist. Shir explained how she overcame this obstacle:

“By and large, there is no mentorship service at the university [Name of the university] So, basically, in terms of academia, I'm not getting a mentor. This tutor, I took from the Ministry of Defense, She is supposedly under the heading of personal mentorship That disabled IDF veterans usually receive. The purpose of this type of mentor is to Take me out, Let me have someone to talk to, Like a kind of companion mentor. So I asked for it, Just for my studies.”

”בגדול אין שירות חונכים באוניברסיטה [שם האוניברסיטה] כך שבעצם מבחינת האקדמיה, אני לא מקבלת חונכת. החונכת הזאת [שיש לה כעת], אני לקחתי אותה ממשרד הביטחון, היא כביכול תחת הכותרת של חונכות אישית שבדרך כלל נכי צה”ל מקבלים אותה. המטרה של חונכת מסוג זה היא להוציא אותי החוצה, שיהיה לי עם מי לדבר, כמו סוג של חונכת חברה. אז אני ביקשתי אותה, פשוט בשביל הלימודים.”

Later when Shir moved to study at another academic institution, she again applied for the mentorship service from the disability support services office. At that time, she usually got

mentorship support from the MoD. Since there was no mentor service available, a contract between the disability support office staff and the MoD staff produced the solution. Then Shir received the same female student she already knew as her mentor and whose company she loved. That student was assigned to her by the MoD with the title of “personal mentor” or “social mentor,” as Shir referred to it.

Navit stated that she had received her student mentor from the NII through the disability support services on her campus, especially for her English classes. Unlike Shir’s good experience, Navit did not create a good personal connection with her first student mentor and, therefore, felt that the mentorship did not contribute to her academic success. Navit explained that she did not feel free enough to accept her mentor's support, especially for her difficulty in understanding the class assignments. Only later, during her second year, with a new mentor, did Navit feel the contribution of mentorship to her success:

*"In the second year,
I found someone I felt more connected to,
And she really really helped me
And explained to me in-depth
What the lecturers wanted from me."*

*"בשנה השנייה,
מצאתי מישהי שהתחברתי אליה יותר,
והיא באמת באמת עזרה לי
והסבירה לי לעומק
מה המרצים רוצים ממני."*

These two examples illustrate the importance of the interpersonal relationship between the student with the disability and the mentor who supports them in order for the service to result in academic success and student satisfaction.

Perception of Service and Experience of Use. The experiences of the eight participants that used the disability support services were mixed (positive and negative), and there were even several students who discussed both experiences as beneficial support and poor support. Below, I will present some representative samples of the variety of these experiences.

Beneficial and Inclusive Support. Several participants shared their positive experiences and level of satisfaction regarding the services they received and the disability support services staff's attention to their various needs. Participants shared their positive feelings concerning the value of the staff's support, their sensitivity, professional treatment, and the personal attention they received from them. Eran, for example, spoke about the personal attention that he received, especially in his previous higher education experience:

*“An attentive ear when you need it,
Because you could walk into a room
and say something was bothering you
And you did not need [to give] too many
explanations,
They know that you have a problem
and it needs to be addressed,
Nobody cares*

*”אוזן קשבת כשאתה צריך,
כי יכולת להיכנס לחדר
ולהגיד שמשוה מפריע לך
ולא היית צריך [לתת] יותר מידי הסברים,
ידעו שיש לך איזושהי בעיה
וצריך לטפל בה,
לא אכפת לאף אחד*

*What happened, what did not happen (...)
They treated me like a human being
Who has certain needs,
They invited me to things
They were aware of it [PTSD] (...)*

*מה קרה מה לא קרה (...)
הם התנייחו אליי כעל אדם
שיש לו צרכים מסוימים,
הם הזמינו אותי לדברים
הם היו מודעים לזה [פוסט-טראומה] (...)*

The significance of the support service was the staff's sensitive care. Eran rated his level of satisfaction with the disability support services office as "good," and he added:

*“The fact that you see that they understand
That you are not a regular student,
And they make the connections by themselves.
Like, they realize you cannot be here now
Because you're going to treatment.”*

*”העובדה שאתה רואה שהם מבינים
שאתה לא סטודנט רגיל,
והם עושים את החיבורים לבד.
כאילו, הם מבינים שאתה לא יכול להיות עכשיו
כי אתה הולך לטיפול.”*

Empathy and understanding, as Eran stated, were very important for many of the participants. Other participants positively noted the availability of the disability support services office staff. The office personnel offered Shir information and assistance regarding the availability of her specific service (CCTV), and she helped to coordinate its delivery to her

class. She noted that learning materials, such as accessible digital textbooks, were supplied very quickly.

<i>"In addition to CCTV, I wrote that I also needed the accessible books that should be sent to me, And I received an email yesterday ... I mean, last week I did not have The accessible books. Yesterday, I received an email and I read it as is: 'Hey Shir, I ordered the books,' And I got an answer that two existed, 'I'll get them to you right away.'"</i>	<i>"בנוסף לטמ"ס, כתבתי שאני צריכה גם את הספרים מוגשים שישלחו לי, וקיבלתי אתמול מייל... זאת אומרת, שבוע שעבר לא היה לי את הספרים מוגשים, אתמול, קיבלתי מייל ואני מקריאה אותו כלשונ 'היי שיר, הזמנתי את הספרים, וקיבלתי תשובה ששניים קיימים, מיד אעביר אלייך.'"</i>
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Shir said that all services, reading-aloud, text-to-speech technology, and CCTV were very important for her. She was appreciative of the fact that all these technologies were already set up for her in the classroom, and she did not have to worry about carrying or setting them up.

Dalit summarized her overall experience with the disability support services and referred to both her military-related disability, as well as her learning disability:

<i>"I think it helped me a lot Make the most of it. Given the state of learning disabilities and the physical limitations ... They really went towards me and it has given me some sense of security that there is someone to turn to, That there is someone there to turn to who can help. I received tools for life, under individual guidance That suited me, the tools of how to learn</i>	<i>"אני חושבת שזה מאד עזר לי למצות את המקסימום שאפשר. בהתחשב בהינתן המצב של לקויות הלמידה והמגבלה הפיזית... מאד הלכו לקראתי וזה כבר נתן איזשהי תחושת ביטחון שיש למי לפנות, שיש שם מישהו לפנות אליו שיכול לעזור. קיבלתי כלים לחיים, בהדרכה הפרטנית שהתאימו לי את הכלים של איך ללמוד."</i>
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Here, again, the staff attitude and personal attention made the experience meaningful. From an administrative and logistical point of view, participants mentioned the good service they had received when moving from one academic setting to another and in receiving the accommodations they needed. A few participants referred to the effective connection between

the department secretary and the disability support office. Dalit shared that in her previous academic setting, she had the option to watch a video recording of the class session. To have this service at her new institution, Dalit approached her department secretary, and as she stated, in some cases, the administrative staff could handle this request by themselves, and in other cases, they contacted the disability support office. In her current academic setting, Dalit described the collaborative work and logistics regarding her class location for the next semester:

*“Again, to my delight, they worked so beautifully
And they are aware
And they are already preparing the classrooms
From now on,
They talked to me a few days ago
About the issue of the classes next semester,
Where to place them,
They already pre-ordered
Computer classes that are accessible
And that they will allow me in statistics.”*

*“שוב, לשמחתי הם עובדים כל כך יפה
והם מודעים
והם כבר מכינים את הכיתות
כבר מעכשיו,
הם שוחחו איתי לפני כמה ימים

על הסיפור של הכיתות בסמסטר הבא,
איפה למקם?
כבר מזמינים מראש
כיתות מחשבים שהן מונגשות
ושיאפשרו לי בסטטיסטיקה.”*

In most cases, the participants indicated that the services provided to them by the disability support services office improved during the period of their academic studies. As Navit, who used exam accommodations, stated:

*"It got better,
They were more accessible,
More communicative and more interested."*

*“זה השתפר,
הם היו יותר נגישים,
יותר תקשורתיים והתעניינו יותר.”*

Above all, Eran's statement revealed the importance of disability support services, especially to DIDF veterans:

*"I think without this support
From this accommodation,
I would have quit school."*

"אני חושב שבלי העזרה הזאת
מההתאמה הזאת,
הייתי עוזב את הלימודים."

*"I cannot learn so fast now,
I cannot, as I have to travel for treatments all
the time,*

"אני לא יכול ללמוד כל כך מהר כבר,
אני לא יכול, שאני צריך לנסוע לטיפולים כל הזמן,

*It's not fair ...
You go through more things during the day,
It's not like some 22 year old
That is now entering university and studying
(...)"*

זה לא פייר ...
אתה עובר עוד דברים במהלך היום,
זה לא כמו מישהו בן 22
שהוא נכנס עכשיו ללימודים ולומד
"(...)"

The support and personal accompaniment assist these students during their academic studies and help prevent dropouts.

Poor Support – Lack of Understanding and Sensitivity. Alongside the good experiences, some participants shared unpleasant feelings and negative experiences about their use of the disability support services or their interactions with the disability services office staff.

For some participants, support-seeking and registration for exam accommodations turned out to be another bureaucratic process that they had to deal with. Yaron, for example, shared a significant event that exposed the mechanism, bureaucratic procedures, and inflexibility of the staff. From Yaron's point of view, this event reflected a lack of sensitivity and understanding of the complexity of the student's condition:

*“One thing that bothers me a bit
is that they require
Computer orders for the exam...
It's not automatic,
You have to write every time
That you need a computer for taking the exam
(...)
And it happened to me twice
that I missed it
And I remembered two days too late ...”*

*“And they told me no,
it is impossible .. [To access the test]
So I had to wait until a later exam date...
Bureaucratic system ...”*

*“דבר אחד שקצת מפריע
זה שהם דורשים
שאת ההזמנות של המחשב למבחן...
זה לא אוטומטי,
צריך כל פעם לכתוב
שצריך מחשב למבחן (...)
וקרה לי פעמיים
שפספסתי את זה
ונוכרתי יומיים אחרי ...”*
*“ואמרו לי לא,
אי אפשר .. [לגשת למבחן].
אז הייתי צריך לחכות למועד ב'...
מערכת בירוקרטית...”*

Yaron highlighted two important issues: First, the students' lack of knowledge of the details of the procedure, especially when it is the student's responsibility to ask for his accommodations on time. Second, he felt that if this process were automated, it could take the hassle and responsibility off the students, who already have many issues to deal with. Yaron expressed his disappointment with the bureaucratic procedure, as well as the staff's unwillingness to assist him. He even sent a personal appeal to the disability office manager, but to no avail. In the end, Yaron had to wait and take his exam on the next available date it was offered just so he could take it on the computer.

Likewise, Sarit shared her experiences of bureaucratic operation and lack of flexibility of the system when she requested a more comfortable chair for her exams because of the pain she experienced during prolonged sitting. Even though she came with a list of her exams and exam halls, the disability office staff member told her to call the custodian each time before the exam and tell him where she needs to have the chair. With great frustration, Sarit the experience she had in contacting the disability support office, as it made Sarit feel like she was working for the disability support services office.

In addition, on one occasion when Sarit arrived to take the exam, she found out that another student had taken the chair that was waiting for her for his own use. So, she had to turn to the exam inspector and ask for assistance. After this event, Sarit decided not to ask again for any support from the disability support office and to deal herself with her pain and the less comfortable chairs during her exams. She expressed her dissatisfaction with the disability support services overall:

*"I just feel
That such a thing requires of me
So much energy to tinker
That you need to know where in life
You can endure and move on
And where in life you must make the mess.
And ... out of that, I may not have asked for
what I could ask for (...)
Because I know what a war it is
To get what I need."*

*"אני פשוט מרגישה
שכל דבר כזה מצריך ממני
כל כך הרבה אנרגיות של התעסקות
שאתה צריך לדעת איפה בחיים
אתה יכול לסבול ולהמשיך
ואיפה בחיים אתה חייב לעשות את הבלגן.
ו... מתוך זה אולי לא ביקשתי
את מה שאני יכולה לבקש (...)
כי אני יודעת איזו מלחמה זה
להשיג את מה שאני צריכה."*

Sarit's narrative highlights a dilemma many participants faced in determining whether the accommodations they need are worth the effort.

Uzi specifically used the economic phrase *cost-benefit analysis* when talking about his reasons not for applying for any service from the disability support services office. He explained that he preferred to go out from the class whenever he was in pain instead of filling out forms and asking for support. He compared his difficulty in prolonged sitting in class to a similar situation during a flight, and even there, he claimed he would not identify himself or demand any help, but he would try to manage on his own. Uzi did not see the benefit that such a service could have generated for him and explained his rationale:

*"In the face of the benefit
it would have brought me,
I do not think
I would have been getting the support ..."*

*"אל מול התועלת
שזה היה מניב לי,
אני לא חושב
שהייתי נעזר ...
עלות תועלת, עלות תועלת."*

Cost-benefit, cost-benefit."

Sarit spoke about choosing her battles and getting a larger perspective on things:

*"I will suffer what I have to suffer,
Again an exam that takes an hour and a half ...
When I look at the proportions
Compared to two years of schooling
it is something small,
You say I'll endure the hour and a half of that
Because everything else around
is much more oppressive and disturbing,
And requires energy ..."*

*"עוד הפעם מבחן של שעה וחצי ...
שאני מסתכלת על פרופורציה
לעומת שנתיים לימודים זה משהו קטן,
אתה אומר אני אסבול את השעה וחצי
כי הכל המסביב
הרבה יותר מעיק ומטריד,
ודורש כוחות..."*

Sarit described the exhausting process of getting her exam accommodations for her English courses. She was required to go to the English department office several times to set her exam accommodations instead of this being handled directly between the disability support office and the English department secretary. Sarit explained her willingness to go through the tedious process for her English class specifically:

*"And here with the English
I knew that if I did not ask for [support]
Most likely I would not be able
to get the exemption
And then I would not get the degree.
So I was willing to do anything ...
Like how do they say? I'll go here, I'll go
there ...
I'll go for this, I'll go for that,
Because I understand that if I do not do it
[Apply for accommodations]
Then I will not get the degree.
But where I see that I can
Even suffer and get along,
Then I will suffer and manage (...)"*

*ופה עם האנגלית
ידעתי שאם אני לא אבקש [עזרה]
סביר להניח שאני לא אצליח
"להוציא את הפטור
ואז אני לא אקבל את התואר.
ואז הייתי מוכנה לעשות הכול..
כאילו איך אומרים? אני אלך לפה אני אלך לשם...
אני אלך לזה, אני אלך לזה,
כי אני מבינה שאם אני לא אעשה את זה
[בקשה להתאמות]
אז אני לא אקבל את התואר.
אבל איפה שאני רואה שאני יכולה
אפילו לסבול ולהסתדר,
אז אני אסבול ואסתדר (...)"*

In addition, some participants referred to the fact that they had indicated at the time of enrollment that they were DIDF veterans or students with disabilities, but no one referred to it or

asked about their needs. Dalit and Sarit both said they were expecting some official response to their self-identification. They hoped that someone later in their studies would refer to it and offer them some assistance. The bureaucratic difficulties, insensitivity, and inflexibility, and sometimes plain ignorance of the system all contributed to some participants' decision not to formally contact the disability support office.

Another barrier to services was the high cost of the diagnostic tests. To receive accommodations for exams, in most cases, students were required to undergo a professional diagnosis outside of academia. These evaluations are very expensive, and they put a strain on the students, as Eran described:

*"I had to do it privately,
To understand what to do,
They didn't give me any specific instructions (...)
Just ... come to the result that you have this document
And it says A. B. C.
I went, [I] paid someone
an exorbitant price (...)*

*"הייתי צריך לעשות את זה באופן פרטי,
להבין מה עושים,
לא נתנו לי איזשהו תהליך מסודר (...)
רק ... תגיע לתוצאה שיש לך את המסמך הזה
וכתוב בו א' ב' ג'.
[אני] הלכתי, [אני] שילמתי למישהי
מחיר מופקע (...)*

*I came with ADHD and all that,
She [works in the disability support office]
[She] saw and looked,
[I had] something the doctor prescribed anyway
That I could bring...
But I needed this 'mediator'
To pay him
another thousand and something shekels
(...)[approximately \$300]."*

*אני באתי עם ADHD וכל הזה,
היא [העובדת במשרד התמיכה]
[ראתה והסתכלה,
[היה לי] משהו שהרופא רשם גם ככה
שיכולתי להביא ...
אבל הייתי צריך את המתווך הזה
כדי לשלם לו
עוד איזה אלף ומשהו שקל (...)*

Eran added that in his pre-academic studies at one of the universities in Israel, he did the diagnosis on campus in the Department of Psychology.

Shir stated another problem with the diagnosis:

*"Now the problem at the university
That they do not receive previous evaluation
And you need to be re-diagnosed.
Now for doing a diagnosis,
I can re-diagnose
But to be honest
The diagnoses,
even putting aside the fact of the money,
They are not suitable for the blind. "*

*"עכשיו הבעיה באוניברסיטה
שהם לא מקבלים אבחונים קודמים
וצריך לעשות אבחונים מחדש.
עכשיו בשביל לעשות אבחון,
אני יכולה לעשות אבחון מחדש
אבל למען האמת
האבחונים, אפילו לשים בצד את העובדה של הכסף,
הם לא מתאים לעיוורים."*

And she added that, ironically, the diagnostic tests themselves do not accommodate visual impairment disability.

Some participants' negative experience with the staff of the office of disability services stemmed from a lack of professionalism. Shir claimed that sometimes the staff's response was insufficient:

*"Sometimes, the Accessibility Department
[Disability Support Office]
Does not give a response
Or does not give a good enough response or just
waves,
(...) or sometimes just slipping between the cracks
by mistake, a human error that also happens –
There's nothing to do."*

*"לפעמים, מדור נגישות
[מרכז התמיכה לסטודנטים עם מוגבלות]
לא נותן את המענה
או לא נותן מספיק טוב או מנפנף,
(...) או לפעמים גם סתם נופלים בין הכיסאות
בטעות, טעות אדם זה גם קורה –
אין מה לעשות."*

Rachel spoke about the lack of attention to student applications or inappropriate care:

*"I think at the time,
[it] was also in the beginning,
I even think I went to the Student Support Center
and told them I was so and so.
No one has spoken to me since in my opinion,
I do not remember being contacted about it.
I turned, no one got back to me."*

*"אני חושבת שבזמנו,
[זה] היה גם בהתחלה,
אני חושבת אפילו שפניתי למשרד נגישות
ואמרתי להם אני ככה וככה.
אף אחד לא דיבר איתי מאז לדעתי,
לא זכור לי שפנו אליי בנוגע לזה.
אני פניתי, אף אחד לא חזר אליי."*

Students usually expect that after they turn to ask for support, someone will contact them.

If it does not happen in most cases, they will not apply again. Michal who requested oral exam accommodations commented on how she was treated:

*“They treated me very strangely,
Also, to get the oral exam,
It was like something most unusual.
It got to the dean,
I had to get his specific approval.
Every year you had to come and renew it.
If I did not bring the original document,
They would do nothing.”*

*”התייחסו אליי מאוד מוזר,
גם לקבל את הבחינה בעל פה,
היה משהו כאילו חריג ביור.
זה הגיע לדיקן,
הייתי צריכה לקבל את האישור שלו ספציפית.
כל שנה היית צריכה לבוא לחדש את זה.
אם לא הייתי מביאה את המסמך המקורי מקורי,
הם לא היו עושים כלום.”*

Michal valued her accommodation of oral examination, but also noted that her dissatisfaction with the disability support service office was due to the bureaucracy:

*“Yes, but the hardships,
the hardships on the way to get it,
The journey of anguish on the way to get it ...”*

*”כן, אבל הקשיים,
הקשיים בדרך לזה,
המסע ייסורים בדרך לזה ...”*

Eran discussed the staff’s knowledge level:

*“They did their best in my opinion,
But sometimes they did not really understand,
Like you're telling someone – PTSD
And she will not know what it is.”*

*”הם עשו את המיטב לטעמי,
אבל לפעמים הם לא ממש הבינו,
כאילו אתה אומר למישהי – PTSD
והיא לא תדע מה זה.”*

Eran, who was diagnosed with PTSD and ADHD, criticized the form of instruction that was given to him individually as a support service. He complained about the lack of professionalism, lack of knowledge, or familiarity of these teachers with students who have more complex learning problems:

"But it's just a title,
It's not really someone whose job it is ...
It's some kind of employee
who's told you you are it and that's it,
As if you're in charge of this and that,
He does not know how to teach people,
how to learn. "

"אבל זה רק טייטל,
זה לא באמת מישהו שזה התפקיד שלו ...
זה איזשהו עובד שאומרים לו זה אתה וזהו,
כאילו אתה אחראי על זה וזה (...)
הוא לא יודע איך ללמד אנשים,
איך ללמוד."

The disappointment from the staff's attitude and the lack of professional response may hold broader consequences, and impact on the student's desire and willingness to seek help again, as Sarit expressed:

"I knocked on the door,
And I brought the certificates
and did not receive,
So the question will be –
Whether to knock on the door another time ..."

"אני דפקתי בדלת,
והבאתי את האישורים
ולא קבלתי,
אז השאלה תהיה –
אם לדפוק עוד פעם בדלת ..."

Yaron was aware of job advertisements coming out for new disability support services office staff at his university, and he referred to their training and professional knowledge:

"It may be that
[Requirement for personnel
with training in the therapeutic field]
It can make a difference
Because before that,
It was people who were just
In a regular administrative position (...)"

"יכול להיות שזה
[הדרישה לכוח אדם
בעל הכשרה בתחום הטיפולי]
יכול לעשות שינוי
כי לפני כן,
זה היה אנשים
שסתם היו בתפקיד אדמיניסטרטיבי רגיל
(...)"

"Before [Before the last bid]
It was someone
Who happened to be studying with me
for a bachelor's degree,
And I know,
She has no background in this field."

"לפני כן [לפני המכרז האחרון]
זו היתה מישהי
שבמקרה למדה איתי
בתואר הראשון,
ואני יודע
שאין לה שום רקע בתחום הזה."

According to Yaron's statement, unlike in the past, currently, the disability support offices were looking for new staff with a therapeutic professional background such as social

workers, occupational therapists, and so on. Yaron shared that this change would help make more students satisfied with the services they receive from the disability support services office.

Participants used their support networks such as faculty members, peers on campus, or other DIDF veterans on their campus, rather than ask for formal support.

Other Support Resources

Faculty Support. Faculty are the primary group that interacts extensively with students with disabilities in general, and DIDF veteran students in particular. A small number of participants indicated that they shared their status as DIDF veterans with their faculty members. The participants turned to their faculty mostly for assistance with issues related to course assignments or their exams. Some of them preferred to approach their faculty indirectly, through the disability support services office. They reported mixed responses from their faculty.

Michal shared a unique experience of getting support from one of her faculty members during her undergraduate studies:

*“I had assistance from a lecturer
Who really somehow heard my story
And was touched by it
And he accompanied me very much
And helped me a lot,
Without him, it would not have happened,
[her graduation]
.... no way.”*

*“הייתה לי עזרה מאיזה מרצה
שבאמת ככה שמע את הסיפור שלי
וזה נגע לו ככה ללב
והוא מאוד ליווה אותי
ומאוד עזר לי,
בלעדיו זה לא היה קורה,
[סיום התואר]
... אין סיכוי.”*

Michal greatly appreciated the faculty support and even credited this faculty member with the fact that she was able to graduate successfully. Dalit also shared a mostly positive attitude about assistance at her new academic institution. Following her absences and difficulty in writing class notes, she turned to her faculty and asked for their presentations:

*“All the lecturers said
That, of course, all presentations
are pre-uploaded on Moodle [university portal],
Everything is there on the computer,
And anything ... if I need a time extension
Or anything I just want
Not to hesitate to contact them.”*

*”כל המרצים אמרו
שכמובן, כל המצגות
מעודכנות מראש בתוכנת המודל,
הכל נמצא שם במחשב,
וכל דבר ... אם אצטרך הארכת זמן
או כל דבר שאני רק רוצה
לא להסס לפנות אליהם.”*

*“Then face to face,
When the semester has already begun
There was a kind of feeling
that they know who I am,
They recognize,
though we have not talked
But they smiled
and they showed they know and understand,
They allowed my spouse
to stay with me in class...”*

*”ואז פנים אל פנים,
שכבר התחיל הסמסטר
הייתה מין תחושה
שהם יודעים מי אני,
הם מזהים,
אומנם לא שוחחנו
אבל הם חייכו
והם הראו
שהם יודעים ומבינים,
אפשרו לבן זוגי
להישאר איתי בכיתה...”*

Dalit contacted her faculty via email, and this initial contact led to an empathetic attitude toward her in class.

On the other hand, Navit shared that during her first year she held back from talking about her illness and the circumstances that led her to study in the specific program she had chosen. She felt that the faculty did not want to know the students as individuals on a personal level:

*"They do not ask,
they are not interested."*

*”הם לא שואלים,
הם לא מתעניינים.”*

In addition, Navit said that during her second year, some of her lecturers knew about her difficulties, and she even spoke to them about it, but she claimed there was no change in their attitude.

Other participants shared this feeling as well. Shahar even argued there is a disconnect between the faculty and their students:

*“In the world of academia,
unlike in the high school world,
There is no emotional involvement
between the student and the lecturer.
The lecturers come precisely because
of the disconnection of this emotional involvement,
That they can come and deliver the material
And go home,
Without getting phone calls or without being involved
with all its pros and cons.
So the lecturer just ...
Was not really listening.”*

*“בעולם האקדמיה
בשונה מעולם התיכון,
אין מעורבות רגשית
בין הסטודנט למרצה.
מרצים באים בדיוק בגלל
הניתוק של המעורבות הרגשית הזאת,
שהם יכולים לבוא, להעביר את החומר
וללכת הביתה,
בלי לקבל טלפונים או בלי המעורבות
עם כל היתרונות והחסרונות שלה.
אז המרצה פשוט ...
לא כל כך הקשיב.”*

Specifically, Shahar referred to his coping with PTSD and having emotional difficulties, and the faculty's lack of personal attention. Shahar noted that only one of his faculty expressed a personal interest in him, and it was in an off-campus course that he took as part of his teacher training.

Like Shahar, Sagi also felt that:

*“It's an academy,
no one cares,
you come, go in, go out,
it does not matter so much.”*

*“זה אקדמיה.
אף אחד לא אכפת לו,
את באה, נכנסת, יוצאת,
זה לא משנה כל כך.”*

Shahar said that faculty support is more important than accommodations, especially their flexibility in the submission of class assignments. Several participants stated their view on faculty's misconceptions regarding the diagnostic tests for students with LD or exam accommodations. Shir said that some faculty members perceive students with learning disabilities as students who do not make enough effort.

Yaron likewise shared his experience when faculty members saw him taking an exam while he was using the computer:

*"Sometimes there were lecturers
Who would come to a class
where I would be taking the exam on the
computer
And they would tell me:
"Oh, you sit like you are at the beach."*

*"לפעמים היו מרצים
שהיו מגיעים לכיתה
שהייתי נבחן בה עם מחשב
והיו אומרים לי:
"אה אתה יושב כמו בחוף הים."*

Similarly, Michal sensed the contempt and misunderstanding of faculty regarding accommodations. She felt that her professors were trying to give her a more difficult exam because she was taking it orally:

*"The lecturers think this is nonsense...
I would always look at the written exam,
And the exam I did ...
A world of difference.
They would do,
I do not know if it was on purpose,
But the oral examination
was much harder."*

*"המרצים חושבים שזה שטות...
תמיד הייתי מסתכלת על הבחינה בכתב,
על הבחינה שאני עשיתי...
פער של שמיים וארץ.
הם היו עושים,
אני לא יודעת אם זה היה בכוונה,
אבל הבחינה בעל פה,
הייתה הרבה יותר קשה."*

From these various examples, it appears that making preliminary contact with the administrative staff, as well as the academic staff, was another component that had the potential to contribute to the student's success.

Faculty have to take a lot of training on how to support students; they have various reporting obligations, and a power differential over students. I would qualify them as formal support and create a section for them there.

Peer Support. The support of classmates was mainly expressed in sharing class notes and additional learning materials, as well as in study groups. For example, Sarit shared that studying together with her classmates helped her overcome some of her learning difficulties, especially in preparing for her exams and other course assignments.

*"When we study in groups before the exams,
When we study together,
I'm usually the reader.
I'm one of those who has an authoritative voice,
Who knows how to read well and properly,
So I read to them."*

*"כשאנחנו לומדים בקבוצות לפני מבחנים,
כשאנחנו לומדים ביחד,
בדרך כלל אני המקריאה.
אני מאלה שיש להם את הקול הסמכותי,
שיודע להקריא יפה ותקין,
אז אני מקריאה להם."*

Sarit explained that her group was helpful because they would stop and discuss the text that she would read aloud. She further explained that she was currently studying social science and humanities subjects which are associated with a lot of reading and writing. In light of her literacy difficulties associated with her learning disability, without the help of the group study, she would not have been able to succeed and meet her various program assignments. Although she lives far from the other students in her group, she said that they used to meet on ZOOM, long before this application was widely used during the COVID-19 epidemic. Sarit estimated that this group was the reason why she did not need official accommodations from her institution.

Sagi also reported getting help from his classmates. He expanded on his unique experience of being absent from his classes due to leg pain, and he felt that his absences influenced his ability to study for his exams. Sagi's main problem was the sense of disconnection, as he calls it. He noted his absences were a critical factor in his studies as he explained that he was used to remembering the course content mainly through listening to his faculty during his class sessions. Sagi stated that this had been the way he had learned since a young age. He explained that he now needed to rely only on his friends' class notes. He shared that his friends recorded the class session for him, but Sagi stated that he would have preferred for his friends to record the lesson for him on video rather than audio. His narratives illuminate additional situations in which the military-related injury has an indirect impact on DIDF-veteran students' academic studies and success. Thus, in this case, the physical injury had an impact on

academic studies indirectly. Dalit found it helpful to get peer support when she could not come to her classes:

*“There's one friend recording for me,
I do not know her personally
She knows my partner from their
undergraduate degree ...
That she happened to see us
and offered her help (...)”*

*”יש חברה אחת שמקליטה בשבילי,
אני לא מכירה אותה אישית
היא מכירה את בן זוגי מהתואר הראשון שלהם...
שהיא במקרה ראתה אותנו
והציעה את עזרתה (...).”*

Dalit also appreciated her classmates' kind support in pushing her wheelchair following her car accident. She also recounted that her friends had regularly saved a seat for her in the front of the class, which made it easy for her spouse to wheel her into the classroom and leave.

Rachel also reported receiving a lot of support from her colleagues:

*“This Master's degree means [learning in] groups
that sit and talk openly,
And in general, on psychological issues.
Everyone knew everything about me.
Like they knew I was suffering from PTSD,
And knew I had a traumatic birth,
They knew all the stories so on the contrary ...
I felt that everyone was supporting
and helping me.”*

*”תואר שני זה [למידה ב] קבוצות
שיושבים ומדברים באופן פתוח,
ובכלל על נושאים פסיכולוגיים.
כולם ידעו הכול עליי.
כאילו ידעו שאני סובלת מפוסט טראומה,
וידעו שהייתה לי לידה טראומתית,
ידעו את כל הסיפורים אז להפך ...
הרגשתי שכולם תומכים בי
ועוזרים לי.”*

Rachel added and stated that the support she was receiving from her classmates was much more than she had experienced during her undergraduate studies.

Eran stated his challenges in finding assistance and support from his classmates in light of age and gender differences:

*"I tried, I tried to do it
With a group of several girls who studied with me
And everything was fine,
At some point, I realized
That they are just laughing at me
Or taking advantage of me (...)
These are 24-year-old girls,
They are not interested in anything."*

*"ניסיתי, ניסיתי לעשות את זה
עם קבוצה של כמה בנות שלמדו איתי
והכל היה בסדר,
בשלב מסוים, הבנתי
שהם סתם או צוחקות עלי
או מנצלות אותי (...)
אלה ילדות בנות 24,
לא מעניין אותן שום דבר."*

Some participants mentioned that they had some friends on campus who were also DIDF veterans, and they found them very helpful, as Shahar said:

*"In the middle of the school year,
a good friend joined
That I knew him
from the rehabilitation at the Beit HaLohem
[rehabilitation center],
and we actually helped each other."*

*"באמצע הלימודים
הצטרף חבר טוב
שהכרתי אותו
מהשיקום מבית הלוחם,
ובעצם עזרנו אחד לשני."*

This issue of knowing other DIDF-veteran students and the importance of knowing those close in age was raised among other participants.

The Department Secretary. In some cases, the participants' request for assistance from the department secretary replaced the need to contact the disability support services office. For example, Miki, who has mobility limitations as a result of his military-related injury, decided to ask for assistance from the department secretary:

*"I presented the disability certificate to the
secretary there,
who is in charge of the Master's program.
That was enough
and I got everything I needed. "*

*"הצגתי את התעודת נכה למזכירה שמה,
לאחראית של תואר שני.
זה הספיק
וקיבלתי כל מה שאני צריך."*

*"Every time I asked,
They changed the place of the class.
Then it was more comfortable for me
Because there were far fewer stairs ..."*

*"כל פעם שביקשתי,
אז שינו את המיקום של הכיתה.
ואז זה היה לי יותר נוח
כי היה הרבה פחות מדרגות ..."*

Miki felt that the department secretary did her best to help him, and he was pleased.

However, he also stated that he had to remind the department secretary every semester that he

has pain, and that he needed a more convenient class location (close to the parking lot with fewer stairs to climb) because the secretary did not remember his needs. This repeat experience was frustrating for Miki since his disability is permanent. He wished the department could have organized the classes better to begin with, without constant reminders. He did acknowledge that the assistance he did get helped him to complete his degree.

Rachel's overall experience with the administrative staff at her undergraduate institution was unsatisfactory. She compared their level of service to that of the MoD, as an example of poor service:

"The assistance of the student administration, (...) Especially their conduct toward the departments was ... Reminded me of the process with the Ministry of Defense, It was awful, awfully hard, and unpleasant."

"העזרה של מנהל הסטודנטים, (...) במיוחד ההתנהלות מול המחלקות הייתה ... הזכירה לי את ההתנהלות מול משרד הביטחון, זה היה נורא, נורא קשה ולא נעים."

Uzi stated that he preferred to ask for informal support only from his program department office, claiming that sometimes shortcuts are needed. His choice was related to his perception of the process as something complicated which was not necessarily worth it. He thought it was simpler to contact the office and ask for the specific assistance he needed at that time.

Dalit described the support of the department office when she referred to the opportunity to watch videotaped class lectures at her previous institution. She spoke about the collaboration between the department secretary and the disability support services office:

*“[I] approached the department secretaries,
And in some cases,
they could take care [of it] by themselves,
And in other cases
They contacted the Department of Learning
Disabilities
Of the university
And there I was in touch
with someone who was very helpful.”*

*”[אני] פניתי למזכירות,
שבחלק מהמקרים,
הן יכלו לטפל [בזה] בעצמן,
ובחלק מהמקרים
הן פנו למחלקה ללקויות למידה*

*של האוניברסיטה
ושם הייתי בקשר
עם מישהי שמאד עזרה.”*

Dalit also claimed that she had had a good experience with the department secretary at the new campus where she had just begun the first semester of her graduate studies.

Public Safety. Several participants needed the Public Safety Department services to arrange entrance with their vehicles and to request on-campus parking space. Only Yaron and Dalit reported that this service was provided to them optimally and quickly. Others reported that the service was tedious and cumbersome. For example, Sarit and Uzi reported that their experience was less helpful. Although Uzi studied in different areas on his campus, he was permitted to enter with his vehicle only through one gate, so he had to walk quite far to get to some of the buildings where he studied. He described his overall experience:

*“I remember the process of getting a parking permit
was a bit of an unpleasant procedure.”*

*”זכור לי שלהוציא תו חניה
הייתה פרוצדורה טיפה לא נעימה (...).”*

*“In short, all this preoccupation,
Now, in retrospect, I understand
That it was so unwelcome
For my only need from the university
Regarding my disability,
That's why this low score ...”*

*”בקיצור, כל ההתעסקות הזאת,
עכשיו, בדיעבד אני מבין
שהיא כל כך לא מסבירת פנים
לצורך היחיד שלי מהאוניברסיטה
בקשר למוגבלות שלי,
ולכן הציון הנמוך הזה...”*

Uzi was extremely dissatisfied and frustrated with the service he received, which he described as a favor to allow him to enter with his car and not even through all the gates. He

attributed his low grades to this lack of accommodation from his institution. He expressed great disappointment and noted that, for him, this had been his most important need as a DIDF-veteran student. Sarit described the complexity of the process and the insensitivity of the service providers:

*“I learned to deal with pain,
With physical pain,
Orthopedic pain I learned to deal with.
With emotional and mental pains and insensitivity
Apparently, it's still difficult for me there.”*

*”עם כאבים [אני] למדתי להתמודד,
עם כאבים פיזיים,
כאבים אורתופדיים [אני] למדתי להתמודד.
עם כאבים רגשיים ונפשיים ושל אטימות
כנראה ששם עוד קשה לי.”*

Additional participants stated that they had difficulty obtaining a permit to enter their campus with a vehicle during their studies, especially when they were undergraduate students. Michal said that in light of an unrecognized military injury to her knee, she had had to park off-campus. She stated that she had not applied for a parking permit because she knew that she would need to deal with another bureaucratic process. There were only a few academic institutions that allowed people with a legal parking permit to enter and park inside the campus without the need for additional approval.

Psychological Counseling Service. Only two participants sought psychological counseling services on their campus. Rachel revealed her positive experience with the psychological counseling services unit in her previous academic setting.

*“In my bachelor’s degree,
there was a psychologist (...)
I used to meet him
and he was lovely,
He really, really helped me, very much.”*

*”בתואר הראשון,
יש שם פסיכולוג (...)
[והייתי פוגשת אותו,
והוא היה מקסים,
הוא ממש, ממש עזר לי, מאוד.”*

Eran, on the other hand, spoke at length about an unpleasant experience with the psychological service during his pre-academic preparatory studies that had taken place at one of

the universities in Israel. He said that he needed to get emotional support from a psychologist as he felt lonely and needed to talk to someone since this was the first time he was on his own. Eran said that this service attracted him both because he did not have the money to pay for a similar service off-campus and because of the convenient location inside the campus. Unfortunately, his experience was very disappointing:

*"The person who interviewed me
Gave me the third degree [questioned me]
in a very unprofessional way (...)
when I finished the conversation,
I got on the bus crying
and stayed in bed crying for three days.
From that moment on, I became addicted
to sleeping pills and all sorts
And the whole second semester was ruined.*

*"הבן אדם שראיין אותי
חפר לי [חקר אותי]
בצורה מאוד לא מקצועית (...)
כש[אני] סיימתי את השיחה
[אני] עליתי לאוטובוס בוכה
ו[אני] נשארתי בוכה שלושה ימים במיטה.
מאותו רגע, [אני] התמכרתי
לכדורי שינה וכל מיני כאלה
יוהלך לי [נהרס] כל הסמסטר השני.*

Eran had been very hurt by this experience and felt like he had been interrogated. I felt this sentiment somewhat in his reticence during Eran's interview with me.

Off-Campus Support Resources

Some participants chose to look for support or additional resources in various places off-campus. These external sources of support included the MoD, the Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization (ZDVO), various non-profit associations that provide solutions to DIDF veterans, private entities, private tutors, and therapists.

Ministry of Defense

The significant support agent outside the academy, in the case of DIDF-veteran students, is the MoD, especially the Rehabilitation Division. The participants shared that they had received various support services from the MoD such as a social worker, mental health care, assistive technology accessories for study purposes, social mentoring, and tutoring.

Social Worker Support. The participants shared a variety of experiences related to their social workers. Overall, the participants' experiences and level of satisfaction from the MoD's social worker support were divided almost equally between those who indicated they had received good and professional service and those who reported a lack of continuous contact and personal attention. Shahar was among those who felt their experience had been very good:

*“Throughout the academic degree
The rehabilitation worker was
'Hand in hand',
Even before the decision,
In just about everything, from the first year
And in the more and less difficult times ...
The rehabilitation worker was in the
background,
She actually directed me to where,
How to get started,
And also, the whole issue of payments and
scholarships,
And she took care of everything I needed.”*

”לאורך כל התואר
העובדת שיקום
הייתה ”ממש יד ביד”,
גם לפני ההחלטה,
ממש בכל מהשנה הראשונה
ובזמנים הקשים יותר ופחות...
העובדת שיקום הייתה ברקע,
היא בעצם הכוונה אותי לאן,
איך להתחיל,
וגם כל עניין התשלומים והמלגה,
ודאגה לי לכל מה שצריך.”

Shahar also was familiar with a variety of services provided by the MoD's social workers, starting with the employment assessment and guidance given mostly to young DIDF veterans (who did not know which direction to choose for future employment).

In contrast to Shahar's positive experience, several participants reported that they had not received an adequate response. As Yaron stated:

*“There is a social worker
That I think maybe called me once
When he started his job because he replaced
someone,
And this is ... I mean,
If you do not turn to them
they will usually not contact you.”*

”יש עובד סוציאלי
שאני חושב שפעם אחת אולי התקשר אלי
כשהוא נכנס לתפקיד
כי הוא החליף מישהי,
וזוהו ... זאת אומרת,
אם אתה לא פונה אליהם
הם לא יפנו אליך בדרך כלל.”

Sarit also claimed that she only received assistance from her social worker if she turned to him. She felt there was no support system in the MoD and also related to the high turnover rate of workers there when she said:

*“Every time they replace
[The social workers]
There is a very, very [high] turnover there
So I do not follow.”*

*“כל פעם מחליפים לנו
[את העובדים הסוציאליים],
יש שם תחלופה ככה מאוד מאוד [גבוהה],
ככה שאני לא עוקבת.”*

Michal and Miki shared that they were in contact with a social worker following their plan to start studying in higher education. Michal explained that the reason the MoD personnel had contacted her was only to verify that her program of choice suited her abilities before they provided her the scholarship.

Several participants referred to a lack of preparation and guidance from the rehabilitation department in the MoD regarding their disability needs, as Noa stated:

*“I do not remember talking to us
On the disability support office
I guess if I knew,
Most likely, I would have gone there.”*

*“אני לא זוכרת שדברו אתנו
על משרד נגישות.
אני מניחה שאם הייתי יודעת,
סביר הניח שהייתי הולכת לשם.”*

Specifically, Yaron and Noa both claimed that Mod’s social workers had not given them any advice or a recommendation to contact the disability support center at the institution of higher education in which they had enrolled.

Financial Aid and Scholarship. The MoD and ZDVO provide awards and scholarships, including a monthly allowance for DIDF veterans. Specifically, DIDF veterans who wish to study vocational training or undergraduate studies can apply to the Rehabilitation Division for assistance in financing their studies. Some of the participants confirmed that the scholarship they

had received from the MoD or the ZDVO had allowed them to apply for academic studies. For example, Uzi said:

<i>"I'm not sure That if I weren't a disabled IDF veteran I could afford it To study at the university [name of the university] I'm not sure my parents could have helped me during the degree To fund me like my friends from the university."</i>	<i>"אני לא בטוח שאני אם לא הייתי נכה צה"ל הייתי יכול להרשות לעצמי ללמוד באוניברסיטה [שם האוניברסיטה] אני לא בטוח שההורים שלי יכלו לעזור לי במהלך התואר בלממן אותי כמו החברים שלי מהאוניברסיטה."</i>
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Uzi referred to the fact that, as a DIDF veteran, he did not have to work and could receive a subsistence allowance from the MoD during his study period.

Shahar explained some of the rules and their consequences:

<i>"The Ministry of Defense basically Funds the studies And gives living expenses to students, If someone takes 20 hours a week He receives a subsistence allowance That essentially alleviates the need to work. Gives time to really focus on studies (...)"</i>	<i>"משרד הביטחון בעצם מממן את הלימודים ונותן דמי קיום לסטודנטים, אם מישהו מגיע ל 20 שעות שבועיות הוא מקבל דמי קיום שזה בעצם מייתר את הצורך לעבוד. נותן זמן להתפנות ממש ללימודים (...)"</i>
--	--

For Rachel, receiving the scholarship was also very helpful, and she appreciated it as it gave her some sense of relief.

Several participants referred to their status as "a rehabilitated DIDF veteran" ("נכה") regarding their eligibility to receive financial aid from the MoD for academic studies. The legal definition of "rehabilitated disabled veteran" refers to a disabled veteran who has already received support from the state to start a business, or for vocational training or an academic degree, and has a regular source of income or education or a profession that allows him to engage in his work (*Section 8, Education Funding For a Rehabilitated Disabled Person, 1987*) (https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law01/310_025.htm#Seif7). This status as a

rehabilitated DIDF veteran sometimes makes it difficult to acquire financial aid for higher education. For example, Miki was not able to ask for any additional support from the MoD because he had already received support from the state for his earlier academic degree, and he had a regular source of sufficient income. Miki expressed his disappointment with the treatment of the MoD, especially regarding the approval of additional studies. He added that he was not fully aware of all his rights and sometimes, he discovered he was eligible for additional rights. Miki blamed the MoD employees, especially the social workers, for not informing DIDF veterans enough about their rights.

Eran said that he had begun to study on his own, without the support of the MoD, as he felt that the MoD had just abandoned him. He stated that according to the MoD, his rehabilitation process had ended after he finished studying for a certificate in youth coaching, which he describes as his hobby:

*“Just as soon as I received a certificate,
[They said] ‘No,
You have a certificate,
you can work, bye.’
Even though I sat with them
And I asked them if it would hurt me [they said],
‘No, you are a rehabilitated disabled person,
you have a certificate.’”*

*“פשוט ברגע שקיבלתי תעודה,
[הם אמרו] ‘לא,
יש לך תעודה,
אתה יכול לעבוד, שלום.’
למרות שישבתי איתם
ושאלתי אותם אם זה יפגע בי [הם אמרו],
‘לא, אתה נכה משוקם,
יש לך תעודה.’”*

Eran felt that his late recognition process had badly influenced his personal development, and he was disappointed with the lack of support that he had received.

To some extent, Sagi’s story was similar. Sagi stated that he was familiar with the regulations and believed that he would not receive any support. Therefore, he had decided to study at his expense:

*"I gave it up
I decided to learn at my own expense,
No committees and no nothing
And anyway, I believe
That nothing would have come out of it."*

*"אני ויתרתי על זה
החלטתי ללמוד על חשבוני,
לא ועדות ולא כלום
וגם ככה אני מאמין
שלא היה יוצא מזה שום דבר."*

All the participants who studied for their graduate degree confirmed that they had previously received financial support from the MoD. In Yaron's case, as he already received financial aid for both his undergraduate and graduate degrees, he found that for his current studies, he was already considered a "rehabilitated disabled veteran" and was not eligible for any further financial support.

Social and Academic Mentorship. In addition to the existing academic mentoring service at some of the institutions of higher education, the MoD offers DIDF veterans a personal companion service, or as Shir labeled it, a "social mentor." Shir said she could not have an academic mentor in her previous academic setting, so the social worker in the MoD advised her to use the social mentor that was provided for her by the MoD:

*"Listen, regardless of your studies,
you deserve a social tutor.
You have the mentor of the university
That you know and love
And she helped you with your studies,
Have her come and register with us in our
database
And when you ask for a social tutor,
You will get her [also for help with studies]."*

*"תקשיבי, בלי קשר ללימודים
מגיע לך חונכת חברתית.
יש לך את החונכת של האוניברסיטה
שאת מכירה אותה ואוהבת אותה
והיא עזרה לך בלימודים,
שהיא תבוא תרשם אצלנו במאגר שלנו
וכשאת מבקשת את החונכת החברתית,
תקבלי אותה [גם עבור העזרה בלימודים]."*

Dalit said that she had just begun an official process to get a mentor from the MoD. For this purpose, like Shir, she had chosen a friend she was already familiar with who was a successful student in the field she was studying.

The solutions discussed by Shir and Dalit illuminate the possibilities that exist in connection and cooperation between the disability support offices and the MoD for the benefit of

DIDF veterans in higher education. Shir said that as a blind student, she has some assistive technology at her house. She was eligible to receive these assistive technologies from both the NII and the MoD, as she compared the two:

*“It’s just that the Ministry of Defense
Is more generous than the National Insurance
Institute in this part,
But, for example, the devices I get
As a supported blind student
(...) CCTV of one kind or another,
A laptop,
A printer,
There is a certain sum of money
With which I can play with the devices ...”*

*“פשוט משרד הביטחון
מפנק יותר מביטוח לאומי בקטע הזה,
אבל, למשל, המכשירים שאני מקבלת
כסטודנטית עיוורת נתמכת
(...) טמ"ס כזה או אחר,
מחשב נייד,
מדפסת,
יש איזשהו סכום מסויים
שאינו אני יכולה לשחק עם המכשירים...”*

Sarit shared during the interview that she receives home cleaning services as a source of support from the MoD in light of her physical disability which allows her to have more time for her studies. Other participants did not address this service, and when I asked Rachel who has two young children (she recently gave birth), she stated that she was not aware of this option.

Emotional and Psychological Support. Shahar and Eran both referred to the support they received from the MoD in terms of emotional and psychological support. Shahar emphasized that he did not need the disability support services on campus since he claimed that he received all the support he needed from the MoD:

*"I know they [disability support office]
Offer assistance and emotional support,
I did not need it again,
I had the other people who were ...
The regular treatment providers.
[Rehabilitation worker and psychiatrist]"*

*"אני יודע שהם [משרד התמיכה]
מציעים תמיכה ומצבים רגשיים,
שוב לא הייתי צריך את זה,
היה לי את האנשים האחרים שהם ...
המטפלים הקבועים (...)
[העובדת שיקום והפסיכיאטר]"*

*"They gave me all kinds of concentration techniques
And techniques for how to study better,
Such basic things.
I used them,
I was on the brink of going to them
[To the disability support office]
Several times,
And I finally decided not to."*

*"הם נתנו לי כל מיני טכניקות לריכוז
וטכניקות לאיך ללמוד יותר נכון,
דברים בסיסיים כאלה.
השתמשתי בזה,
הייתי על הסף של ללכת אליהם
[למרכז התמיכה]
כמה פעמים,
והחלטתי בסוף שלא."*

Eran also remarked that in light of the bad experience he had in the past when he studied in the pre-academic preparatory setting, he was pleased with the mental health services he had received from the MoD and had not looked for any mental health services on his campus.

A few participants such as Eran, Navit, and Dalit shared their use of an additional therapeutic response beyond the support of the MoD like a private psychologist, emotional counselor, or bio-feedback therapy to improve their learning skills and abilities during their time of academic studies.

Associations and Organizations of Disabled IDF Veterans. In addition to the extensive activities of the MoD and the ZDVO, other associations have been established in recent decades to act for and support DIDF veterans. The Beit Halochem (*Warrior House*) is a sports rehabilitation and social activity center for DIDF veterans and their families, operated by the ZDVO. There are several centers of Beit Halochem in various cities in Israel (Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beer Sheva, Jerusalem, and a guest house in Nahariya). The services provided by these centers are supposed to meet the needs of the DIDF population. Members of the ZDVO can join and pay

for participation at a low token cost. These centers operate through a budget from the MoD's Rehabilitation Division, and donations from philanthropists from Israel and abroad.

Most participants referred to the activities that are available for them in Beit-Halochem centers, in particular to social and sports activities. Although they said that the typical population is elderly, some participants sometimes come alone or with their children for leisure activities such as swimming. Of all the participants, Eran was the only one who mentioned that he sometimes asks for a quiet room for studying in the Beit-Halochem in the city where he lives. In addition, he stated that he would be happy if there were a support group for DIDF veteran students.

Several participants mentioned their active participation in associations and non-profit organizations such as: 'Brothers for Life' ('אחים לחיים'), 'Challenges' ('אתגרים'), and the 'Meale Association – Oz Center' ('עמותת מעל"ה').

Shahar talked about getting support from the "Brothers for Life" association. This association was established to give support to IDF veterans who were wounded during their military service in operational activities and the Israeli wars. The association provides several services that are similar to the ZDVO; however, the association's uniqueness is in its use of the peer support model of injured soldiers helping other injured soldiers. The helping peers are combat fighters who have experienced combat injuries and have undergone injury rehabilitation procedures. As Shahar described:

*"This broad common denominator
Of injury in a war event
is a common denominator
That you can build a lot of
deep friendships with it (...)
They do a lot of things,
And most of the services I use,
I get from them."*

*"המכנה המשותף הרחב הזה
של פציעה באירוע מלחמתי
הוא מכנה משותף
שאפשר לבנות איתו
הרבה הרבה חברויות עמוקות (...)
הם עושים הרבה מאוד דברים,
ורוב השירותים שאני נעזר,
אני נעזר בהם."*

Shahar explained the association's support was particularly helpful for veterans with PTSD. He said that his wish to take part in the association activities came from his social needs. Shahar spoke about a variety of support services available at that association which he took advantage of, such as a support group

Miki shared that he is an active member of the Meale Association (which was founded in memory of the soldier Oz Mendelovich, who was killed in the Tzuk Eitan battle in 2014). Then Miki shared an important event that occurred when he had given a lecture to his class on the topic of coping with stress and trauma:

*“Thanks to the association I am a member of,
I taught a whole lesson (...)
The lecturer took me
And asked that I speak about the trauma of combat
soldiers
and what it means,
And I brought stories from friends
Which are not known in the media
But they just talked about
Their true way of living,
Where is the difficulty,
where is the problem.”*

*”בזכות העמותה שאני חבר בה,
העברתי שיעור שלם (...)
המרצה לקח אותי
שאני אדבר על הלומי קרב
ומה זה אומר,
והבאתי סיפורים מחברים
שלא מוכרים בתקשורת
אלא שפשוט דברו על
אופן החיים האמיתי שלהם,
איפה הקושי, איפה הבעיה.”*

Miki acknowledged the importance of this association, which set a goal of supporting DIDF veterans (as well as other people with different medical conditions by providing them with medical cannabis legally). Miki shared his pride in being a part of the association and his belief in its approach. These feelings contrasted with his experiences with the MoD support practices, where he felt no one was truly interested in him.

Higher Education as a Place of Rehabilitation

In general, all participants indicated that their experience in higher education had been positive. Sarit, for example, expressed her excitement and good feeling from the very fact of being a student despite the difficulties involved in integrating into higher education later in life:

*“I love to study,
It's fun to learn.
A little hard when it's both work and study
And both home and children.
It makes it harder
But it's fun to be a student.”*

*”אני אוהבת ללמוד,
זה כיף ללמוד.
קצת קשה כשזה גם עבודה וגם לימודים
וגם בית וגם ילדים.
זה עושה את זה יותר קשה
אבל זה כיף להיות סטודנט.”*

Other participants shared their positive satisfaction, appreciation, and perception of their studies as a healing and rehabilitative factor in their life. Michal shared how her school experience made it easier for her to cope with her difficult daily symptoms of PTSD:

*“In the first days,
I had so much fun discovering the knowledge,
To sit and hear things,
It made me a little calm,
Suddenly I was quiet,
Suddenly I was preoccupied with other things,
Not in the room, it was fun.
I was the only student here,
Who studied five full days.
I took all kinds of courses
And it did me good.
I was here all day,
This was my place of refuge.”*

*”בימים הראשונים,
היה לי ככה כיף לגלות את הידע,
לשבת ולשמוע דברים,
זה קצת עשה לי שקט,
פתאום היה לי שקט,
פתאום התעסקתי עם דברים אחרים,
לא בחדר, זה היה כיף.
הייתי הסטודנטית היחידה פה,
שלמדה חמישה ימים מלאים.
לקחתי כל מיני קורסים
וזה עשה לי טוב.
הייתי פה כל היום,
זה היה המקום מחסה שלי.”*

Michal used words like noise and silence interestingly: Doing nothing at home, she felt restless and had to deal with her noisy thoughts. In contrast, she found peace and calm in her hard work on her academic studies. Similarly, Eran felt that the experience in higher education had served him well as a place of rehabilitation:

*“The learning process was
a rehabilitation process
Much better
Than any process they gave me.”*

*”התהליך לימוד היה
תהליך שיקום
הרבה יותר טוב
מכל תהליך שנתנו לי.”*

Several participants had engaged in social activities, and found a way to share their injury stories and their experiences of living with a disability with other students, finding meaning in raising awareness of DIDF students in higher education. Others had volunteered (like Uzi) in different activities during their studies or even found an administrative position (like Yaron) or academic position (like Michal, Rachel, Eran) at the same institution in which they were studying. Eran shared that:

*“I teach what I learned,
It's some kind of an army project ...
Students come out with
An engineering technician certificate ...”*

*”אני מלמד את מה שלמדתי,
זה מין פרויקט כזה של הצבא ...
התלמידים יוצאים עם
תעודת הנדסאי בניין ...”*

Concerning social life, many of the participants had met new people, made new connections, engaged with their classmates, were part of study groups, and were part of on-campus activities and social events. Uzi stated that the injury paved his way to higher education, as he had not even thought about it before he was injured. Uzi described his academic experience as a pleasant and encouraging time:

*“The guys were amazing
And the interest in studies
was very challenging and very nice,
Overall, this period is,
A time you are flourishing,
You're really at your peak
and you're out of trouble,
meaning you get up in the morning
And you go to the university
Where you meet very nice people,
Everyone your age, everyone is young,
Everyone is smart, everyone has ambitions.”*

*”החבר'ה היו מדהימים
והעניין בלימודים
היה נורא מאתגר ונורא נחמד,
ובכלל התקופה הזו,
תקופה שאתה פורח,
אתה באמת בשיא שלך
ואתה חסר צרות,
כלומר אתה קם בבוקר
ואתה הולך לאוניברסיטה
שבה אתה פוגש אנשים מאוד נחמדים,
כולם בגיל שלך, כולם צעירים,
כולם חכמים, כולם בעלי שאיפות.”*

In general, all the participants reported that their experience at the academic, personal, and social levels in their higher education had been good.

Conclusions

The findings here describe what support resources the participants used during the time of their academic studies: on-campus and off-campus, both formal and informal support. Even though the participants' experiences were quite mixed, overall, they stated that their experience with on-campus support was positive. Moreover, the majority of the participants described their experience in higher education as an important part of their rehabilitation.

The primary support resources were academic accommodations that were used mainly for taking exams. Most of the accommodations made were in terms of granting extra time during exams, academic reinforcement, and academic mentorship. Other on-campus support was used for physical accessibility issues in on-campus spaces and other logistics.

Overall, participants' experiences getting support on- and off-campus were mixed. Some found their disability support services quite efficient, helpful, and supportive, whereas others felt there was so much bureaucracy that they were discouraged from using those services. DDF veteran students who could not get their support through the disability support services sometimes found alternative means on their campus, such as getting assistance from the program secretary, their faculty, the public safety office, or peers. Overall, it seems like there is significant room for improvement of these services on campus and raising awareness of these services.

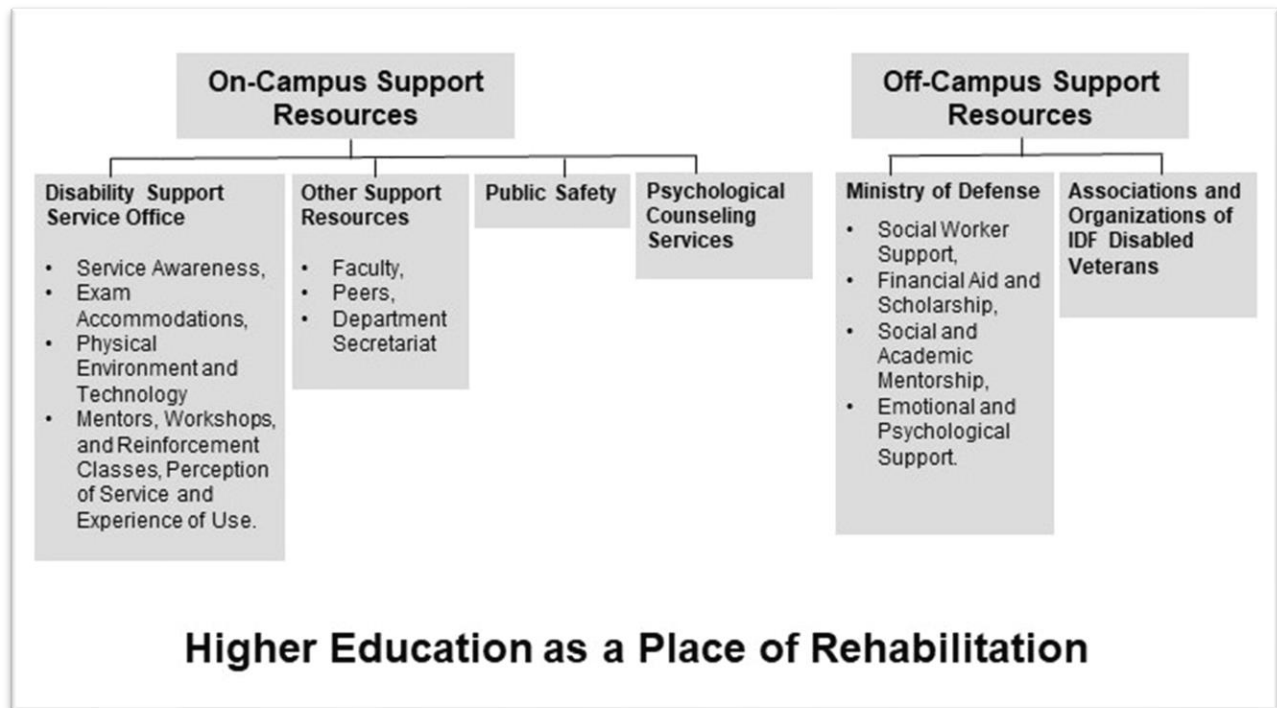
Participants reported similar mixed experiences with sources of support off-campus, in particular from the MoD. For example, while some participants felt that their social worker had been a critical element in their academic success, others felt neglected. Financial assistance from

the MoD brought some into higher education where they could not have gone otherwise, but refusal of this aid was a source of frustration for other participants. Within the MoD, too, there seems to be ample room to increase employees' and veterans' awareness of the range of services offered. Sometimes, private associations or private personnel have stepped in to fill these gaps.

It is necessary to see DIDF veteran students more holistically, to provide support services more broadly, while making links and connections with different factors to provide better support, and to build a more inclusive setting in Israeli HE institutions. See Figure 8 which summarizes the findings of this research question.

Figure 8

Resources of Support



Chapter 6: Discussion

“Research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise, but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions.”

(Smith, 2012)

This study explored the experiences of DIDF-veteran students during their academic journey in Israeli HE. In this Chapter, I discuss the findings related to research questions in the context of the current literature and the theoretical frameworks selected as most appropriate. First, this Chapter lays out the research questions, links the findings to the research's theoretical frameworks and the literature base on this topic, then discusses the factors that emerged through the collected data (some of the participants' survey responses and mainly through interviews transcripts). I specifically linked the findings to the disability studies (medical and social model of disability, and critical disability theory) and veteran studies (VCT and Vacchi's model) theoretical frameworks. Following that, I discuss the implications of the study's findings and recommendations for the field. Then I go over the study's limitations, as well as opportunities for further research, reflection, and the study's significance. I hope that the findings and conclusions of this study will add to the body of knowledge in research based on DIDF-veteran students' phenomenological experiences. I also hope that the findings, insights, and conclusions of this study will provide new knowledge to research based on the phenomenological experiences of DIDF-veteran students.

Central Research Question and Four Sub-Questions

The central research question of this phenomenological study was: What are the experiences of DIDF-veteran students in Israeli higher education? Overall, the participants' experiences were found to be similar in many aspects but also unique in other facets. To further

understand the DIDF-veteran students' experiences, the study's sub-research questions were designed to focus on distinct aspects of disability identity and usage of support resources:

1. How do DIDF-veteran students identify themselves on their campuses?
2. What challenges do DIDF-veterans encounter as students?
3. How do DIDF-veterans manage their disability identity?
4. What are the sources of support used by DIDF-veteran students during their time of academic studies?

The following discussion is based on the perspectives and experiences of DIDF-veteran students who took part in this study, including the key topics of identification, challenges, disclosure strategies, and support experiences, which are outlined in Chapters Four and Five. The main purpose of this Chapter is to provide interpretive insights into these data and to develop a more holistic knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation.

According to the research data, the DIDF's lived experiences as a whole impacted their transition into HE as well as their practices and experiences as students. Following the data analysis, three themes emerged pertaining to the study's major and sub-research questions: Disability as a Complex Category, Negotiating Disability, and Choice of Support. These themes are discussed in this chapter, applying disability studies, Critical Disability Theory (CDT), and veteran studies as theoretical frameworks to interpret the findings, due to a lack of a coherent theory regarding this specific population in the Israeli HE. Viewing disability as a natural element of human variation (Davis, 2014), rather than a homogeneous community with comparable attention to veteran students' status, was a significant component of this study. Subsequently, in this Chapter, I provide a holistic perspective that connects the participants' narratives and suggests that "the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Participants in this study experienced a variety of problems and impediments (academic, environmental, and social) during their academic journey. The following section discusses the participants' thoughts on identity in general and their disability identity in particular.

Disability as a Complex Category

The participants in this study were all formally recognized as DIDF veterans by the MoD who had served in various IDF corps. They were all enrolled full-time and came from diverse academic backgrounds, ranging from freshman to graduate students, with some being first-generation students. The educational experiences of DIDF-veteran varied among the participants in the Israeli HE system. According to the findings, DIDF-veterans identify themselves as students with a disability in a variety of situations on their campuses and during various contacts with other individuals on campus. They chose to embrace different identities: DIDF-veteran students, students with LD/ADHD, or students with specific disabilities as a result of an aggravation of a military-related injury or other physical medical conditions. Some of them even self-identified as students without disabilities. The gaps between the two data collection phases (survey and interview), as well as the iterative processing of the interview transcripts, contributed to this insight.

Multiple and Intersecting Identities

This study found that DIDF-veteran students can each have multiple identities that are relevant to their HE experience. To begin with, students in higher education frequently face a range of shifting identities and expectations (to be a good friend, to be charismatic and respected, to make their families proud, to be a model student, and to be successful). While students with disabilities in general confront the same demands as their peers, they must develop ways of knowing, learning, and being in a world that are different from their peers' (Wood, 2017).

The complexity of identity emerged as a significant factor in this study, influencing how DIDF-veteran students perceive themselves and choose to reveal their identity, whether as DIDF-veteran students, students without disabilities, or students with other disabilities. Recent

research observed that American veteran students may be simultaneously negotiating multiple identity roles of soldier, citizen, or student as part of their daily college experiences (Ghosh et al., 2020; Hammond, 2016; Naphan & Elliott, 2015; Pellegrino & Hoggan, 2015). This understanding was also relevant for DIDF-veteran students. These social roles and identities were important for the participants in various situations like in their daily life routine, challenges in getting ready to go to class, HE high expenses, family support, employment status, etc. In this context, VCT recognizes “a third space, where student veterans are students, veterans, and the unique mesh of the two identities” (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017, p. 661).

There is a vast literature on the transition of veterans into HE in the USA referring to specific roles and identities from different perspectives, but not all of them are relate specifically to veterans with disabilities. For example, Pellegrino and Hoggan (2015) emphasized the transition from military service to non-military life and the role change from being a soldier in the military environment to a student in a community college. The researchers emphasized the influence of age and gender differences that shaped their transition experiences from the military to HE. However, although mentioning other factors that could have an impact on the students' transition, such as mental disorders, their examination did not include disability as a focus of their research.

The participants shared their identity variations and relevant experiences in terms of their demographic information, like gender perspective, marriage status, military service experience, type of military-related injury, medical condition, other disabilities following their military service, other injuries, or cognitive difficulties. In addition, the participants reported that the intersectional nature of their identity (i.e., fitting to multiple groups in terms of disability, combat/non-combat veterans, gender, academic background, social status) could sometimes

hinder their level of comfort to engage in self-advocacy in search for support within their HE settings.

One of the most important aspects of a student's academic experience is self-identification. This identity includes a sense of belonging to the academic institution as well as living within a meaningful and fruitful normative framework. Therefore, during their academic studies, students with disabilities, in general, go through two distinct processes: the formation of their student identity and the formation of their disability identity, which regularly changes forms, particularly in the context and environment of HE (Almog & Tenne Rinde, 2021).

The participants openly shared their stories of becoming DIDF veterans, the difficulty of the injury event, the recognition process by the MoD, aggravation of injury or medical condition, and in some cases the fact that they also have more than one disability. As was stated by Michal “My story is complex” regarding being a woman, a combat soldier, dealing with PTSD, and having a LD. Other participants echoed this narrative in various forms multiple times throughout the interview sessions. Some of them were frequently using the Hebrew word ‘מורכב’ - ‘complex’ to describe various difficulties in their experiences as students. Other students used different metaphors to express their unique, challenging experiences and their wish to be like regular students ‘a Toyota Car’ like in the case of Eran. Although Eran and other participants in this study mentioned that they did not feel the military-related injury/illness defined them, their narratives and their descriptions and especially metaphors reflected the profound impact of their disability on their embodied experience (Wood, 2017).

Disability Identity

The participants’ disability identity was large, fundamental, and significant element in their experiences in HE. Disability identity affected every aspect of their lives, and particularly

how they introduce themselves to other people on campus. Their perception was based on the challenges and barriers they encountered during their academic studies. Disability identity, in comparison to other social identities mentioned in former studies, such as race, class, gender, and so on, is a relatively new term that has not been well investigated in the context of higher education in general (Kimball et al., 2016) and veteran students in Israeli higher education in particular. By viewing disability as a natural characteristic of human heterogeneity (Davis, 2014), rather than a homogeneous group, this study was able to gain a better understanding of the participants' identities and experiences.

The increase in the veteran student demographic in American HE pushed educators and researchers to better understand veteran students as complex individuals with multidimensional constructed identities (Vacchi et al., 2017). Phillips and Lincoln (2017) designed the VCT principles to better learn about American veteran students and to call attention to their challenges and their positionality during their academic studies. Data analysis revealed that the theoretical frameworks used in this study prompted the induction process and understanding of the participants' experiences based on several key tenets of the VCT (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017). For example with respect to veteran students living with disabilities, Phillips and Lincoln (2017) defined the sixth tenet of the VCT with the understanding that “student veterans experience multiple identities at once” (p. 662). The VCT view disability as a significant component in the lives of veteran students by applying the perspectives of disability studies. Additionally, this study increases the discussion and raises awareness of the lack of thinking and existing stigma and stereotypes in the Israeli society which may affect the educational experiences of DIDF veterans in HE (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017).

In recent years scholars like Hammond (2015) also provided a theoretical understanding of this population by exploring how combat- veteran students experience college and subsequently construct a more complex sense of self as part of their overall transition. Due to the lack of a coherent theory encompassing this specific population in Israeli HE, these theoretical perspectives were chosen to look at comparable populations such as students with disabilities in general and American student veterans in particular. Former studies on veteran students, particularly on the complicated perceptions of identity among American veteran students and how they influenced their HE experience, were evaluated to better understand the identification component of this population . There is a dearth of studies related to the identity management strategies of DIDF veterans during their HE studies.

During the interviews, the complexity of the participants' disability identities and experiences were revealed regarding different contexts on their campuses during their registration process, their interactions with staff, faculty, and peers, class activities, and social interactions and especially in seeking support from the DSC staff. Overall, data showed that the participants' perspectives were shaped by their identities as HE students, DIDF veterans, individuals with LD/ADHD, or individuals with other medical issues. As students in HE, they encountered physical barriers, academic challenges, and social or financial issues. This finding is consistent with the literature (Hammond, 2016; Kraus & Rattray, 2013; Mobley et al., 2019; Myers et al., 2014; D. Vacchi et al., 2017). Hammond (2016) for example called it “the phenomenon of taking on a particular identity for student combat veterans in their interactions with students, faculty, and staff on their campuses and a contextual activation of this identity” (p. 147).

In this study, the way DIDF-veteran students made sense of their self-identity as students with disabilities as well as the way they chose to identify with a disability were shaped by their experiences in Israeli HE. A range of relevant experiences were discovered to have shaped the participants' disability identity on their campuses. The key issues covered by participants were student academic performance, specifically coping with academic tasks, attending classes, and overcoming on-campus physical barriers, learning strategies, and seeking peer support.

Furthermore, the results suggest that participants' disability identity and identity as regular students are often intertwined, informing each other. Both of these identities were constituted and reconstituted for most participants, as students were exposed to new information and experiences during their academic studies. Unexpected failures (especially in English and Statistic courses) often prompted students to consider their identification with a disability, while success and meeting academic assignments often served as an indicator of well-being, performance, and ability to meet expectations. In this context, Broyer and Hammer (2019) summarized the concept of disability as performance that examines the actions of individuals in social situations and recognizes the active role of each individual in those situations. More specifically, the concept of disability as performance emphasizes agency in the social sphere and highlights the opportunities for people with and without disabilities to influence power relations and change notions of ability, disability, and normalcy. Broyer and Hammer (2019), like previous disability researchers (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013; Riddell & Weedon, 2014; Shakespeare, 1996; Shakespeare et al., 2006), see disability "not as a fixed and stable status, but as an individual's feature that is shaped by circumstance, and hence dynamic and unstable" (p. 189).

Besides, the social model of disability and CDT, both of which view disability as a part of social diversity (Davis, 2014) and embrace disability as a source of pride rather than a tragic

condition to be cured, are based on this approach (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013; Linton, 1998a; Putnam, 2005). This study demonstrated this perspective among disability identity of DIDF-veteran students. As Abes and Wallace (2018) argued, “disability identity scholarship will benefit from critical perspectives that aim toward disability justice. Further, treating disability as a social identity allows for the celebration of disability culture” (p. 546).

Disability as a Fluid State

An important finding related to the variety of disabilities the participants revealed, and especially its connection to their coping experiences as students in HE. First, in considering the participants’ military-related injury and student identity connections, two groups among them emerged: those who positioned their military-related injury DIDF veteran identities as a defining part of their student identity and those who did not. The findings presented an interesting viewpoint as half of the participants chose to identify as students without disability when they answered the survey item “How do you identify yourself on-campus?” Their reported self-identification later changed through the interviews, when most of the participants shared both their military-related disability and additional impairments (LD/ADHD) or other medical conditions that impact them as students. These findings are aligned with data reported in recent years in the context of American veteran students. For example, the Rand Corporation report (2008) predicted that “as many as a quarter of these students will have hidden disabilities, such as TBI, PTSD, and other emotional disorders. Others will have physical disabilities, while others may have cognitive disabilities such as LD or ADHD that existed before military services” (Madaus et al., 2009, P.14). Kraus and Rattray (2013), as well as Myers et al., (2014) found that American student-veterans might have had psychological or LD before joining the army which emerged or intensified during or after the military service. As is well known today, LD is not a

phenomenon that accompanies students during a period of k-12 schooling only. Fichten et al. (2016) found that Israeli students almost exclusively identified as having LDs and/or ADHD. These findings support the current study's findings and add up to the growing body of evidence from other studies indicating a high prevalence of LDs and ADHD among Israeli students (Finkelstein & Tabakman, 2008; Heiman & Olenik Shemesh, 2012; Heiman & Precel, 2003; Russak & Daniel Hellwing, 2019; Sachs, et al., 2020) as well as among American veteran students (Kraus & Rattray, 2013; Myers et al., 2014; Shackelford, 2009; Wood, 2017).

In most situations, following high school graduation, the mandatory military service is an important milestone in Israel. Military duty presents many cognitive, physical, emotional, and social challenges to young adults in general, and young adults with LD in particular. There has been little research on this population through their military service in the IDF. From these studies, a complex picture emerged on the adjustment of IDF soldiers with LD (Altalef-Green, 2010; Toren, 2018). In parallel to the trends seen in the civilian population at large, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of young adults claiming learning difficulties during the recruiting stages of the IDF (Altalef-Green, 2010; Toren, 2018). Soldiers with learning difficulties, according to Altel-Green (2010), display normal organizational behavior throughout service and finish the entire length of military service in the IDF. However, their scores during military training courses were found to be lower, and they completed the training courses at a lower rate than soldiers without a LD. As a result, when compared to the overall IDF population, their rate of promotion throughout duty (to the rank of sergeant or officer) is low.

It is crucial to keep in mind that symptoms of impairments such as ADHD, language issues, and learning disabilities persist into adulthood (Shinn & Ofiesh, 2012; Vogel et al., 2016). Moreover, for students with disabilities, the transition from childhood to adulthood also

highlights ongoing challenges in a variety of categories, including emotional, social, intellectual, personal, and occupational issues (Goldberg et al., 2003; Heiman & Precel, 2003; Raskind et al., 1999; Shinn & Ofiesh, 2012; Vogel & Sharoni, 2011).

Two important laws enhance and support the integration of students with LDs and ADHD in HE: the Law of the Rights of Students with Learning Disabilities in Post-Secondary Institutions (2008), which was enacted to protect the rights of candidates with LDs seeking admission to HE as well as to control the profession of LDs diagnosis; and the regulations on Accessibility Adjustments to Public Places, exclusively for HE (2016). Through these laws, the Israeli HE system has committed to fostering inclusive education, equal rights, social justice, and environmental accessibility for students with disabilities (Almog, 2018a; Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019). In this context, changes in educational policy, approach, and support practices for students with disabilities in the Israeli education system as a whole were influenced by the increase in this population and specifically of students with LDs. For example, in the 2015-2014 academic year, about 10% of all undergraduate and graduate students in state-funded higher education institutions were recognized as students with LDs (Weininger, 2016). This number is similar to the estimated number of students with LDs in the primary and secondary education system in Israel (Katchergin, 2015). Many students with disabilities in higher education institutions are diagnosed with LDs, ADHD, or both, as has been shown on a global and local basis. (AL-Yagon & Margalit, 2016; Avgar, 2018; Ben-Simon et al., 2019; Heiman & Precel, 2003).

The Israeli HE development and expansion had an impact on high schools, with a stronger focus on preparation and increased competition among students; on the other hand, many colleges lowered their admission requirements in comparison to universities in academic

programs with high enrollment requirements, such as Law and business and administration studies. There are also alternative tracks for obtaining a baccalaureate (*Bagrut*) certificate in specific programs in some HE institutions, and one-year preparatory pre-academic programs (*Mechinot*) are offered to students from disadvantaged backgrounds after their military service (Ayalon et al., 1992 as cited in Guri-Rosenblit, 1996) or to others who want to retake the *Bagrut* exams to improve their grades and their chances to get accepted into HE institutions (Ayalon & Yogev, 2005; Guri-Rosenblit, 1996). Students in these programs are often students who have struggled in school and are seeking to pass matriculation tests in various disciplines in order to be admitted to various programs at the academy, given the fact that LD affects a large proportion of the population (Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019).

Aside from the high incidence of LDs in Israeli society and among study participants, additional impairment as a result of aggravation of military-related injury or another injury had had an important impact on some individuals' academic performance. Dalit, for example, was in a serious car accident shortly before she started her Master's degree, and it impacted her ability to attend classes. Therefore, her primary functional needs and support requests related to her mobility and accessibility needs. On the other hand, when she was an undergraduate student, she did apply for academic accommodations since she had also been diagnosed as a student with LD/ADHD during her first year. The fluidity of her disability was impacted by new events in her life that affected her functionality and the necessity to reveal only part of the disabilities she faced as a student. She presented her shoulder injury in the military, which affected her ability to write during her classes or exams, only after she revealed her additional disabilities as a result of the accident. Dalit was not the only one to use this strategy. In several cases, other participants

chose to reveal a different disability than their group affiliation (DIDF veterans) during their interactions on campus for different use.

These findings aligned with Barnartt's (2010) statement that “there is a lot of evidence that disability is a fluid state and not a dichotomous one” (p. 2). Barnartt's) standpoint considers a link between impairment (physical state) and disability, which is neither fixed nor permanent; rather, it is fluid and difficult to anticipate. Furthermore, if this is the situation, there is a need to reconsider how we measure and tally disability. Barnartt's (2010) argument is meaningful and powerful since we must always take into consideration social processes and their consequences on individuals since our focus is on the individual in society rather than the individual in isolation. Therefore, “we must examine the idea of disability as a fluid state at the micro and macro levels of analysis” (p. 3). According to Barnartt (2010), at the micro level, the focus is on interactions between or among small numbers of people and therefore there are no fixed identities, interactions, roles, or selves. Among a plethora of fluid categories, "learning disability" appears to be one of the more flexible and fluid (Barnartt, 2010, P.18).

This current study revealed that 85 percent of the participants (11/13) had multiple impairment conditions (both related to military service and others). Segev and Schiff (2019), who examined the integration of DIDF veterans into the workforce, found that “when compared with physical disabilities, all other types of disabilities (mental, integrated, post-trauma, head injury) lower the likelihood of integration into the workforce” (p. 7). Accordingly, the findings of this study also suggested that when the disability was more complex or when there was more than one disability, the students indicated more difficulties and complexity in coping with the academic tasks as well as integrating socially. This fact has to do with how DIDF veterans coped

with their challenges and how they managed their disability disclosure to receive support during their studies.

Negotiating Disability

Disability identity was a central theme in the participants' personal narratives. It touched on every aspect of their lives, especially the way they presented themselves to other people on their campuses. The participants were mindful of their differences as disabled students and engaged in complex dialogue with it. Their self-identification reflects their position on the continuum between normalcy (ordinary students, like everyone else) and being students with disabilities (physical, sensory, mental, cognitive). The findings revealed a wide range of abilities and disabilities among the participants, as well as a variety of barriers (physical, academic, and social) they encountered during their studies. These barriers influenced their self-perception and identity as students, as well as the disclosure of their disability to others on campus. . Most importantly, DIFD-veteran students were discovered to be as diverse as any other student group, with their own experiences, self-reported connections to their identity, and perceptions.

Stigma and Self-Identification

Stigma is a common theme in discussions about disability identity in higher education and other settings (Shackelford, 2009; Wood, 2017). Likewise, my participants discussed a wide range of opinions on disability and stigma, while many of their stories reflected personal experiences with stigmatized identities that are also formed and forced on them by others in the general public (Wood, 2017) or negative reactions from significant others in their lives (Shackelford, 2009). Hence, we need to remember that individual identity negotiation takes place in a social context and is the result of complex relationships with other individuals. As Evans et al.'s' (2017) second core component of CDT specified, "local knowledge as a method of

understanding the lived experiences of people with disabilities” (p. 67). This principle was especially relevant and locally placed in my examination of the participants' narratives, as it should be for anyone working with DIDF-veteran students in Israeli higher education settings.

In this study, it seems that the participants were aware of the stigma associated with their impairments and their group affiliation as DIDF veterans. They sought to control the perceptions of others so that they could have the opportunity to be perceived as any other students and as equals. In this context we must remember that “People with disabilities operate within social and cultural contexts that disregard, dismiss, and devalue them” (Olney & Brockelman, 2003, p. 35).

Visibility is frequently a key element when it comes to defining disability as unusual in our society (Goffman, 1963, 1968). In this study, the participants frequently mentioned situations in which they were identified as DIDF veterans by others or felt it necessary to disclose their disability identity due to an external marker that labeled them as such. Because of the injury recognition and support provided by the MoD, the participants said they were either stigmatized as heroes or as people with high economic status. In several cases, the participants discussed their injury/illness or the circumstances of their military-related disability primarily in terms of how they are perceived by others, such as administrative staff and peers. These perceptions include being viewed as a hero, or feeling others' respect and admiration, or in terms of benefits and rights, how a new car or a campus car entry permit are perceived. This prevalent stigma associated with DIDF veterans derives from Israeli society's perception of them as having a higher status than other disabled groups in Israel, based on the financial benefits to which they are entitled (Ben-Moshe, 2016; Gal, 2001; Gal & Bar, 2000; Mor, 2006). In contrast to this perception, many of the study participants had low disability percentages, therefore their financial benefits are lower in comparison to the benefits of DIDF veterans with high disability

percentages. Furthermore, only disabled veterans with a 20% or higher recognition rate are eligible for benefits from the MoD as well as a funding for HE (Israel Ministry of Defense, 2017). Indeed, some of the participants revealed their financial struggles throughout the interviews.

In cases of invisible impairments, such as PTSD, several participants decided not to report their disability or the fact that they were DIDF veterans. Sachs et al. (2020) reported on administrative and academic staff's lack of familiarity with invisible disabilities. They believe the low prevalence is related to students' concerns of being stigmatized as a result of disclosure, as well as their lack of awareness of the rights and support services available in HE, along with the academic and administrative staff's lack of skills.

The impact of PTSD and stigma on DIDF veteran students in HE has been little explored in the literature, despite the potential impact of PTSD on student functioning. One recent study looked at the integration of DIDF veterans into the workforce, including those suffering from PTSD (Segev & Schiff, 2019). Segev and Schiff (2019) found that DIDF veterans with PTSD had more difficulty integrating into the employment compared to DIDF veterans without PTSD. According to the study, the students' challenges stemmed from PTSD-related functional deficits as well as work performance expectations, including hierarchical settings with rules, deadlines, teamwork, and sticking to objectives and outcomes, all of which can be problematic for people with PTSD. All these elements are applicable to HE as well, and can explain some of the difficulties of participants with PTSD in my study.

Overall, due to the stigmatization of DIDF veterans in Israeli society, several participants stated that they tend to assimilate on their campus to preserve a positive image and ensure efficient and smooth interactions ('be like everybody else (כמו כולם); like able-bodied

individuals). Every new experience, challenge, or connection requires a person (at HE, workplace, or social occasions) to make a decision whether to disclose, especially? if there is no visible sign of disability. Like Goffman's (1963) famous quote - "to display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when and where" (p. 57).

Regarding the stigma toward DIDF veterans, people often think of DIDF veterans as people with physical impairments who use wheelchairs or crutches. This assumption was also viewed in the Fichten et al., (2016) study which was the only study that referred to the presence of DIDF-veteran students in HE. Fichten et al., (2016) stated this notion as part of their hypothesizes - "We expected a larger proportion of Israeli students to be veterans with disabilities such as mobility impairments, and chronic physical and mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorders" (p. 25). Although Fichten et al., (2018) expressed awareness of the presence of DIDF veterans in Israeli higher education institutions, they did not present clear findings on personal attitudes or how those students identified themselves to various support providers on their campuses.

Overall, this research results highlight that in the case of disability, there are opposing processes at play, some of which encourage people to embrace their impaired identities while others continue to stigmatize disability (Riddell & Weedon, 2014).

Breaking the Binary Thinking

The participants' perspectives of themselves and how they developed their disability identities over their time in HE were prominent findings in this study. The participants employed several narratives to characterize their experience while navigating between being just students, DIDF-veteran students, or students with disabilities. It is impossible to generalize from the study

due to the limited sample size and the differences between them, their military-related injuries, and the numerous challenges they experienced as students. Church's (2009) study came to a similar conclusion that “it is impossible to generalize regarding the functional capabilities or limitations of combat veterans due to the wide range of disabilities, diagnoses, and contributing factors” (p. 44).

Hammond (2016) also highlighted the difference between combat and non-combat veteran students as he observed the population of military veterans defined as combatants, the way they perceived themselves, other students, or the way they are perceived by the other students, and the impact of these identity components on their use of support services. Hammond (2016) found the participants' inferred perception of self was based on their interactions with nonveteran civilians in and out of the classroom or other social contexts. Hammond found that self-perception often caused participants “to selectively conceal their identity as a combat veteran in class or when conducting an assignment and to isolate themselves from nonveterans”. Hammond (2016) indicated that the stigma toward combat veterans as killers lacking emotions was mainly related to emotional distress or hidden injury like PTSD which “contributed to an inferred perception of self” which resulted in low frequency of reaching out for services or low registration records for classroom accommodations (p. 156).

Similar to former studies, my participants experienced a variety of disabilities as a result of their military service, though the nature of their military-related injury was not always related to their role as combat soldiers or to battle. I would like to emphasize that attitudes in the Israeli public and among Israeli students toward military veterans who participated in combat differ from attitudes toward military veterans that can be found among American students. Additionally, there was no consistent pattern of turning to DSCs among these two groups (combat/non-combat).

In light of the findings that emerged from this study and based on the theoretical framework, I sought to challenge binary thinking and its the power (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009; Shildrick, 2012) that is usually inherent in society. The notion of "breaking binary thinking" relates to both the individual variety, disability needs, and the social perspective of DIDF veterans in Israel. Viewing disability as a continuum rather than a binary idea may help us break down the binary categorizations of DIDF veterans as well as other disabilities (such as LDs) and allow us to address diverse types of DIDF-veteran students' experiences.

CDT and VCT shed new light on previous conceptions of disabled IDF veterans in general and students in particular. Using these theories, I was able to question binary thinking, especially when it came to disability identification and student orientation. The Social Model and particularly CDT both recognize that disability identity can be dynamic and fluid rather than fixed (Barnartt, 2010). Furthermore, the VCT was designed for insiders, for those researchers who grasp the numerous constructions that make up a student veteran identity and influence their success or failure in HE (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017). Phillips (2014) theory address the variations that exist among US military veteran students and their experiences in American colleges and institutions (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017). While there are some similarities between DIDF veterans and US veterans, there are also some distinctions.

Identity, Disability, and Strategies of Disclosure

There was a large range of diversity in the visibility of the participants' military-related disabilities, in addition to the heterogeneity in their military experience and military-related disabilities. The majority of the participants stated having more than one impairment that affects their academic performance. Therefore, they have used a variety of approaches and ways of managing their disability identity.

The data have provided some information about what makes DIDF-veteran students different from other students in Israeli HE institutions and expanded our understanding of how student identity is shaped by their disability needs. The participants described in detail their experiences and the different barriers they have encountered as students. They were aware of their differences from other students, and they revealed a variety of identities with different support agencies (administrative staff, faculty, peers, and DSCs staff) on their campuses at different times and places. An interesting pattern emerged when I looked at the links between having a military-related injury or illness, having a group affiliation stigma, and being a student with additional disabilities. Students with disabilities, and particularly DIDF-veterans, face plenty of new and difficult challenges in higher education, including academic, social, and body concerns such as mobility and accessibility matters.

The participants talked about their need to deal with barriers and difficulties related to their impairments as part of the social and political construction in Israeli society. The findings of this study indicated a variety of disability identities, barriers, disclosure strategies, and dilemmas of DIDF-veteran students during their academic education journey. Former studies (Hammond, 2016; Kraus & Rattray, 2013; Mobley et al., 2019; Myers et al., 2014; D. Vacchi et al., 2017) discussed various disclosure strategies that American disabled veterans students apply: concealment, passing, and selective disclosure. Indeed, the participants in my study employed all of these while managing their disability needs. Specifically, the participants shared their experiences to cope with more than one disability during their lives and especially through their academic journey.

Concealment - Unwillingness to be Disclosed

This study found that DIDF-veteran students have utilized a range of disclosure strategies of different identities at various times, for various reasons, and with various people on campus. The participants' self-perceptions of their disabilities' visibility, specific needs and expectations in higher education, social contexts, disability policies, and available support services, as well as the distribution of responsibilities among care providers, were all taken into their consideration in seeking for support (on-campus and off-campus). The participants were aware of their unique challenges and needs as students at HE, which were found to be largely comparable to American students' experiences as documented in previous studies (Branker, 2009; Griffin & Gilbert, 2015; Hammond, 2016; Madaus et al., 2009). For example, in some cases, the participants expressed the difficulty of sharing their stories, needs or disclosing their military-related disabilities in cases of invisible injuries and especially PTSD (Kelley et al., 2013).

There are a variety of reasons why DIDF-veteran students are hesitant to self-identify as students with disabilities, even when they face severe barriers, according to the . For example, DIDF-veteran students may simply want to blend in with other students (Shackelford, 2009), to 'be like everybody else (כמו כולם) as some participants stated. In several cases, this wish has resulted in not applying for any formal support from the DSCs like in the case of Miki and others. They did, however, disclose their military-related injury and their DIDF-veteran status in other circumstances, such as when they needed an entry permit for their vehicle or a dog to accompany them.

Another strategy used by some participants which I categorized as concealment was described by Wood (2017) as a genericism strategy in which the student reveals the status of being a disabled person but resists a specific disclosure of their type of disability or being recognized as DIDF veteran, like in Yaron's case " I did not submit it as a DIDF veteran, as a student with a

disability ... I have a disability in my spine, these are the certificates from my doctors ... “. These examples are part of the disclosure strategies that were used by the participants. The literature applies a variety of terms related to disability and disability identity concerns, ranging from disability visibility categories, and coming out (Samuels, 2003) to disability disclosure strategies, passing, concealment (Cureton, 2018), genericism and selective disclosure (Miller et al., 2019; Wood, 2017). Kerschbaum et al., (2017) indicated “disability disclosure is not a singular event, not a once-and-for-all action but, rather an ongoing process of continuously, in a variety of settings and contexts, performing and negotiating disability awareness and perceptibility” (p. 1).

These findings highlight the need for a more flexible, holistic thinking that considers the individual from a variety of perspectives in light of various circumstances and needs, without prejudice or generalization.

Passing and Selective disclosure

All of the participants in this study were officially recognized as DIDF veterans, despite a large range of diversity in the visibility of their impairments. The participants' narratives suggest that DIDF-veteran students actively negotiate their disability identities during the time of their academic studies. Henderson and Ostrander (2008) extend this notion of disabled identity: “If disability, like gender and like sexuality ... is always in the process of becoming, then disability is something we do, rather than something we are” (p. 1). In this context, the complexity of identity greatly impacted DIDF-veteran students' choice of disability disclosure management?, whether as DIDF veterans or as students with various disabilities (passing, selective disclosure), and what resources they use during their time in HE. In contrast to Segev and Schiff's (2019) findings, this study found no link between the condition of injury during combat and a more successful integration into HE. However, the individuals in this study who were injured in

combat also indicated that they had been diagnosed with PTSD, which made it more difficult for them to complete their HE tasks for example. In most cases, the participants who were identified as DIDF veterans with PTSD requested support primarily for academic needs, such as academic accommodation due to LD or ADHD symptoms that had been diagnosed before their service in the military. Likewise, Wood (2017) stated that students with disabilities and especially disabled veterans may be navigating different kinds of choices than they had during their studies in k-12, about how and when to identify as disabled.

Participants' self-perceptions as DIDF-veteran students appeared to have little bearing on their ability to function independently in daily life. The participants viewed their impairments as something that must be overcome through concealment, passing, or selective disclosure to sustain their student routine and, to effectively complete their academic assignments. The participants have attempted to minimize the impact of their impairments by concealing and passing strategies to facilitate their functional integration in areas such as mobility, learning activities and assignments, and social interactions. Their approaches to overcoming difficulties and barriers during their HE experiences were diverse and represented the functional component of their needs. Not only do many DIDF-veteran students have LDs, but they also selectively disclose one or the other depending on the situation and circumstances, according to my research.

Some students select to disclose themselves as students with LD rather than DIDF-veteran students when they applied for services from DSC office on their campus. Several recent research on the impact of DSCs on students with disabilities, particularly those on students with LDs, have been conducted in Israel (Ben-Simon et al., 2019; Finkelstein & Dahan, 2019; Heiman & Olenik Shemesh, 2012; Lipka et al., 2020; Russak & Daniel Hellwing, 2019; Sachs, et

al., 2020) while the contribution of DSCs to DIDF-veteran students has received little attention. Sachs et al.'s (2020) recent report on the Israeli HE explained that a high percentage of academic and administrative staff meetings took place with students with LDs because this population, more than other populations of students with disabilities, claim their rights to accessibility and academic accommodations, according to the Law on the Rights of Students with Learning Disabilities in Post-Secondary Institutions (2008; 2014). Additionally, it was found in recent studies that most students who come to the DSCs have LD and/or ADHD. This is probably since services for this group are more established and a high rate of students tends to apply for these services and accommodations, especially for examinations (Greenberger, 2016; Sachs, et al., 2020).

Wood (2017) defined Selective Disclosure as a practice by people with disabilities “revealing some disabilities while concealing others” (p. 89). This definition seems appropriate and precise for describing the practices and preferences of this study sample. Other selective disclosures that were expressed by some participants reflected the prevalence of PTSD as a phenomenon and the impact of stigma on mental health disabilities (Wood, 2017). Some participants in this study (Eran, Michal, Uzi, Rachel) preferred to disclose a physical disability or LD/ADHD rather than their PTSD. These examples are aligned with Wood’s (2017) study, where two participants also preferred to disclose their physical disabilities but not their mental disabilities.

Choice of Support

The participants’ fluid disability identity also impacted their search of support. The participants chose to share their needs and request support from a range of on-campus and off-campus support agencies. The student may choose the type of support relevant to him in a way

that will give him an appropriate and practical response to his needs, although this is clearly influenced by the availability of support resources and the student's service awareness.

Several participants in the study requested assistance due to learning challenges and academic/pedagogical barriers, while others requested assistance due to physical barriers in the educational environment, both inside and outside the classroom. Participants found both formal and informal support resources, as support can take various forms. It is vital to note that there is no systematic administrative actions to identify students with disabilities in Israeli HE; instead, students with disabilities must identify themselves as having a disability and request the resources and supports they need from their college or university's DSS office (Getzel & Thoma, 2008). As a result, it's important to encourage disabled students in general, and disabled IDF students in particular, to become aware of services on the one hand, and to teach them how to advocate for their own needs on the other.

IDF veterans are not unique in Israeli society, but DIDF veteran students seem to be unique in HE. In the context of the military-related injury experience, suffering, and being labeled as disabled, the participants shared their ways of managing their daily life after they finished their hospitalization and moved forward to build their future in the Israeli HE system. DIDF-veteran student veterans may experience challenges accessing needed services while integrating into a college or university environment.

Disabled IDF Veterans Outreach On-Campus

This study, like previous studies on U.S. military graduates (Elnitsky et al., 2018; Griffin & Gilbert, 2015; Hammond, 2016; Madaus et al., 2009; Mobley et al., 2019; Vacchi et al., 2017; Vacchi & Berger, 2014), revealed that military-related injuries of DIDF veterans, such as sensory disability, PTSD, physical disabilities, and other impairments affected how they used campus

support resources to help them integrate into the HE system. The participants reported searching for the right services or assistance to meet their environmental or academic needs. Since reaching out for help inevitably required disclosure, this approach sometimes illustrated the link between the participants' disability identity, needs, disclosure strategy, and coping mechanisms. The participants selected when and where they reveal their disabilities, self-advocate for their needs, call out for support or remain silent. The participants created a sense of integration for themselves through a process of formal or informal disclosure via self-advocacy accordingly to their condition, needs, and disability identity.

The findings of this study revealed that DIDF-veteran students used disclosure strategies that are consistent with recent Israeli research (Sachs, Shrueuer, Spiegelman, et al., 2020): Concerning the prevalence of students with LDs and ADHD among HE students, as well as their high prevalence in encounters and disclosure to administrative and academic staff compared to students with other disabilities (physical, sensory, mental). DIDF-veteran students used their LD as a vehicle to reach out for support service. As most participants came in contact with the DSCs because of LDs or ADHD difficulties, not because of a military-related injury (either visible or invisible; physical, sensory, or mental disabilities). These findings support? Russak and Daniel Hellwing's (2019) study which examined definitions of success as well as the factors that promote it amongst graduate students with learning disabilities. The researchers found that students with LDs used "the LD as a motivation to succeed" and invited a shift in the conventional discourse from "being deficit oriented to one that is focused on empowerment, where the disability is not seen as a deficit but is seen as a force that gives one a unique advantage over others who do not have a disability" (Russak & Daniel Hellwing, 2019, p. 420).

Additionally, their participants believed that their “LDs are the source of their distinctive strengths” (p. 420). This conclusion, that the LD served as a motivator and a source of strength, is surprising, given the association of LD with procrastination behaviors, low motivation and low success rates in prior research (Russak & Daniel Hellwing, 2019).

The findings of the current study illuminate the powerful impact of LD on the successful experiences of DIDF veteran students as well. For many of my participants, their LDs were one of the main causes? of formal and informal disclosure. The participants described how situations they have encountered both as DIDF-veteran students and students with LDs or ADHD influenced their disability identity management and disclosure strategies in seeking support, especially academic accommodations. Their perspective on their disability, service awareness, and self-strategies, as well as disclosure strategies, contributed to the formation of students’ identity as well as to their disclosure strategies and their success as well; “*It completely saved me,*” as Noa pointed out. In this context, it is important to note that most of the participants (8/13) studied in HE institutions that were part of the “*Revolution in Higher Education Project.*” Over the years that this study took place, there was a considerable expansion of the activity of the DSC in those institutions.

Another important influence on seeking support by DIDF-veteran students with LDs was the participants’ past experiences (prior HE settings, or experiences during primary and secondary school education). Their disclosure strategies also assisted them build their identities on campus and in social situations as well as in group studying situations.

In terms of seeking assistance from various sources, it is vital to understand that the MoD has very little authority to aid DIDF students within the HE system. “*This is outside the academy,*” Shir said, referring to the types of academic support that a DIDF veteran student can

receive from the MoD, such as classes for reinforcement, accompaniment, and support through class sessions, etc. It is worth noting that Israeli higher education institutions do not provide a service for creating class summaries (notetaking), and live transcription is usually only offered for students with hearing issues through third-party funding sources such as the NII, the MoD, and others. In this context, Almog (2018b) provided the number of students with disabilities in HE institutions following the type of funding they receive from a range of government bodies, including the Ministry of Health, the NII, the Ministry of Health, and other external associations. However, as Almog pointed out, no research has been done on the distribution of resources across entities in HE for the benefit of students with disabilities.

Several participants have brought up the difficulties of sitting for lengthy periods on various seats on campus. The shared experience of sitting during their studies was found to be a common theme referring to the fact that on one hand sitting in class is seen as a necessary aspect of attending class and being a student. While on the other hand, for some this common habit is one of the most challenging things they face as students. Their shared narratives reminded me of the well-known proverb in the Jewish oral traditions (*Mishna*) –

Who is a hero?

*A person who knows how to resist and curb
his passions .*

מיהו הגיבור?

זה הכובש את ייצרו.

On the one hand, a DIDF veteran is viewed as a hero, and on the other hand, some of the participants in the study have a tough time overcoming the challenges they confront in sitting in class, as well as other challenges they have met in the Israeli society.

Overall, Israeli HE institutions should adopt more holistic and inclusive attitudes, as well as awareness of many identities and more flexible knowledge, to properly respond to this

population. Faculty, staff, and DSCs on-campus can make a profound difference for DIDF-veteran students.

Awareness of Rights and Support Services

Students with disabilities face additional difficulties that are different in nature from the difficulties students without disabilities face during their studies (Heiman & Precel, 2003; Lipka et al., 2020; Yssel et al., 2016). The participants' narratives revealed a lack of service awareness, a lack of self-advocacy strategies, or using other disability identities out of their desire not to disclose their military-related injury and status as DIDF veterans to non-disabled others on their campuses on many occasions.

Some of the participants reported that they had previously studied at other academic institutions and that their current educational experience was influenced by their past studies' experience and knowledge. Sachs and Schreuer (2011) referred to this common phenomenon of transition between HE institutions, stating that students with disabilities more frequently transferred between HE institutions in Israel, in part because they did not or could not receive adequate institutional support at their first institution. Although this study finding is consistent with previous research, it is worth noting that the reason for the participants' shift across HE institutions was not always related to a lack of support from their campus's disability support services office. In some cases, participants' transitions were associated with another disability that was not related to their acquired military disability, but to LD/ADHD symptoms, which in some cases were diagnosed before their military service. Listening to the participants' voices of self and disability, it was clear that they adopted a self-determination strategy to keep their military-related injury and identification as disabled IDF veterans concealed from non-disabled people on their campuses.

Support Usage and Assessment

In general, Israel's higher education system is still not accessible enough to accommodate students with disabilities, and it does not always respond adequately to students' diverse needs (Almog, 2018a; Almog & Tenne Rinde, 2021; Sachs et al., 2020). The participants' stories revealed a significant absence of organized outreach to DIDF-veteran students. Additionally, the participants shared expectations, perceptions of the effectiveness of available services, and recommendations for improvement.

Following this research, I agree with Hammond's (2016) statement that there is a need to consider the barriers to attending HE, and a full understanding of the experiences of DIDF veterans is “vital to informed practice” (p. 147). However, contrary to Hammond I do not believe this understanding refers only to combat veterans, but the entire DIDF-veteran students’ populations.

In general, all participants who used DSCs services for classroom learning (assistive technology) or exam accommodations said that these services were necessary for them and that they helped them enhance their academic performance. Some participants pointed out that many instructors do not appreciate the true value of the accommodations and regard them as "easements." This phrase is widely used in Israeli discourse, participants themselves frequently used this phrase instead of "accommodations."

Unlike the common differentiation in American colleges and universities between combat and non-combat veterans (Hinton, 2020; Mobley et al., 2019; Naphan & Elliott, 2015; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010), such distinction among DIDF-veteran students was less present in the participants' narratives. Some of Naphan and Elliott's (2015) insights regarding easy transition and difference in disconnection feelings and loneliness were expressed as some of the social

challenges DIDF veteran students expressed in this study as well. In the current study, few participants stated they maintained contact with other DIDF veterans, such as through DIDF-veterans associations or the ZDVO organization that advocates for their welfare. Only two participants stated that other DIDF veteran students on their campus assisted or supported them (socially or academically). Several participants have brought up the necessity to be in touch or to get personal assistance from someone who has gone through a similar experience.

The participants' narratives about their experiences with the DSCs were diverse, both positive and noteworthy, as well as poor and frustrating. However, higher education in general was seen as a vital aspect of rehabilitation for all participants, including those who had negative experiences. This insight supports Segev and Schiff's (2019) study, which found that participants with a greater degree of education at the time of the study were better integrated into the workforce than those with a lower level of education. In other words, the rehabilitative aspect of HE continues into the workforce. This clearly highlights the necessity of facilitating HE for DIDF veterans, in order to better integrate them into Israeli society.

Limitations of the Study

Along with the study's value and contribution, some limitations may have influenced the findings' validity and generalizability. First, the participants were interviewed about sensitive topics, and they may not have disclosed all aspects of their experiences. Most importantly, this study was designed to focus exclusively on DIDF-veterans in Israel who are enrolled at universities and colleges in Israel. It can offer limited conclusions with respect to DIDF veteran students who were not formally recognized by the MoD or who are not enrolled in HE institution.

The diversity of the sample was limited as I only recruited participants who were formally recognized by the Israeli MoD and studied in HE institutions in Israel only. The research sample was small and not representative of all types of HE institutions in Israel. Therefore, the findings are exploratory and should be further examined in specific institutions and among other DIDF veteran populations.

The interpretive data analysis may have been influenced by the fact that the analysis was performed by a researcher who comes from the field of Disability Studies and is herself a woman with a disability, who supports the Social Model as well as the CDT focusing on a holistic view of the individual besides awareness of the existing social barriers in Israeli society. Lastly, this study used the methodology of qualitative research; thus, as the researcher, I became an instrument through my investigation, choice of interview questions, and interviewing style, which potentially influenced the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Recommendations

Future Research Recommendations

Based on the participants' experience in this study, several areas for future research were suggested:

1. Future research should include a greater number of participants from various backgrounds.

For example, the sample could include more participants (DIDF-veterans) from other Israeli sectors that serve in the IDF (Druz, Beduian, Christian /Muslim Arabs, secular Jews/national religious/ultra-Orthodox) and later study in Israeli HE.

2. Using a mixed-methods approach, the future study can examine DIDF-veterans' usage of DSCs more precisely and systematically. It would be insightful to select a wider range of institutions of HE, including those that are part of the Higher Education Revolution Project

as well as those that have chosen not to take part in the project. In addition, it is important to build partnerships with relevant bodies such as the MoD, the Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization (ZDVO), and the DSCs in a wider range of Israeli HE institutions. In particular, contacting the MoD directly as a partner in this kind of research can assist in having larger-scale access to the population and extant statistics information about DIDF students.

3. A longitudinal study of DIDF-veteran students' academic journey through time could be used in future studies as well. Such a study could follow the same participants in multiple interview waves, starting with the transition to HE, including pre-academic settings, through undergraduate studies to graduate studies. This kind of research could expand the investigation to explore the varying needs of DIDF-veteran students over time.
4. It is advisable to examine the relationship between the type of disability, willingness to receive services from the DSCs, as well the degree of academic success. Such research should focus on searching for the DIDF-veterans' academic challenges while examining their management strategies, especially for students who identify themselves with additional disabilities such as LD/ADHD, or any other disability.
5. Future research should look into intrinsic motivation, self-determination, and effective DIDF veteran students' use of support resources in Israeli HE institutions. An additional avenue of research could examine qualitatively the relationship between attitudes of service providers and faculty toward DIDF-veteran students, and DIDF-veteran students' readiness to use support services.
6. The current study explored the experiences of only recognized DIDF veteran students, however, many Israeli IDF veterans are undiagnosed or do not meet the criteria for

disability status as established by the Israeli Ministry of Defense, yet their symptoms may affect their daily life, especially during their academic studies. Exploring this population can contribute to the discourse on living with a disability and academic studies experiences.

7. Another interesting population to study, from which a comparative analysis could be drawn, is IDF veteran students in the U.S. (American or Israeli citizens). Such research could shed light on the contextual and cultural backdrop of life with disabilities in HE.

Recommendations for Practical Applications

During the interviews, I also asked participants to share their recommendations and suggestions for future DIDF veterans as well as how HE institutes, and agencies could better support DIDF-veteran students. I believe the participants' voices are an essential part of this study and can contribute to creating more veteran-friendly campuses in Israel. The recommendations below are based on their suggestions.

At the DSCs in the Israeli HE institutions, there are workshops designed to provide tools, raise awareness and develop a self-directed learner. There are a variety of workshop topics, for example, workshops for time organization, dealing with exam anxiety, learning strategies, summarizing academic articles, writing a seminar paper, preparing for entering the job market, and more. These workshops are open to a wide range of students with no personal focus. Several participants have remarked that these workshops are not focused on individual needs, especially for students with LDs or multiple disabilities. This recommendation calls for re-thinking and changing attitudes. Not only the student has to look for the support needed, but the teaching staff and administrators of the program should get to know the students and their needs. The message is to have an understanding of each individual and the complexity of the story behind the specific difficulty.

The institutions of HE in Israel should also devote attention to DIDF-veteran students to apply equal and inclusive education, which also includes them as part of the existing diversity in Israeli society. Connections and collaborations between the MoD and especially the Rehabilitation Department staff, and the DSCs staff can employ specific strategies to raise awareness of this population on the one hand, while on the other, direct and encourage DIDF-veterans to contact the DSCs staff. These can include, for example, self-advocacy training, self-management strategies skills, etc.

The participants expressed a feeling of functioning on their own during their academic studies. Training, guidance, and better connections between the DSCs team and other on-campus agencies such as administrative staff and academic staff are required for better integration and adjustments of the physical and learning settings for the benefit of DIDF-veteran students.

Reflection

I had the privilege to meet, get familiar with 13 DIDF-veteran students, and study their life experiences. It was my honor to interview them and spend some time with each one of them. Along with my desire to learn about their experiences, their voices shaped my research. Their reactions as well as their answers to my interview questions encapsulated the essence of their life experiences as students in the Israeli HE system. They shared with me their stories, some of which were very intimate and personal. They have shared pain and frustration along with pride and success. This study described for the first time the DIDF-veteran experiences in Israeli HE, the formation of their identities as individuals and as students with disabilities. From that vantage point, insights that are relevant to other students with disabilities, life situations, and settings may be discovered.

This research was a once-in-a-lifetime process for me as an Israeli citizen, a former IDF veteran, and a woman with a disability on both a personal and professional level. Furthermore, as an Israeli student who came to Chapman University specifically to study Disability Studies, the

opportunity to meet military veterans in the United States as well as become acquainted with a new theoretical framework to present the voice of DIDF-veterans in Israeli HE is new and exciting for me. The accounts of the participants offer a unique insight into the lives of DIDF veterans and how they cope with military-related injuries as well as other challenges throughout their academic studies in Israel. This research provides evidence that DIDF-veteran students experience several identities throughout their lives and especially in HE, I should state that I did not focus my interview questions on how the intersectional aspect of their identity could assist them in advocating for themselves. This idea was born out of the data, and it emphasizes the necessity for support services staff, faculty, administration, and policymakers to think about the intersectional nature of DIDF-veteran student identity on their campuses and to better guide them for self-advocacy and service awareness that may lead them also to academic success.

Significance of the Study

With the expansion of the Israeli HE system, the development of inclusive education policies, the increasing number of students with disabilities in Israeli HE, and the growth of DSCs, now is the time to include the DIDF-veterans in this discourse. This study's findings demonstrate that DIDF-veteran students need awareness, better guidance, and more holistic support services.

In this study, I had the opportunity to learn about this specific group of participants who are part of the larger population of students with disabilities in Israel. Taking a comprehensive view of these 13 stories, a more generalized understanding that extends beyond the individual DIDF-veteran student and the local higher education community may be considered later. The voices of DIDF-veteran students are important in Israeli society in general, and they contribute to research on students with disabilities in Israeli HE in particular. As was mentioned before, the literature did not deal with the transition process and other experiences of DIDF-veterans in the

Israeli HE system. Hence, the current study adds to the theoretical concept of participation and inclusion of DIDF-veteran students among other students with disabilities in the Israeli HE system. Further, this study contributes to the student veteran literature by informing researchers, staff, and educators on DIDF-veteran students' transition to Israeli HE institutions, as well as how and when they use support services both on and off-campus. In addition, the findings of this study provide a foundation for future research and contribute to practical practices and policies. Further, the findings will help DSCs staff, educators, and other administrative staff to better support this population. For example, if educators were aware of which services DIDF-veterans chose to use, they could tailor student support to meet their individual needs in class or with class assignments.

Overall, this study emphasizes the significance of spreading awareness of this diverse population in HE institutions, and the range of its needs from service providers, both in HE and in key agencies in the MoD. Raising awareness of the available support services at HE institutions among DIDF-veteran students is important as well, as the study found that many of them are not aware of all the services they can receive. Better connections between numerous support agencies, both on-campus and off-campus are essential, and it is our opportunity as a society to better handle the diversity that exists in the Israeli society, including DIDF-veteran students.

This study contributes to the Israeli field of Disability Studies in another aspect. In this study, I employed a poetic form to explore and portray the participants' narratives while applying iterative analysis of the research data, an interpretation process, and data presentation strategies.

This process enabled me to go back to participants' narratives, their voices, and view them as a whole rather than by separate codes. In this stage, I used the hermeneutic circle idea to embody the researcher's act of interpretation and subjectivity, as it enabled me to provide the readers with a first-person voice and deliver the participants' stories as a whole to the reader.

I wish this study's findings will inform future DIDF-veterans who plan to go to study in Israeli higher education settings and provide them with information about available services and how they should use them. In addition, I hope this study will contribute to social workers and other professionals in the MoD. I believe that the phenomenological experiences of this specific student population need to be heard beyond this study. Therefore, it is important to continue to explore the experiences of this population more deeply and broadly.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Consent Form (English/Hebrew)

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Study: Israeli Student-Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education: Importance of and Satisfaction with Disability Services on Israeli Campuses

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Participation is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions. All the research data of this study will be kept confidential.

RESEARCH TEAM

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STUDY SPONSOR(S): Chapman University, Donna Ford Attallah College of Educational Studies

Investigator Financial Conflict of Interest- No one on the study team has a disclosable financial interest related to this research project.

WHY IS THIS RESEARCH STUDY BEING DONE?

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the perceptions and experiences of Israeli students with disabilities due to military/security service who are currently pursuing academic degrees in Israeli higher education institutions in relation to their disability needs on campus.

This study examines for the first time the availability of disability support services from the perspective of Israeli veterans with disabilities in the higher education system. By studying this unique group, we will have a better sense of this population's perceptions, self-identifications, and experiences with disability support services.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

We expect approximately 5-15 people to participate in this study. The interview participants were selected after they have completed an on-line survey and expressed their willingness to participate in a follow up interview.

WHAT PROCEDURES ARE INVOLVED WITH THIS STUDY AND HOW LONG WILL THEY TAKE?

The research will include three sessions of interviews. Israeli student-veterans with disabilities will be asked about their life prior to their army service and injury, event of their injury, self-identity, disability-identity, disability disclosure on campuses, their perceptions and their experiences with disability support services in higher education institutions in Israel. The interviews will take place at any place that will be comfortable to the participants like at their home or any other at location at their daily environment. Each interview will last approximately 90 minutes; the total amount of time across all three interviews is approximately 270 minutes.

AM I ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?

You can participate in this study if you are:

- At least 18 years of age or older
- Live in Israel

- Man or woman
- Currently study in higher education institution in Israel or graduated in the last 5 years.
- If you are a student veteran with a disability who meet one of the following criteria:
 - Legally recognized by the Israeli Ministry of Defense as a *Nechei Zahal* - Israel Defense Forces (IDF) veteran with disabilities, OR
 - Israeli IDF veteran who is legally recognized by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) – as a person with disabilities due to his army or other security service, OR
 - Israeli veteran who is self-identified as a person with disabilities due to his army or other security service but is not legally recognized by the Ministry of Defense or the NII.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE DISCOMFORTS OR RISKS RELATED TO THE STUDY?

There are no known harms or major discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. If you feel any discomfort associated with questions about your army service or disability identity you can quit the study at any time. **Please notify the researcher immediately if you wish to withdraw (see contact information on the top of this page).**

Breach of Privacy and Confidentiality: As with any study involving collection of data, there is the possibility of breach of confidentiality of data. No personal information or any identifiable information is requested in this study. Following the ethical regulations every precaution during the study will be taken to secure participants' confidentiality.

ARE THERE BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

Participant Benefits

The possible benefits for you as a participant in this study include increase of awareness, and new perspectives on disability services in academic environment for your benefit of as a student-veteran and your academic needs.

Benefits to Others or Society

The participation in this study may inform the field of higher education in Israel on how to support student-veterans with disabilities. The research's input may impact on better outreaching for student-veteran's needs, developing and improving disability support services for future student-veterans with disabilities. The possible benefits of this study include greater understanding of student-veterans with disabilities needs on campuses in Israel, raising the awareness for disability support services in higher education institutions, and expanding cooperation with other relevant organizations.

HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE KEPT?

Subject Identifiable Data

The identity of the participants will remain confidential. Each participant will be given a pseudonym. The data reported based on the interviews will not disclose any personal details about the participants. Participants will not be able to be identified.

Data Storage & Retention

Research data will be stored electronically on a secure network in an encrypted file with password protection. The research team intends to keep the research data until the research is

published and/or presented. The audio recordings that can identify you will also be stored in a secure location. The recording will be transcribed by the researcher.

The recordings and the transcriptions will be retained with the other research data and erased at the end of the study.

WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO MY STUDY DATA?

The research team, authorized Chapman University personnel, and other regulatory entities may have access to your study records to protect your safety and welfare.

Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed by these entities without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Study records provided to authorized, Non-chapman University entities will not contain identifiable information about you; nor will any publications and/or presentations without your separate consent.

While the research team will make every effort to keep your personal information confidential, it is possible that an unauthorized person might see it. We cannot guarantee total privacy.

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY?

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the research study you should contact the research team listed at the top of the consent form.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at +1(714)-628-2833 or irb@chapman.edu or at Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, One University Drive Orange, CA 92866. If:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

HOW DO I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?

You should not sign and date this consent form or participate in this study until all of your questions about this study have been answered by a member of the research team listed at the top of this form. You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form or you may save a copy of this information to keep for your records. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with Chapman University.

AUDIO RECORDING:

I have received an adequate description of the purpose and procedures for audio-recording sessions during the course of the proposed research. I give my consent to allow myself to be audio-recorded during participation in this study, and for those records to be reviewed by persons involved in the study, as well as for other professional purposes as described to me.

_____ **Yes**, I agree to allow the research team to **audio record** my interview(s).

_____ **No**, I do not wish to have my interview **audio recorded**.

Signature of Participant

Date

Your signature below indicates you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about this study.

I agree to participate in the study.

Subject Signature

Date

Printed Name of Subject

Researcher Signature

Date

Printed Name of Researcher

You have been contacted because you have recently completed an online survey by the researchers. Although the survey is anonymous, the responses could be identified through the IP address of the device you have used. We ask for your permission to de-anonymize the data (i.e., link your survey responses to your identity). Doing so will give the researcher the opportunity to learn about you and your experiences before your follow-up interview. This information will be kept confidential, and your identity will not be revealed to anyone outside the research team. All the reports based on these data will not reveal your identity.

IP address use:

I have received an adequate description of the purpose and procedures for use of my IP address during the course of the proposed research. I give my consent to allow the researcher to identify my online survey responses using the IP address during participation in that study, and for those records to be reviewed by persons involved in the study, and linked to the interview data in the current study.

_____ **Yes**, I agree to allow the research team to use my IP address to identify my responses.

_____ **No**, I do not wish to allow that my IP address will be revealed.

Signature of Participant

Date

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Experimental Subject's Bill of Rights

The rights listed below are the right of every individual asked to participate in a research study. You have the right:

1. To be told about the nature and purpose of the study.
2. To be told about the procedures to be followed in the research study, and whether any of the drugs, devices, or procedures is different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To receive a description of any side effects, discomforts, or risks that you can reasonably expect to occur during the study.
4. To be told of any benefits that you may reasonably expect from the participation in the study, if applicable.
5. To receive a description of any alternative procedures, drugs, or devices that might be helpful, and their risks and benefits compared to the proposed procedures, drugs or devices.
6. To be told of what sort of medical treatment, if any, will be available if any complications should arise.
7. To be given a chance to ask any questions concerning the research study both before agreeing to participate and at any time during the course of the study.

8. To refuse to participate in the research study. Participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your right to receive the care you would receive if you were not in the experiment.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated written consent form and a copy of this form.
10. To be given the opportunity to freely decide whether or not to consent to the research study without any force, coercion, or undue influence.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the research study you should contact the research team listed at the top of the consent form.

If you are unable to reach a member of the research team and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Chapman University IRB staff at 714-628-2833 or irb@chapman.edu.

אוניברסיטת צ'פמן

טופס הסכמה מדעת למשתתפים במחקר

כותרת המחקר:

סטודנטים ישראלים עם מוגבלות עקב שירות צבאי/ ביטחוני בהשכלה הגבוהה:

חשיבות ושביעות רצון משירותי מרכזי התמיכה בקמפוסים בישראל

הינך מתבקש/ת להשתתף במחקר. ההשתתפות במחקר הינה על בסיס התנדבות. אנא קרא/י את המידע שלהלן ושאל/י כל דבר שאינך מבין/נה. החוקר המפורט להלן יהיה זמין כדי לענות על השאלות שלך. כל המידע שנאסף במחקר זה יישמר חסוי.

צוות המחקר

חוקר מוביל

עינת בן דב, דוקטורנטית בתוכנית לתואר שלישי בחינוך, לימודי-מוגבלות הפקולטה לחקר החינוך ע"ש דונה פורד אטאללה, אוניברסיטת צ'פמן, אורנג', קליפורניה, ארה"ב.
+1 (949) -247-6124 , bendo101@mail.chapman.edu

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ניגוד אינטרסים פיננסיים של החוקר: איש מצוות המחקר לא הצהיר על עניין פיננסי הקשור לפרויקט מחקר זה.

מדוע מחקר זה מבוצע?

מטרת מחקר זה היא לברר את התפיסות והחוויות של סטודנטים ישראלים עם מוגבלות עקב שירות צבאי/ביטחוני הלומדים כיום במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה בישראל, וזאת על רקע צורכי המוגבלות שלהם בקמפוס.

מחקר זה בוחן לראשונה את זמינות שירותי התמיכה מנקודת המבט של קבוצה ייחודית זו במערכת ההשכלה הגבוהה. מחקר זה יספק הבנה טובה יותר של הזיהוי העצמי בהתייחס למוגבלות, הצרכים, התפיסות, וחוויות השירות של אוכלוסייה ספציפית זו במרכזי התמיכה במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה בישראל.

כמה אנשים ייקחו חלק במחקר זה?

אנו מצפים לכ- 15-5 משתתפים במחקר הנוכחי. המשתתפים בשלב הראיונות נבחרו לקחת חלק במחקר לאחר שענו על הסקר המקוון והביעו את נכונותם להשתתף בראיונות אישיים.

מהם ההליכים המעורבים במחקר זה וכמה זמן נמשך המחקר?

שלב זה במחקר יכלול שלושה מפגשים של ראיונות אישיים בהם סטודנטים נכי צה"ל ישאלו על חייהם לפני שירותם הצבאי ופציעתם, על אירוע הפציעה, זהות האישית, זהות הנכות, גילויי הנכות בקמפוס בו הם לומדים, תפיסותיהם וחוויותיהם עם שירותי התמיכה במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה בישראל. הראיונות יתקיימו בכל מקום שיהיה נוח למשתתפים כמו בביתם או בכל מקום אחר בסביבה היומיומית שלהם. כל ראיון יימשך כ- 90 דקות עבור כל משתתף; משך הזמן הכולל של כל שלושת הראיונות הוא כ- 270 דקות.

מחקר זה יכלול סקר מקוון. השאלות בסקר יופנו אל סטודנטים ישראלים עם מוגבלות עקב שירותם הצבאי/ביטחוני ויצו בפניהם שאלות לגבי זהותם העצמית, חשיפת המוגבלות בקמפוסים, תפיסותיהם וחוויותיהם בהתייחס לשירותי מרכזי התמיכה במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה בישראל.

האם אני רשאי להשתתף במחקר זה?

את/ה יכול/ה להשתתף במחקר זה אם את/ה:

- לפחות בן/בת 18 שנים ומעלה
- חי/ה בישראל
- גבר או אישה
- לומד/ת כיום במוסד להשכלה גבוהה בישראל או שסיים את לימודיו ב-5 השנים האחרונות.
- אם הנך סטודנט/ית לאחר שירות צבאי/ביטחוני עם מוגבלות העונה על אחד הקריטריונים הבאים:
 - מוכר/ת בחוק על ידי משרד הביטחון הישראלי כנכה צה"ל, **או**
 - יוצא/ת שירות צבאי שהוכר כחוק על ידי המוסד לביטוח לאומי - כאדם עם מוגבלויות בשל שירותו הצבאי או שירות בטחוני אחר, **או**
 - יוצא/ת שירות ביטחוני המזהה את עצמו כאדם עם מוגבלויות עקב שירות צבאי או שירות ביטחוני אחר, אך אינך מוכר/ת על ידי משרד הביטחון או המוסד לביטוח לאומי.

מה הם מצבי אי-נוחות או הסיכונים האפשריים הקשורים למחקר?

לא ידוע על נזק או אי-נוחות משמעותיים הכרוכים במחקר זה מעבר לאלה בהם אנו נתקלים בחיי היומיום הרגילים. באם את/ה מרגיש/ה אי-נוחות הקשורה לשאלות המתייחסות למוגבלות, הינך יכול/ה להפסיק את המחקר בכל עת. אנא הודע/י לחוקר מידית אם ברצונך לפרוש מהמחקר (ראה/י פרטי קשר בחלק העליון של הדף).

הפרת פרטיות וסודיות: בדומה לכל מחקר הכרוך באיסוף נתונים, קיימת אפשרות של הפרת חיסיון הנתונים. במחקר

זה אינך נדרש/ת לתת מידע אישי או כל מידע מזהה. בהתאם לתקנות האתיות ינקטו כל אמצעי זהירות האפשריים במהלך המחקר יילקח בחשבון על מנת להבטיח את חשאיות המשתתפים.

האם יש הטבות להשתתפות במחקר?

יתרונות ההשתתפות

היתרונות האפשריים עבורך כמשתתף/פת במחקר זה כוללים: חשיפה והגברת המודעות לשירותי מרכזי התמיכה הזמינים בסביבה האקדמית העשויים לסייע לך ולתרום לשילובך והצלחתך במוסד בו הינך לומד/ת.

הטבות לאחרים או לחברה

השתתפות במחקר זה עשויה לספק מידע בתחום ההשכלה הגבוהה בישראל על איך לתמוך בסטודנטים נכי צה"ל. תוצאות המחקר עשויות להשפיע על פיתוח, הרחבה ושיפור שירותי מרכזי התמיכה לטובת קבוצה ייחודית זו. היתרונות האפשריים במחקר זה כוללים הבנה טובה יותר של הצרכים הייחודיים של סטודנטים יוצאי שירות צבאי/ביטחוני עם מוגבלויות בקמפוסים בישראל, העלאת המודעות במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה לצרכיהם והרחבת שיתופי הפעולה עם גופים נוספים רלוונטיים.

כיצד המידע האישי שלי יהיה מאוחסן?

זיהוי נתוני הנבדקים

זהות המשתתפים תישאר חסויה. זהות המשתתפים תישאר סודית ופרטי המשתתפים לא יוכלו להיות מזוהים. בשלב הראיונות כל משתתף יקבל שם בדוי. דיווח הנתונים שיאספו באמצעות הראיונות לא יחשפו פרטים אישיים על המשתתפים.

אחסון ושמירת נתונים

נתוני המחקר יאוחסנו בצורה אלקטרונית ברשת מאובטחת בקובץ מוצפן עם הגנה באמצעות סיסמה. צוות המחקר מתכוון לשמור את נתוני המחקר עד שהמחקר יפורסם ו/או יוצג. הקלטות האודיו שיכולות לזהות אותך יאוחסנו במקום מאובטח. ההקלטות יישמרו עם נתוני המחקר האחרים. ההקלטה תועתק (תתומלל) על ידי החוקר. ההקלטות והתעתיקים יישמרו עם נתוני המחקר האחרים וימחקו בסוף המחקר.

מי יהיה בעל גישה לנתוני המחקר שלי?

צוות המחקר, צוות מורשה מאוניברסיטת צ'פמן, וגופים רגולטוריים אחרים העשויים לקבל גישה לרשומות המחקר שלך כדי להגן על בטיחותך ורווחתך. כל מידע שמקורו בפרויקט מחקר זה שמזהה אותך באופן אישי, לא ישוחרר או יפורסם על ידי גופים אלה ללא הסכמתך הנפרדת, למעט כפי שנדרש במפורש בחוק. רשומות המחקר שימסרו לגופים מוסמכים, שאינם של אוניברסיטת צ'פמן, לא יכילו מידע שמזהה אותך אישית; ולא יהיו ימסרו פרטים מזהים לפרסומים ו / או מצגות ללא הסכמתך הנפרדת. בעוד שצוות המחקר יעשה כל מאמץ לשמור על סודיות המידע האישי שלך, ייתכן שאדם לא מורשה יראה זאת. איננו יכולים להבטיח פרטיות מוחלטת.

מי יכול לענות על שאלותיי בנוגע למחקר?

אם יש לך חששות, או שאלות, בנוגע למחקר שוחח עם צוות המחקר המצוין בראש טופס ההסכמה.

מחקר זה נבדק ואושר על ידי הוועדה האתית - מועצת הביקורת המוסדית ("IRB"), את/ה יכול ליצור איתם קשר

בטלפון - 1 (714) 628-2833 או בדואר אלקטרוני irb@chapman.edu

או בכתובת דואר -

Chapman University, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs,

One University Drive Orange, CA 92866

במידה ו-:

- שאלותיך, חששותיך או תלונותיך אינן נענות על ידי צוות המחקר.
- אינך יכול/ה להגיע לצוות המחקר.
- את/ה רוצה לדבר עם מישהו מלבד צוות המחקר.
- יש לך שאלות לגבי הזכויות שלך כמשתתף במחקר.
- את/ה רוצה לקבל מידע או לספק מידע על מחקר זה.

כיצד אני מסכים להשתתף במחקר זה?

אינך צריך לחתום על טופס הסכמה זה או להשתתף במחקר עד שכל השאלות שלך על מחקר זה נענו על ידי חבר צוות המחקר המפורטים בראש טופס זה. יינתן לך עותק של טופס הסכמה חתום ומתוארך זה, אותו תוכל לשמור כעותק למידע זה ולשמור כתיעוד. ההשתתפות במחקר זה היא מרצון. אתה רשאי לסרב לענות על כל שאלה או להפסיק את המעורבות שלך בכל עת ללא קנס או אובדן הטבות שאחרת היית זכאי להם. ההחלטה שלך לא תשפיע על היחסים העתידיים שלך עם אוניברסיטת צ'פמן.

הקלטת שמע:

קיבלתי תיאור הולם של מטרת והנהלים עבור ההקלטות השמע במהלך המחקר המוצע. אני נותן את הסכמתי להרשות לעצמי להיות מוקלט במהלך השתתפותי במחקר זה, ושהקלטות אלה ייבדקו על ידי האנשים המעורבים במחקר וכן למטרות מקצועיות אחרות כפי שתוארו לי.

_____ כן, אני מסכים לאפשר לצוות המחקר להקליט את ראיון/נות שלי.
_____ לא, אני לא מעוניין שהראיון שלי יוקלט.

חתימת המשתתף

תאריך

חתימתך להלן מציינת שקראת את המידע בטופס הסכמה זה והייתה לך הזדמנות לשאול שאלות כלשהן על מחקר זה. אני מסכים להשתתף במחקר זה

שם המשתתף _____ תאריך _____
חתימת החוקר _____ תאריך _____

הוזמנת להשתתף בראיונות משום שמילאת סקר אינטרנטי של החוקרים. בעוד הסקר האינטרנטי הינו אנונימי, ניתן לזהות את נתוני הסקר שמילאת לאחרונה באמצעות כתובת ה- IP של המכשיר שבו השתמשת. אנו מבקשים את אישורך לזהות את המידע הזה (כלומר, לחבר בין התשובות שלך בסקר האינטרנטי שהוא לבין זהותך). בכך, תינתן לחוקרים הזדמנות ללמוד עליך ועל החוויות שלך לפני עריכת ראיון המעקב עימך. מידע זה יישמר באופן חסוי. זהותך לא תיוודע לאיש מחוץ לצוות המחקר. כל הדיווחים על ממצאי המחקר לא יזהו אותך אישית.

שימוש בכתובת IP:

קיבלתי תיאור הולם של הנהלים והמטרה לשימוש בכתובת ה-IP שלי במהלך המחקר המוצע. אני נותן את הסכמתי לאפשר לחוקר לזהות את כתובת ה-IP שלי במהלך השתתפותי במחקר זה, ולשימוש ברשומות אלה שייסקרו על ידי החוקר והאנשים המעורבים במחקר, ולמטרות מקצועיות אחרות הקשורות במחקר זה.

כן, אני מסכים לאפשר לצוות המחקר להשתמש בכתובת ה-IP שלי לצורך זיהוי התשובות שלי בסקר.

לא, אני לא מעוניין לאפשר את לחשוף את כתובת ה-IP שלי.

חתימת המשתתף _____ תאריך _____

חתימת החוקר _____ תאריך _____

מגילת הזכויות של נבדקי המחקר

הזכויות המפורטות להלן הן זכותו של כל אדם שנדרש להשתתף במחקר.

יש לך את הזכות:

1. לקבל מידע על מהות המחקר ותכליתו.
2. לקבל תיאור של כל אי נוחות, או סיכונים, שהינך יכול לצפות באופן סביר שיתרחשו במהלך המחקר.
3. לקבל מידע אודות כל היתרונות שאתה יכול לצפות באופן סביר מן ההשתתפות במחקר, אם רלוונטי הדבר.
4. לקבל הזדמנות לשאול שאלות לגבי המחקר הן לפני שתסכים להשתתף ובכל עת במהלך המחקר.
5. לסרב להשתתף במחקר. ההשתתפות היא מרצון. אתה רשאי לסרב לענות על כל שאלה או להפסיק את המעורבות שלך בכל עת ללא קנס או אובדן הטבות שאחרת היית זכאי להם.
6. לקבל עותק של טופס הסכמה חתום ומתוארך.
7. לקבל את האפשרות להחליט באופן חופשי האם להסכים להשתתף במחקר ללא כוח, כפייה, או השפעה פסולה.
8. לקבל עותק של טופס הסכמה חתום ומתוארך ועותק של טופס זה.
9. ניתנת לי האפשרות להחליט באופן חופשי האם להסכים או לא להסכים למחקר, ללא כפייה או השפעה מופרזת.

אם יש לך שאלות או שאלות בנוגע למחקר, עליך ליצור קשר עם צוות המחקר המופיע בראש טופס ההסכמה. אם אינך יכול להגיע לחבר בצוות המחקר ויש לך שאלות כלליות, או שיש לך חששות או תלונות על המחקר, צוות המחקר, או שאלות על זכויותיך בנושא מחקר, צור קשר עם צוות הוועדה האתית (IRB) באוניברסיטת צ'פמן בטלפון 2833-628-(714)+1 או בכתובת מייל - irb@chapman.edu

Appendix B

Online Survey (Hebrew)

סקר סטודנטים עם מוגבלות על רקע צבאי/ביטחוני בהשכלה גבוהה

Survey Flow

Standard: Consent (1 Question) Standard: Instructions (1 Question) Standard: Filter 1 (2 Questions) Standard: Filter 2 (1 Question)
Branch: New Branch If Is לא?...?לא Selected And האם אתה מוכר באופן חוקי כנכה צה"ל על ידי משרד הביטחון?לא Selected
EndSurvey: Advanced
Block: Disability status (2 Questions) Block: History dis (7 Questions) Block: Education (7 Questions) Block: Need / importance (3 Questions) Block: Self-Identity/Discloser (4 Questions) Block: Accessibility services (26 Questions) Block: Demographic end (12 Questions)
EndSurvey: Advanced

Page Break

Start of Block: Consent

אוניברסיטת צ'פמן

טופס הסכמה מדעת למשתתפים במחקר

כותרת המחקר:

סטודנטים ישראלים עם מוגבלות עקב שירות צבאי/ביטחוני בהשכלה הגבוהה:

חשיבות ושיעור רצון משירותי מרכזי התמיכה בקמפוסים בישראל.

הינך מתבקש/ת להשתתף במחקר. ההשתתפות במחקר הינה על בסיס התנדבות. אנא קרא/י את המידע שלהלן ושאל/י כל דבר שאינך מבין/נה. החוקר המפורט להלן יהיה זמין כדי לענות על השאלות שלך. כל התשובות לסקר יישמרו באופן אנונימי.

צוות המחקר

חוקר מוביל

עינת בן דב, דוקטורנטית בתוכנית לתואר שלישי בחינוך, לימודי-מוגבלות
הפקולטה לחקר החינוך ע"ש דונה פורד אטאללה, אוניברסיטת צ'פמן, אורנג', קליפורניה, ארה"ב.

חוקרים אחרים:

יו"ר וועדת הדיסרטציה:
דונלד. נ. קרדינל Ph.D.,
פרופסור ומנהל, אוניברסיטת צ'פמן
הפקולטה לחקר החינוך ע"ש דונה פורד אטאללה, אוניברסיטת צ'פמן, אורנג, 'קליפורניה, ארה"ב.
+1 (714) 997-6970, cardinal@chapman.edu

מימון המחקר: הפקולטה לחקר החינוך ע"ש דונה פורד אטאללה, אוניברסיטת צ'פמן, אורנג, 'קליפורניה, ארה"ב.

ניגוד אינטרסים פיננסיים של החוקר: איש מצוות המחקר לא הצהיר על עניין פיננסי הקשור לפרויקט מחקר זה.

מדוע מחקר זה מבוצע?

מטרת מחקר זה היא לברר את התפיסות והחוויות של סטודנטים ישראלים עם מוגבלות עקב שירות צבאי/ביטחוני הלומדים כיום במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה בישראל, וזאת על רקע צורכי המוגבלות שלהם בקמפוס.

מחקר זה בוחן לראשונה את זמינות שירותי התמיכה מנקודת המבט של קבוצה ייחודית זו במערכת ההשכלה הגבוהה. מחקר זה יספק הבנה טובה יותר של הזיהוי העצמי בהתייחס למוגבלות, הצרכים, התפיסות, וחוויות השירות של אוכלוסייה ספציפית זו במרכזי התמיכה במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה בישראל.

כמה אנשים ייקחו חלק במחקר זה?

אנו מצפים לכ- 150 אנשים אשר ייקחו חלק במחקר זה.

מהם ההליכים המעורבים במחקר זה וכמה זמן נמשך המחקר?

מחקר זה יכול לקרוך סקר מקוון. השאלות בסקר יופנו אל סטודנטים ישראלים עם מוגבלות עקב שירותם הצבאי/ביטחוני ויציגו בפניהם שאלות לגבי זהותם העצמית, חשיפת המוגבלות בקמפוסים, תפיסותיהם וחוויותיהם בהתייחס לשירותי מרכזי התמיכה במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה בישראל. משך הסקר הוא כ 10-25 דקות.

האם אני רשאי להשתתף במחקר זה?

את/ה יכול/ה להשתתף במחקר זה אם את/ה: לפחות בן/בת 18 שנים ומעלה חי/ה בישראל גבר או אישה לומד/ת כיום במוסד להשכלה גבוהה בישראל אם הנך סטודנט/ית לאחר שירות צבאי/ביטחוני עם מוגבלות העונה על אחד הקריטריונים הבאים:
מוכר/ת בחוק על ידי משרד הביטחון הישראלי כנכה צה"ל, או יוצא/ת שירות צבאי שהוכר כחוק על ידי המוסד לביטוח לאומי - כאדם עם מוגבלויות בשל שירותו הצבאי או שירות בטחוני אחר, או יוצא/ת שירות ביטחוני המזהה את עצמו כאדם עם מוגבלויות עקב שירות צבאי או שירות ביטחוני אחר, אך אינך מוכר/ת על ידי משרד הביטחון או המוסד לביטוח לאומי.

מה הם מצבי אי-הנוחות או הסיכונים האפשריים הקשורים למחקר?

לא ידוע על נזק או אי-נוחות משמעותיים הכרוכים במחקר זה מעבר לאלה בהם אנו נתקלים בחיי היומיום הרגילים. באם את/ה מרגיש/ה אי-נוחות הקשורה לשאלות המתייחסות למוגבלות הינך יכול/ה להפסיק את המחקר בכל עת. את/ה חופשי/ה לפרוש מן המחקר בכל עת, פשוט על ידי סגירת חלון הסקר.

הפרת פרטיות וסודיות: בדומה לכל מחקר הכרוך באיסוף נתונים, קיימת אפשרות של הפרת חיסיון הנתונים. במחקר זה אינך נדרש/ת לתת מידע אישי או כל מידע מזהה. בהתאם לתקנות האתיות ינקטו כל אמצעי זהירות האפשריים במהלך המחקר יילקח בחשבון על מנת להבטיח את חשאיות המשתתפים.

האם יש הטבות להשתתפות במחקר?

יתרונות ההשתתפות

היתרונות האפשריים עבורך כמשתתף/פת במחקר זה כוללים: חשיפה והגברת המודעות לשירותי מרכזי התמיכה הזמינים בסביבה האקדמית העשויים לסייע לך ולתרום לשילובך והצלחתך במוסד בו הינך לומד/ת.

הטבות לאחרים או לחברה

תוצאות המחקר עשויות להשפיע על פיתוח, הרחבה ושיפור שירותי מרכזי התמיכה לטובת קבוצה ייחודית זו. היתרונות האפשריים במחקר זה כוללים הבנה טובה יותר של הצרכים הייחודיים של סטודנטים יוצאי שירות צבאי/ביטחוני עם מוגבלויות בקמפוסים בישראל, העלאת המודעות במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה לצרכיהם והרחבת שיתופי הפעולה עם גופים נוספים רלוונטיים.

כיצד המידע האישי שלי יהיה מאוחסן?

זיהוי נתוני הנבדקים

הסקר המקוון יהיה אנונימי. המשיבים לא יהיו ברי-זיהוי ולא יצטרכו למסור פרטים אישיים מזהים במחקר. עם זאת, לאחר שתשלם את הסקר תינתן לך האפשרות ליצור קשר עם החוקרת על ידי שליחת דואר אלקטרוני במידה ותהיה מעוניין להיענות לראיון מעקב בהמשך.

אחסון ושמירת נתונים

נתוני המחקר יאוחסנו בצורה אלקטרונית ברשת מאובטחת בקובץ מוצפן עם הגנה באמצעות סיסמה. צוות המחקר מתכוון לשמור את נתוני המחקר עד שהמחקר יפורסם ו/או יוצג. כל תשובותייך יישארו אנונימיות וישמרו בשרת מאובטח של אוניברסיטת צ'פמן בשירותי ענן מוגנים על בסיס סיסמה ביישומים Qualtrics ו-Dropbox.

מי יהיה בעל גישה לנתוני המחקר שלי?

צוות המחקר, צוות מורשה מאוניברסיטת צ'פמן, וגופים רגולטוריים אחרים העשויים לקבל גישה לרשומות המחקר שלך כדי להגן על בטיחותך ורווחתך. כל מידע שמקורו בפרויקט מחקר זה שמזהה אותך באופן אישי, לא ישוחרר או יפורסם על ידי גופים אלה ללא הסכמתך הנפרדת, למעט כפי שנדרש במפורש בחוק. רשומות המחקר שימסרו לגופים מוסמכים, שאינם של אוניברסיטת צ'פמן, לא יכילו מידע שמזהה אותך אישית; ולא יהיו ימסרו פרטים מזהים לפרסומים ו/או מצגות ללא הסכמתך הנפרדת. בעוד שצוות המחקר יעשה כל מאמץ לשמור על סודיות המידע האישי שלך, ייתכן שאדם לא מורשה יראה זאת. איננו יכולים להבטיח פרטיות מוחלטת.

מי יכול לענות על שאלותיי בנוגע למחקר?

אם יש לך חששות, או שאלות, בנוגע למחקר שוחח עם צוות המחקר המצוין בראש טופס ההסכמה.

מחקר זה נבדק ואושר על ידי הוועדה האתית - מועצת הביקורת המוסדית, ("IRB") את/ה יכול ליצור איתם קשר בטלפון +1 (714) 628-2833 - או בדואר אלקטרוני irb@chapman.edu או בכתובת דואר-

Chapman University, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs,
One University Drive Orange, CA 92866

במידה ו-:

- שאלותיך, חששותיך או תלונותיך אינן נענות על ידי צוות המחקר.
- אינך יכול/ה להגיע לצוות המחקר.
- את/ה רוצה לדבר עם מישהו מלבד צוות המחקר.
- יש לך שאלות לגבי הזכויות שלך כמשתתף במחקר.

• את/ה רוצה לקבל מידע או לספק מידע על מחקר זה.

אוניברסיטת צ'פמן

מגילת הזכויות של נבדקי המחקר

הזכויות המפורטות להלן הן זכותו של כל אדם שנדרש להשתתף במחקר. יש לך את הזכות : לקבל מידע על מהות המחקר ותכליתו. לקבל תיאור של כל אי נוחות, או סיכונים, שהינך יכול לצפות באופן סביר שיתרחשו במהלך המחקר. לקבל מידע אודות כל היתרונות שאתה יכול לצפות באופן סביר מן ההשתתפות במחקר, אם רלוונטי הדבר. לקבל הזדמנות לשאול שאלות לגבי המחקר הן לפני שתסכים להשתתף ובכל עת במהלך המחקר. לסרב להשתתף במחקר. ההשתתפות היא מרצון. אתה רשאי לסרב לענות על כל שאלה או להפסיק את המעורבות שלך בכל עת ללא קנס או אובדן הטבות שאחרת היית זכאי להם. לקבל עותק של טופס הסכמה חתום ומתוארך. לקבל את האפשרות להחליט באופן חופשי האם להסכים להשתתף במחקר ללא כוח, כפייה, או השפעה פסולה.

אם את/ה לא מעוניין/נת להשתתף במחקר זה, אנא סגור/סגרי את חלון הסקר כעת. אני מאשר את השתתפותי במחקר על ידי המעבר לדף הבא. לכניסה לסקר לחץ על הכפתור " הבא " .

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Instructions

log in השאלות בשאלון נכתבו בלשון זכר מטעמי נוחות בלבד, אך הן פונות לנשים וגברים כאחד. השתדלי/י לענות בבקשה על כל השאלות בסקר. דעתך מאוד מוערכת ותסייע בעריכת מחקר זה. שוב תודה על ההיענות והשירות שלך, אני מקווה שתרגיש/י שמחקר זה הינו חשוב עבור כלל אוכלוסיית הסטודנטים בישראל ובפרט עבור סטודנטים עתידיים עם מוגבלות על רקע פגיעה או מחלה בשירות הצבאי/ביטחוני. במידה וידוע לך על סטודנטים נוספים המוכרים על ידי משרד הביטחון כנכי צה"ל או כאלו הסובלים מפגיעה/מחלה בעקבות השירות הצבאי/ביטחוני והלומדים כיום באחד ממוסדות ההשכלה הגבוהה בישראל, אודה לך מאוד באם תסייע/י לי בהפצת הסקר ותעביר/י את הקישור לסקר לאנשים העונים לקריטריונים אלו.

End of Block: Instructions

Start of Block: Filter 1

F1

האם אתה מוכר באופן חוקי כנכה צה"ל על ידי משרד הביטחון?

- כן (1)
- לא (2)

Display This Question:

If F1 = 2

F2

האם אתה סובל מנכות או מוגבלות כלשהי עקב שירות צבאי או שירות בכוחות הביטחון?

- כן (1)
- לא (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If F2 = 2

End of Block: Filter 1

Start of Block: Filter 2

Display This Question:

If F1 = 2

And F2 = 1

NII recog

האם אתה מוכר על ידי המוסד לביטוח הלאומי כאדם עם מוגבלות בעקבות שירותך הצבאי או שירותך בכוחות
ביטחון ישראלים אחרים?

כן (1)

לא (2)

End of Block: Filter 2

Start of Block: Disability status

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1

Or NII recog = 1

Percent

מהי דרגת נכותך המוכרת?

19% - 10% (1)

29% - 20% (2)

39% - 30% (3)

49% - 40% (4)

99% - 50% (5)

100%, + 100% (6)

Display This Question:

If F1 = 2

And NII recog = 2

Not Recog

תאר בבקשה בקצרה את נסיבות אי-הכרתך כאדם עם מוגבלות על ידי משרד הביטחון או המוסד לביטוח לאומי.

End of Block: Disability status

Start of Block: History dis

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1

Or F2 = 1

Or NII recog = 1

Event year

באיזו שנה אירע האירוע) פציעה/מחלה (שעברת)?

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1

Or F2 = 1

Where

פציעתך/מחלתך ארעה בזמן ששירתת ב) - ניתן לסמן יותר מתשובה אחת:

- בצבא - צה"ל (1)
- כמשמר הגבול (2)
- בכוחות משטרה (3)
- בשירות בתי הסוהר (4)
- כמשמר הכנסת (5)
- בקהילת המודיעין וכוחות הביטחון הישראליים האחרים (6)
- בהיותי אזרח עובד צה"ל (7)

Display This Question:

If Where = 1

Or Where = 2

Duty Service

כאשר נפגעת או כאשר המוגבלות באה לידי ביטוי היית במהלך -

- שירות סדיר (1)
- שירות מילואים (2)
- שירות קבע (3)
- אחר (99) _____

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1

Or F2 = 1

Type of Dis

כיצד אתה מגדיר את סוג המוגבלות שלך) ? ניתן לסמן יותר מתשובה אחת:

- לקות ראייה) שאינו מתוקן כראוי על ידי משקפיים/עדשות מגע (1))
- לקות שמיעה) כבד שמיעה/חרש (2))
- פגיעה בגפים עליונות (3)
- פציעת ראש (4)

- פגיעת ראש (5)
- מוגבלות בניידות) פגיעה בגפיים תחתונות (6)
- בעיה רפואית / בריאותית כרונית (כגון סוכרת (7))
- מחלת נפש (8)
- הפרעת דחק פוסט טראומטית (9) (PTSD)
- הפרעת ספקטרום האוטיזם (10)
- לקות למידה ו / או הפרעת קשב (11) ADHD
- פגיעת גב (12)
- פגיעת בטן (13)
- אחר _____ (99)

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1

X+

Type of Dis rec 1

על בסיס איזו מוגבלות הנכות שלך הוכרה על ידי משרד הביטחון?

- אחר (99) לקות ראייה) שאינו מתוקן כראוי על ידי משקפיים/עדשות מגע (1)
- לקות שמיעה) כבד שמיעה/חרש (2)
- פגיעה בגפיים עליונות (3)
- פגיעת ראש (4)
- פגיעת ראש (5)
- מוגבלות בניידות) פגיעה בגפיים תחתונות (6)
- בעיה רפואית / בריאותית כרונית (כגון סוכרת (7))
- מחלת נפש (8)
- הפרעת דחק פוסט טראומטית (9) (PTSD)
- הפרעת ספקטרום האוטיזם (10)
- לקות למידה ו / או הפרעת קשב (11) ADHD
- פגיעת ופגיעה בגב (12)
- פגיעת ופגיעה בבטן (13)
- אחר _____ (99)

Display This Question:

If NII recog = 1

Type of Dis rec 2 על בסיס איזו מוגבלות הנכות שלך הוכרה על ידי הביטוח הלאומי?

- לקות ראייה) שאינו מתוקן כראוי על ידי משקפיים/עדשות מגע (1)
- לקות שמיעה) כבד שמיעה/חרש (2)
- פגיעה בגפיים עליונות (3)
- פגיעת ראש (4)
- פגיעת ראש (5)
- מוגבלות בניידות) פגיעה בגפיים תחתונות (6)
- בעיה רפואית / בריאותית כרונית (כגון סוכרת (7))
- מחלת נפש (8)

- הפרעת דחק פוסט טראומטית (9) (PTSD)
- הפרעת ספקטרום האוטיזם (10)
- לקות למידה ו / או הפרעת קשב (11) ADHD
- פציעת ופגיעה בגב (12)
- פציעת ופגיעה בבטן (13)
-

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1

Or F2 = 1

Or NII recog = 1

Benefit awareness

- שאלה זו מתייחסת לסיוע והטבות הזמינים כיום בהשכלה הגבוהה. ציין בבקשה 'כן' או 'לא' עבור כל אחד מהמשפטים הבאים:

	כן (1)	לא (2)
האם אתה מודע לסיוע ולהטבות הזמינים בפניך כנכה צה"ל בהשכלה הגבוהה (1)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
האם פנית למשרד הביטחון, למחלקת השיקום על מנת לקבל סיוע במהלך הלימודים (2)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
האם פנית לביטוח הלאומי, למחלקת השיקום על מנת לקבל סיוע במהלך הלימודים (3)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: History dis

Start of Block: Education

Degree

מהי תוכנית הלימודים אליה אתה רשום כעת? (ניתן לסמן יותר מתשובה אחת):

- תכנית קדם-אקדמית (1)
- תואר ראשון (2) (B.A)
- תואר שני (3) (M.A, MBA, MSc)
- דוקטורט (4) (Ph.D. Ed.D)
- תעודת הוראה (5)
- אחר

(99) _____

School program ציין את החוג הראשי שבו הנך לומד כעת:

Name HEI 1

באיזה מוסד להשכלה גבוהה הינך לומד?

- אוניברסיטה (1)
- מכללה/מוסד לא אוניברסיטאי אחר (2)

Display This Question:
If Name HEI 1 = 1

Name HEI 2
לומד
בחר בבקשה את המוסד להשכלה הגבוהה בו הינך

▼ אוניברסיטת אריאל בשומרון ... (1)
מכון ויצמן למדע(14)

Display This Question:
If Name HEI 1 = 2

Name HEI 3
לומד
בחר בבקשה את המוסד להשכלה הגבוהה בו הינך

▼ אמונה-אפרתה -מכללה אקדמית לאמנויות ולחינוך, ירושלים ... (1)
סמינר הקיבוצים – המכללה לחינוך לטכנולוגיה ולאמנויות(55)

Friendly האם אתה מתאר את המוסד האקדמי בו הינך לומד כ" -ידידותי לאנשים עם מוגבלויות?"
 כן (1)
 לא (2)

Reason for target HE מהן הסיבות העיקריות שבגללן העדפת ללמוד במוסד אקדמי זה? (ניתן לסמן יותר מתשובה אחת):

- תחום הלימודים בו אני מתעניין (1)
- קמפוס ידידותי לאנשים עם מוגבלות (2)
- קרוב למקום מגוריי (3)
- קיים דיור בקמפוס (4)
- מוניטין הסגל האקדמי (5)
- חיי החברה בקמפוס (6)
- אחר (99) _____

End of Block: Education

Start of Block: Need / importance

בחן את רשימת שירותי התמיכה וההתאמות האקדמיות הזמינים במוסדות להשכלה גבוהה, ודרג אותם לפי רמת חשיבותם בעיניך

	חשיבות				
	לא חשוב כלל (1) (1)	מעט חשוב (2) (2)	די חשוב (3) (3)	חשוב (4) (4)	חשוב מאוד (5) (5)
ליווי ותמיכה אישיים/קבוצתיים (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
קבלת תקצירים/סיכומי שיעור (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סיוע בהקניית הרגלי למידה (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הקראה (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
פישוט לשוני (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תרגום לשפת סימנים (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תמלול ההרצאה (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תמיכה רגשית (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שימוש באמצעי הקלטה בשיעור (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Click to write Statement 14 (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סריקה - ספרים/חומרי לימוד בפורמט דיגיטלי (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שימוש בתוכנות מחשב ייחודיות כגון: תוכנת הקראה או המרה לברייל (11) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מיקום ישיבה ללא מסיחים בשיעור/במבחן (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הארכת זמן המבחן (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
פורמט שונה של מבחן (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

איזה סוג של סיוע או שירות אתה מקבל במהלך הלימודים מתלמידים אחרים, אנשי סגל או אנשי הוראה?

	כן (1)	לא (2)
עזרה בניידות ובהתמצאות בקמפוס (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
כתיבת הערות וסיכומים בשיעור (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
איתור חומרי הלימוד בפורמט מתאים (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הקראה של משימות וחומרי הלימוד (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
קבלת משימות או מצגות השיעורים כתדפיסים (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
התאמות בבחינות (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ליווי לפעילויות חברתיות בקמפוס (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Aware of services

האם אתה מודע לשירותי התמיכה הקיימים לסטודנטים עם מוגבלויות במוסד בו הינך לומד ?

- כן (1)
- לא (2)

End of Block: Need / importance

Start of Block: Self-Identity/Discloser

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1

Or F2 = 1

Self-Identity

כיצד אתה מזהה את עצמך מול מרצים, אנשי סגל, או נותני שירותים אחרים במוסד בו אתה לומד ?

- סטודנט ללא מוגבלות (1)
- סטודנט עם מוגבלות (2)
- סטודנט נכה צה"ל (3)

Display This Question:

If Self-Identity = 3

Or Self-Identity = 2

Share info
האם שיתפת אנשים אחרים במוסד בו אתה לומד אודות המוגבלות או הרקע להכרתך כנכה צה"ל ?

- כן (1)
- לא (2)

Display This Question:

If Self-Identity = 2
Or Self-Identity = 3

Discloser

האם זיהית את עצמך כנכה צה"ל או כסטודנט עם מוגבלות בפני נותני השירותים הבאים במוסד בו אתה לומד?

	כן (1)	לא (2)
משרד הרישום (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מרכז שירותי התמיכה לסטודנטים עם מוגבלויות (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מרצים (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סטודנטים אחרים (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
יועץ אקדמי (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
עובד סוציאלי (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סגל מעונות הסטודנטים (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירותי הבריאות (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
השירות הפסיכולוגי (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
יחידת הביטחון) למשל לצורך אישור חנייה (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מרכז לייעוץ לימודי ומקצועי, אבחון לקויות למידה (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הכוון תעסוקתי (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
צוות הספרייה (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Self-Identity = 2
Or Self-Identity = 3

When identify

מתי הזדהית כנכה צה"ל או כסטודנט עם מוגבלות ?

- כאשר הגשתי מועמדות (1)
- לאחר שהתקבלתי ונרשמתי ללימודים (2)
- כשנתקלתי בקשיים בכיתה (3)
- כשקיבלתי ציון סופי גרוע בקורס (4)
- כשהייתה לי בעיה עם נושא לא אקדמי) כגון: שירותי בריאות, דיור וכו' (5)
- כשהתמודדתי עם קושי מסוים מול מרצה (6)
- בעקבות מצב לחץ בלימודים (7)
- אחר _____ (99)

Display This Question:

If $F1 = 1$ Or $F2 = 1$

X→

Freq physical access

באיזו תדירות אתה משתמש בשירותי הנגישות הפיזית במוסד בו אתה לומד ?

	אף פעם (1)	לעיתים רחוקות (2)	לפעמים (3)	לעיתים קרובות (4)	תמיד (5)
חנייה נגישה (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
כיסאות ושולחנות מתכווננים	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תחבורה נגישה (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירותי ניידות והתמצאות בקמפוס (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
רמפות (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מעליות (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירותים/בתי שימוש נגישים (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If $F1 = 1$ Or $F2 = 1$

Assiv Tech האם אתה משתמש במהלך הלימודים בטכנולוגיה מסייעת או באביזרי עזר אישיים?

(1) כן (2) לא

Display This Question:

If Assiv Tech = 1

Asses Tech 2 באיזה טכנולוגיה או אביזרי עזר אישיים אתה משתמש ?

 אמצעי עזר לניידות) כיסא גלגלים, מקל וכו' (1) מכשירי שמיעה/אביזרי עזר לשיפור השמיעה (2) משקפיים/אביזרי עזר לשיפור הראייה (3)

- כלב נחיייה (4)
 מחשבים חומרה/תוכנה (5)
 אחר _____ (99)

Display This Question:
If F1 = 1
Or F2 = 1

Use of services האם אתה משתמש בשירותים המוצעים על ידי מרכז התמיכה לסטודנטים עם מוגבלויות במוסד בו אתה לומד?
 כן (1)
 לא (2)

Display This Question:
If Use of services = 2

Reason
ציין את הסיבה העיקרית שבגללה אתה מעדיף לא להשתמש בשירותי התמיכה ?

Display This Question:
If Use of services = 1

DSS response
האם שירותי מרכז התמיכה נותנים מענה לצרכיך?
 כן (1)
 לא (2)

Display This Question:
If Use of services = 2

DSS response 2
האם לדעתך ישנם שירותים במרכז התמיכה בקמפוס שעשויים היו לתת מענה לצרכיך?
 כן (1)
 לא (2)

Display This Question:
If F1 = 1
Or F2 = 1

Tagging
האם היית מרגיש יותר בנוח לפנות לשירותי תמיכה שאיננו מתויג כ'-שירותי תמיכה לסטודנטים עם מוגבלויות' ?
 כן (1)

○ לא (2)

*Display This Question:
If DSS response 2 = 1*

could help, פרט אילו שירותים היו עשויים לסייע לך בלימודים?

*Display This Question:
If DSS response = 1*

Rate in general

דרג את יעילות שירותי מרכז התמיכה עבורך באופן כללי?

- כלל לא עוזרים (1)
- מועילים מעט (2)
- מועילים למדי (3)
- מועילים (4)
- עוזרים מאוד (5)

*Display This Question:
If DSS response = 1*

Open 1 בבקשה הסבר כיצד שירותי התמיכה במוסד בו אתה לומד מסייעים לך ?

*Display This Question:
If Use of services = 1*

Know DSS איך למדת על קיומו של מרכז התמיכה?

- אתר האינטרנט של האוניברסיטה/המכללה (1)
- מזכירות רישום תלמידים (2)
- סגל אקדמי) יועץ, מרצה (3)
- סטודנט אחר (4)
- עובד סוציאלי בתוך האוניברסיטה/מכללה או מחוצה לה (5)
- צוות הספרייה (6)
- צוות רפואי בתוך האוניברסיטה/מכללה או מחוצה לה (7)
- עובד שיקום בארגון נכי צה"א או בית הלוחם (8)
- קבוצת תמיכה של סטודנטים עם מוגבלות או נכי צה"ל (9)

Display This Question:
If Use of services = 1

Academic self import

בחן את שירותי התמיכה וההתאמות האקדמיות הבאים, ודרג את רמת החשיבות שלהם בהתאם לצרכיך.

	חשיבות				
	(1) כלל לא חשוב	(2) מעט חשוב	(3) די חשוב	(4) חשוב	(5) חשוב ביותר
ייעוץ, תמיכה וליווי בקשר ללימודים (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
קבלת תקצירים/סיכומים (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סיוע בהקניית הרגלי למידה (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שימוש באמצעי הקלטה בשיעור (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
דפוס נגיש, פישוט לשוני (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תרגום לשפת סימנים (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תמלול ההרצאה (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הקראה (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תמיכה רגשית (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הגברת שמע אישית (FM/loop hear)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סריקת חומרי לימוד (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מיקום שונה בעת מבחן (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הארכת זמן המבחן (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
פורמט שונה של מבחן) בע"פ/בכתב, הקראה וכד (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שימוש בתוכנת מחשב ייחודית כגון: תוכנת הקראה, המרה לברייל (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	אף פעם (1)	לעיתים רחוקות (2)	לפעמים (3)	לעיתים קרובות (4)	תמיד (5)
ייעוץ, תמיכה וליווי בקשר לתוכנית הלימודים/בקורסים ספציפיים (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
קבלת תקצירים/סיכומי שיעור (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הקניית הרגלי למידה (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הקראה (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
דפוס נגיש, פישוט לשוני (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תרגום לשפת סימנים (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תמלול ההרצאה (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הקלטה) קובץ קול (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תמיכה רגשית (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ספרים/חומרי לימוד בפורמט דיגיטלי (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מקום ישיבה בשיעור/במבחן במיקום ללא מסיחים (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הארכת זמן המבחן (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
פורמט שונה של מבחן (בע"פ/בכתב, הקראה וכד (22)')	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שימוש בתוכנת מחשב ייחודית כגון: תוכנת הקראה, או המרה לברייל (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

בחן את רשימת שירותי התמיכה וההתאמות האקדמיות, ודרג באיזו תדירות אתה משתמש בהם במוסד בו אתה לומד?

Display This Question:
 If Freq Acad Access = 2
 Or Freq Acad Access = 3
 Or Freq Acad Access = 4
 Or Freq Acad Access = 5

Academic Satis בחן את שירותי התמיכה וההתאמות האקדמיות הבאות, ודרג את רמת שביעות רצונך מהשימוש בשירותים והתאמות אקדמיות אלו .

	שביעות רצון					
	בכלל לא מרוצה (1)	לא מרוצה (2)	די מרוצה (3)	מרוצה (4)	מרוצה מאוד (5)	לא רלוונטי עבורי (99)
ייעוץ, תמיכה וליווי בקשר לתוכנית הלימודים/בקורסים ספציפיים (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
קבלת תקצירים/סיכומים (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סדנאות לשיפור כישורי למידה (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירות הקראה (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
דפוס נגיש, פישוט לשוני של חומרי הקורס/מבחן (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תרגום לשפת סימנים (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תמלול ההרצאה (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סיוע בהקניית הרגלי למידה (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הקראה (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
הגברת שמע אישית (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
סריקת חומרי לימוד (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מיקום ישיבה ללא מסיחים בשיעור/במבחן (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

הארכת זמן השיעור (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
פורמט שונה של מבחן (בע"פ/פ/בכתב, הקראה וכד') (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שימוש בתוכנת מחשב ייחודית כגון: הקראה, או המרה לבריל (3).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Physic Access import

בחן את שירותי הנגישות הפיסית בסביבת הקמפוס בו הינך לומד, ודרג את רמת חשיבותם בהתאם לצרכיך

	חשיבות				
	לא חשוב כלל (1)	מעט חשוב (2)	די חשוב (3)	חשוב (4)	חשוב ביותר (5)
הנייה נגישה (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תחבורה נגישה (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירותי נידות והתמצאות בקמפוס (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
רמפות (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירותים/בתי שימוש נגישים (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מעליות (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
כיסאות ושולחנות מתכוונים (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If Freq physical access = 2

Or Freq physical access = 3

Or Freq physical access = 4

Or Freq physical access = 5

Physical satis.

בחן את שירותי הנגישות הפיסית בסביבת הקמפוס בו הינך לומד, ודרג את רמת שביעות רצונך

	שביעות רצון					
	בכלל לא מרוצה (1)	לא מרוצה (2)	די מרוצה (3)	מרוצה (4)	מרוצה מאוד (5)	לא רלוונטי עבורי (99)
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

חנייה נגישה (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
תחבורה נגישה (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירותי ניידות והתמצאות בקמפוס (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
רמפות (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שירותים/בתי שימוש נגישים (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מעליות (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
כיסאות ושולחנות מתכוונים (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Display This Question:
If Use of services = 1*

Satisf. General

עד כמה אתה שבע רצון באופן כללי מהשירותים שאתה מקבל במרכז התמיכה בקמפוס בו אתה לומד ?

- (1) בכלל לא מרוצה
- (2) לא מרוצה
- (3) די מרוצה
- (4) מרוצה
- (5) מאוד מרוצה

Difficulty

דרג את רמת הקושי והאתגר האישי שלך כסטודנט במוסד להשכלה גבוהה

	קל מאוד (1) (1)	קל (2) (2)	ניטרלי (3) (3)	קשה (4) (4)	קשה מאוד (5) (5)
מבחינה אקדמית (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מבחינה חברתית (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Support bodies 1

בחן את רשימת הגופים הבאים וציין באיזו תדירות אתה פנית לגופים אלו כדי להסדיר את שירותי התמיכה במוסד בו אתה לומד

	תדירות				
	(1) אף פעם	(2) כמעט אף פעם	(3) לפעמים	כמעט בכל סמסטר (4)	בכל סמסטר (5)
דיקאנט הסטודנטים (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מרכז שירותי התמיכה בקמפוס (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
המוסד לביטוח לאומי (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
משרד הביטחון אגף השיקום (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ארגון נכי צה"ל (סניף בית הלוחם) (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
קבוצת תמיכה של סטודנטים עם מוגבלות- תאי סמ"ן (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מרכז על"ה (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
עמותה/ארגון תמיכה בפצועי צה"ל (ל כגון- אחים לאחים) (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:
 If Support bodies 1#1 = 2
 Or Support bodies 1#1 = 3
 Or Support bodies 1#1 = 4
 Or Support bodies 1#1 = 5

Support bodies 2

בחן את רשימת הגופים הבאים וציין את רמת שביעות רצונך מהשירות שניתן לך על ידי גופים אלו על מנת להסדיר את שירותי התמיכה במוסד בו הינך לומד.

	שביעות רצון					
	בכלל לא מרוצה (1) 1	לא מרוצה (2) 2	די מרוצה (3) 3	מרוצה (4) 4	מרוצה מאוד (5) 5	לא פניתי (6) 6
דיקאנט הסטודנטים (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מרכז שירותי התמיכה בקמפוס (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
המוסד לביטוח לאומי (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
משרד הביטחון אגף השיקום (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ארגון נכי צה"ל (סניף בית הלוחם (5))	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
קבוצת תמיכה של סטודנטים עם מוגבלות- תאי סמ"ן (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
מרכז על"ה (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
עמותה/ארגון תמיכה בפצועי צה"ל (ל) כגון- אחים לאחים (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Satisf. acad experie

עד כמה אתה שבע רצון מחוויות הלימודים במוסד האקדמי אליו אתה רשום ?

- (1) בכלל לא מרוצה
- (2) לא מרוצה
- (3) די מרוצה
- (4) מרוצה
- (5) מרוצה מאוד

Why HE מדוע החלטת ללכת ללימוד בהשכלה הגבוהה ?

(בחר בשלוש הסיבות העיקריות ודרג אותן על פי חשיבותן בעיניך

= 1 חשיבות נמוכה = 2, חשיבות בינונית = 3, חשיבות גבוהה)

- _____ כדי לשפר את הזדמנויות התעסוקה שלי (1)
- _____ כדי להיות יותר עצמאי (2)
- _____ כדי לפגוש אנשים שונים ולהכיר חברים חדשים (3)
- _____ כדי להיות דוגמה לילדיי (4)
- _____ כי יש לי סיוע כספי זמין למימון הלימודים (5)
- _____ כי כל אחד צריך היום שיהיה לו תואר אקדמי (6)
- _____ כי המוסד להשכלה גבוהה יעשה כל שביכולתו כדי לסייע לי להצליח בלימודים (7)
- _____ כדי להיות לדוגמה לפצועים/נכים אחרים (8)
- _____ כדי שאוכל להרוויח יותר כסף (9)
- _____ כי חשוב לי לחוות את החוויה של לימודים בהשכלה הגבוהה (10)
- _____ כדי לרכוש ידע במספר תחומים (11)
- _____ כדי לחזק את הביטחון העצמי שלי (12)

*Display This Question:
If Use of services = 1
Or Use of services = 2*

Open 2 לפני שהתחלת ללמוד במוסד בו הינך לומד היום, מה נתפס בעיניך כשירות התמיכה החשוב ביותר לו אתה זקוק? או השירות שרצית לקבל?

Open 3 מאילו שירותים שעדיין לא מוצעים במוסד בו אתה לומד, היית לדעתך נהנה כסטודנט? אילו שירותי תמיכה היו מסייעים לך להשתלב טוב יותר ולהצליח בהשכלה הגבוהה בישראל?

Open 4 אילו המלצות יש לך עבור אנשים עם מוגבלות או נכי צה"ל אחרים העתידיים להירשם ללימודים באחד ממוסדות ההשכלה הגבוהה בישראל?

End of Block: Accessibility services

Start of Block: Demographic end

Gender מיין

- זכר (1)
○ נקבה (2)

Where born האם נולדת בישראל?

- כן (1)
○ לא (2)

Status today

מהו מעמד שירותך הביטחוני כיום ?

- חייל בשירות סדיר (1)
○ אזרח (2)
○ בשירות מילואים לאחר שירות סדיר (3)
○ חייל בשירות קבע (4)
○ אזרח, בשירות מילואים לאחר שירות קבע (5)
○ אזרח בגמלאות לאחר שירות קבע (6)
○ אחר _____ (99)

Goal to study האם מטרתך הייתה ללכת ללמוד בהשכלה גבוהה לפני שירותך הצבאי/הביטחוני או לפני הפציעה?

- כן (1)
○ לא (2)

Academic year באיזו שנת לימודים אקדמית התחלת את תוכנית הלימודים הנוכחית שלך ?

- 2017-2018 (1)
○ 2016-2017 (2)
○ 2015-2016 (3)
○ 2014-2015 (4)
○ 2013-2014 (5)
○ אחר _____ (6)

Full/Part ציין את סטטוס התכנית אליה הינך רשום כעת

- תכנית מלאה (1)
○ תכנית חלקית (2)

Display This Question:
If F2 = 1
Or F1 = 1

X→

Action before enroll

להלן מובאות מספר פעולות שייתכן וביצעת לפני כניסתך ללימודים בהשכלה הגבוהה .
בבקשה תתייחס לכל אחת מהאפשרויות, וציין' כן 'או' לא 'עבור כל אחת מהן .

	כן (1)	לא (2)
חקרתי את ההיבטים השונים הקשורים לסטודנטים עם מוגבלויות ושירותי הנגישות בהשכלה הגבוהה לפני שנרשמתי לאיזשהו מוסד אקדמי (1) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שוחחתי עם נכי/פצועי צה"ל אחרים שלמדו בעבר בהשכלה הגבוהה כדי לקבל תובנות מהניסיון שלהם (2) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ביקרתי במכללה/אוניברסיטה לפני שנרשמתי כדי ללמוד מקרוב על זמינות שירותי הנגישות בקמפוס (3) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ידעתי לאיזה סוג של שירותי תמיכה אני זקוק לפני שנרשמתי ללימודים (4) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
חיפשתי מידע באתר האינטרנט של המכללה/האוניברסיטה כדי ללמוד על זמינות שירותי התמיכה בקמפוס (5) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ביקרתי במרכז התמיכה לסטודנטים עם מוגבלות בקמפוס (6) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שוחחתי עם איש מקצוע) כמו עובד סוציאלי (על הקשיים והצרכים שלי (7) .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

: Display This Question
If Where born = 2

Aliya1

ציין באיזו ארץ בה נולדת ?

Display This Question
:If Where born = 2

Aliya2

ציין באיזו שנה עלית לישראל?

Family status

מהו מצבך המשפחתי ?

- (1) רווק
 - (2) נשוי
 - (3) פרוד / גרוש
 - (4) אלמן
 - (5) מעדיף לא לומר
-

Relig/Nation

האם הינך-

- (2) יהודי
- (1) דרוזי
- (3) מוסלמי
- (4) נוצרי
- (5) צ'רקסי
- (6) אחר

End of Block: Demographic end

End of Survey
End survey messages:

End survey 1

Message Library - Students without disabilities 2

תודה על הרצון הטוב ועל היענותך לסקר.
סקר זה מיועד אך ורק לאנשים עם מוגבלות/נכות עקב שירותם בצה"ל או בכוחות הביטחון האחרים בלבד, הלומדים כעת בהשכלה הגבוהה בישראל.

בהצלחה וכל טוב,
עינת בן דב

bendo101@mail.chapman.edu

End survey 2

Message Library - End and Thanks

תודה רבה על שהקדשת מזמנך למילוי הסקר הזה.
במידה והינך מוכן שהחוקרת תיצור עימך קשר בהמשך לראיון מעקב, הינך מוזמן לשלוח הודעה לכתובת הדוא"ל bendo101@mail.chapman.edu

בהצלחה וכל טוב,
עינת בן דב.

Appendix C

Online Survey (English)

Background Characteristics:

Start of Block: Filter

Question tag- F1

Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense?
(Filter question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If - Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =No

Question tag- F2

Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? (Filter question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = No

Question tag- F3

Display This Question:

If - Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = Yes

Are you recognized by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) as a person with disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Question tag- non-recognition

Display This Question:

If - Are you recognized by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) as a person with disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = No

Please briefly describe the circumstances of your non-recognition by the IDF or the National Insurance Institute.

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

Or Are you recognized by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) as a person with disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces?= Yes

Question tag - Percent

What is your recognized degree of disability?

- 19% - 10% (1)
- 29% - 20% (2)
- 39% - 30% (3)
- 49% - 40% (4)
- 99% - 50% (5)
- 100%, + 100% (6)

Start of Block: History dis

Question tag - Event year

What year did the event (injury / illness) occurred?

Question tag - Where

The injury occurred while you were on (you can mark more than one answer):
(Multiple)

- Army forces (IDF) (1)
 - The Israel Border Police (2)
 - Police forces (3)
 - The Israel Prison Service (4)
 - The Knesset Guard (5)
 - Intelligence community and other Israeli defense forces (6)
 - A civilian employee of the IDF (7)
-

Display This Question:

If The injury occurred while you were serving in (you can mark more than one answer): = Army (IDF)

Or The injury occurred while you were serving in (you can mark more than one answer): = Israel Border Police

Question tag - Duty Service

When you injured or when the disability is demonstrated you were under

- Regular mandatory service (1)
 - Reserve service (2)
 - Permanent service (3)
 - Other (99) _____
-

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

*Or Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? =
Yes*

Question tag - Type of Dis

How do you define your type of disability? (You can mark more than one answer):

- Vision impairment (not properly corrected by glasses / contact lenses) (1)
 - Hearing impairment (hard of hearing / deaf) (2)
 - Injury in upper limbs (3)
 - Head injury (4)
 - Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
 - Mobility limitation (lower limb injury) (6)
 - Chronic medical / health problem (such as diabetes) (7)
 - Mental illness (8)
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (9)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (10)
 - Learning Disabilities and / or ADHD (11)
 - Back injury (12)
 - Abdominal injury (13)
 - Other (99) _____
-

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

Question tag – Type of Dis rec 1

According to which disability type your disability was recognized by the Ministry of Defense?

- Vision impairment (not properly corrected by glasses / contact lenses) (1)
- Hearing impairment (hard of hearing / deaf) (2)
- Injury in upper limbs (3)
- Head injury (4)
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Mobility limitation (lower limb injury) (6)
- Chronic medical / health problem (such as diabetes) (7)
- Mental illness (8)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (9)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (10)
- Learning Disabilities and / or ADHD (11)
- Back injury (12)
- Abdominal injury (13)
- Other (99) _____

Display This Question:

If Are you recognized by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) as a person with disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = Yes

Question tag – Type of Dis rec 2

According to which disability type your disability was recognized by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII)?

- Vision impairment (not properly corrected by glasses / contact lenses) (1)
- Hearing impairment (hard of hearing / deaf) (2)
- Injury in upper limbs (3)
- Head injury (4)
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Mobility limitation (lower limb injury) (6)
- Chronic medical / health problem (such as diabetes) (7)
- Mental illness (8)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (9)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (10)
- Learning Disabilities and / or ADHD (11)
- Back injury (12)
- Abdominal injury (13)
- Other (99) _____

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

Or Are you recognized by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) as a person with disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = Yes

Question tag – Benefit awareness

This question relates to the assistance and the available benefits to disabled IDF veterans. Please specify "Yes" or "No" for each of the following statements:

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Are you aware of the assistance and available benefits for you as a veteran with disabilities in higher education?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you apply to the Rehabilitation Department in the Ministry of Defense to for any assistance for your studies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you apply to the Rehabilitation Department in the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) to for any assistance for your studies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: History dis

Start of Block: Education

Question tag – Degree

What is the academic degree that you intend to obtain now?

- Pre-Academic Program (1)
- First degree (B.A) (2)
- Master's degree (M.A, MBA, MSc) (3)
- Doctoral degree (Ph.D Ed.D) (4)
- Teaching Certificate (5)
- Other - specific degrees such as: medical degree (99)
- Question tag – School program

What is your major of study?

Question tag – Name HEI 1

What kind of institution of higher learning do you study at?

- University (1)
- College (2)

Display This Question:

If Name HEI 1 = 1 (Dropdown list)

Question tag – Name HEI 2

From the list listed below in alphabetical order, please select the institution of higher learning you are studying

אוניברסיטת אריאל בשומרון ... (1) מכון ויצמן למדע(14) ▼

Question tag – Name HEI 3

Display This Question:

If Name HEI1 = 2 (Dropdown list)

From the list listed below in alphabetical order, please select the institution of higher learning you are studying

אמונה-אפרתה -מכללה אקדמית לאמנויות ולחינוך, ירושלים ... (1) סמינר הקיבוצים – המכללה לחינוך
לטכנולוגיה ולאמנויות(55)

Question tag – Friendly

Would you describe your university as a “Disability friendly” institution?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Question tag – Reason for target HE

What are the most important reasons for enrolling to this specific academic college/university?
 (Check all that apply) (Multiple)

- Field of interest for major studies (1)
- Disability friendly campus (2)
- Close to where I live (3)
- On-campus housing (4)
- Faculty and staff reputation (5)
- Social student life (6)
- Other _____ (99)

End of Block: Education

Start of Block: Need / importance

Examine the list of <u>academic accommodations</u> , and rate them according to their <u>level of importance</u> in higher education institutions.	Importance				
	Not Important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Very Important (5)
Counseling service, support and guidance in connection with the program studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Notetaking service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting/Teaching learning habits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of voice recorder in lecture classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible printing, linguistic simplification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Sign language interpretation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Time Captioning services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading of course materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A personal audio accessibility system –(FM/loop hear)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Textbooks/study materials in alternate formats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternate location at class or test time (like location without distractors)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extended exam time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternate test format (oral / written, reading aloud instructions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of special accessibility software such as reading software or Braille	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question tag – General acad importa

Question tag - Access 1

Have you received any of the following assistances from other students, faculty or staff during the course of your studies in this university/college? Please indicate Yes or No for each statement.

	Yes (1)	No (2)
--	---------	--------

Mobility and orientation on campus		
Class notetaking		
Transcript service		
Locating and finding study materials		
Reading class assignments		
Receiving class assignments as papers and presentations		
Taking exams		
Escort to social activities on campus		

Question tag - Aware of services

Are you aware of the existing support services for students with disabilities in your academic institution?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Need / importance

Start of Block: Self-Identity/Discloser

Display This Question:

If F1 = 1 (legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense)

Or F2 = 1 (has injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security

forces

Question tag - Self-Identity

How do you identify yourself as a student in this university/college?

- Student without disability (1)
- Student with disability (2)
- Student IDF disabled veteran (*Neche-Zahal*) (3)

Display This Question:

If Self-Identity = 2 (Student with disability)

Or Self-Identity = 3 (Student IDF disabled veteran)

Question tag - Share info

Have you shared information with others about your disability?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Self-Identity = 2 (Student with disability)

Or Self-Identity = 3 (Student IDF disabled veteran)

Question tag - Discloser

Have you self-identified as an IDF disabled person or as a student with disabilities to the following service providers on campus? Please indicate Yes or No for each statement.

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Admission office (1)		
Disability Support Services (2)		
Faculty members (3)		
Other students (4)		
Academic Advisor (5)		
University Social worker (6)		
Residence Hall Staff (7)		
Health center services (8)		
psychological Counseling services (9)		
Public Safety (10)		
Educational counseling, center of learning disabilities diagnosis (11)		
Career development office (12)		
Library stuff (13)		

Display This Question:

If Self-Identity = 3

Or Self-Identity = 2

Question tag - When identify

When did you self-identify as student with disability or as IDF veteran with disabilities?
(Multiple)

- When I applied (1)
- When I registered/enrolled (2)

- When I began struggling in a class (3)
- When I received a poor final grade in a class (4)
- When I had trouble with a non-academic issue (health services, housing, etc.) (5)
- When I had difficulty with a particular faculty member (6)
- Following some pressure in school (7)
- Other _____ (99)

End of Block: Self-Identity/Discloser

Start of Block: Accessibility services

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

Or Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = Yes

Question tag - Freq physical access

How often do you use the following physical accessibility services in a campus environment?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
Accessible parking (1)					
Accessible transportation (2)					
Mobility and orientation on campus (3)					
Ramps (4)					
Accommodated Restrooms (5)					
Elevators (6)					
Alternative tables and chairs in the classroom (7)					

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

Or Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = Yes

Question tag - Assiv Tech

Do you use personal assistive technology during your academic studies? (Filter question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Do you use personal assistive technology during your academic studies? = Yes

Question tag - Asses Tech 2

What personal assistive technology/ies to you use on campus? (Multiple)
(Check all that apply).

- Means of mobility (wheelchair, stick, etc.) (1)
- Hearing aids or other assistive hearing aids(2)
- Visual aids (glasses or other assistive visual aids) (3)
- Dog guide (4)
- Computer hardware and software (4)
- Other (99) _____

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

Or Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = Yes

Question tag - Use of services

Do you use the disability services offered by the disability support office on your campus?
(Filter question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? = 2 (No)

Question tag - Reason

Indicate the main reason why you prefer not to apply to campus support services?

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

Question tag - DSS response

Do disability support services meet your needs?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =No

Question tag - DSS response 2

Do you think there are any services in the disability support center that might have been able to meet your needs?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Are you legally recognized as an IDF disabled person by the Ministry of Defense? =Yes

Or Do you have any injury or disability due to military service or service in the other Israeli security forces? = Yes

Question tag - Tagging

Would you feel more comfortable contacting a support service that is not tagged as a Support for Students with Disabilities?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Do you think there are any services in the disability support center that might have been able to meet your needs? = Yes

Question tag - Could help

If YES, please detail what services might help you with your studies?

Display This Question:

If Do disability support services meet your needs? = Yes

Question tag - Rate in general

Please rate the effectiveness of the support services for you in general?

- Not helpful (1)
- Slightly helpful (2)
- Fairly helpful (3)
- Helpful (4)
- Very helpful (5)

Display This Question:

If Do disability support services meet your needs? = Yes

Question tag - Open 1

Please explain how the college/ university disability support office help you?

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

Question tag - Know DSS

How did you learn about the disability support office? (Check all that apply)
(Multiple)

- The University/college website (1)
- Registration Administrator staff (2)
- Faculty member (Advisor, teacher) (3)
- Other student (4)
- Social worker inside or outside of the university/college (5)
- Librarian (6)
- Medical staff inside or outside of the university/college (7)
- Rehabilitation worker in the organization of the IDF veterans or Beit Halochem (8)
- Support group for students with disabilities or IDF disabled veterans (9)
- Other _____ (99)

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

Question tag – Academic self Import

According to your personal needs, please rate the level of importance of the following accommodations.

	Importance				
	Not Important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Very Important (5)
Counseling, support and guidance in connection with the program studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Notetaking service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting/Teaching learning habits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of voice recorder in lecture classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible printing, linguistic simplification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sign language interpretation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Time Captioning services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading of course materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A personal audio accessibility system –(FM/loop hear)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Textbooks/study materials in alternate formats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternate location at class or test time (like without distractors)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extended exam time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Alternate test format (oral / written, reading aloud instructions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of special accessibility software such as reading software or Braille	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

Question tag - Freq Acad Access

How often do you use the following **academic accommodations** in your classes?

	Frequency				
	Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)
Counseling, support and guidance in connection with the program studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Notetaking service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting/Teaching learning habits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of voice recorder in lecture classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible printing, linguistic simplification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sign language interpretation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Time Captioning services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading of course materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Emotional support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A personal audio accessibility system –(FM/loop hear)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Textbooks/study materials in alternate formats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternate location at class or test time (like without distractors)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extended exam time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternate test format (oral / written, reading aloud instructions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of special accessibility software such as reading software or Braille	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:
If How often do you use these accommodations in your classes? = 2
Or How often do you use these accommodations in your classes? = 3
Or How often do you use these accommodations in your classes? = 4
Or How often do you use these accommodations in your classes? = 5

Question tag - Academic Satis.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following academic accommodations.

	Satisfaction				
	Very Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Somewhat Satisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)
Counseling, support and guidance in connection with the program studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Notetaking service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting/Teaching learning habits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of voice recorder in lecture classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible printing, linguistic simplification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sign language interpretation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Time Captioning services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading of course materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A personal audio accessibility system –(FM/loop hear)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Textbooks/study materials in alternate formats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternate location at class or test time (like without distractors)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extended exam time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternate test format (oral / written, reading aloud instructions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of special accessibility software such as reading software or Braille	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 2

Or How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 3

Or How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 4

Or How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 5

Question tag - Physic Access import

Please indicate the level of importance of the following physical accessibility services for your better academic and social success in Israeli higher education institutions.

Physical accessibility	Importance				
	Extremely important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately important (3)	Slightly important (2)	Not at all important (1)
Accessible parking (1)					
Accessible transportation (2)					
Mobility and orientation on campus (3)					
Ramps (4)					
Accommodated Restrooms (5)					
Elevators (6)					
Alternative tables and chairs in the classroom (7)					

Display This Question:

If How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 2

Or How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 3

Or How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 4

Or How often do you use physical accessibility services in a campus environment? = 5

Question tag - Physical satis.

Examine the physical accessibility services in your campus environment. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following services.

Physical accessibility	Satisfaction					
	Not relevant for me	Very Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Somewhat Satisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)
Accessible parking (1)						
Accessible transportation (2)						
Mobility and orientation on campus (3)						
Ramps (4)						
Accommodated Restrooms (5)						
Elevators (6)						
Alternative tables and chairs in the classroom (7)						

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

Question tag – Satisf. General

How satisfied are you with the overall services you are receiving from the disability support services office at your college/university/?

- Not at all satisfied (1)
- Slightly satisfied (2)
- Moderately satisfied (3)
- Very satisfied (4)
Extremely

Question tag – Difficulty

How do you feel about your overall academic and social experiences?
Please rate your level of difficulty/challenges as a student in higher education.

	Very Easy (1)	Easy (2)	Neutral (3)	Difficult (4)	Very Difficult (5)
Academic experiences					
Social experiences					

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

Question tag - Support bodies 1

For each of the different entities listed below, please indicate how frequently you have used their services in order to meet your disability needs on campus?

	Frequency of use				
	Every semester (5)	Almost every semester (4)	Occasionally/ Sometimes (3)	Almost never (2)	Never (1)
Dean of Students' office					
Disability services office on campus					
National Insurance Institute					
Ministry of Defense – Rehabilitation department					
IDF Disabled Veterans Organization - Z.D.V.O					
Saman Project - Students Lead accessibility					
“Aleh” (The society of Blind and Dyslexic students in Israel)					
Other association which support disabled IDF veterans					

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

And indicate how frequently use = 2

Or indicate how frequently use = 3

Or indicate how frequently use = 4

Or indicate how frequently use = 5

Question tag - Support bodies 2 For each of the different entities listed below, please indicate your level of satisfaction of their services in helping you to regulate the disability support services on campus.

	Level of satisfaction				
	Very Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Somewhat Satisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)
Dean of Students' office					
Disability services office on campus					
National Insurance Institute					
Ministry of Defense – Rehabilitation department					
IDF Disabled Veterans Organization - Z.D.V.O					
Saman Project - Students Lead accessibility					
“Aleh” (The society of Blind and Dyslexic students in Israel)					
Other association which support disabled IDF veterans					

Question tag – Why HE

Why did you decide to go to higher education? (Choose the three main reasons and rank them according to their importance to you 1 = low importance, 2 = moderate importance, 3 = high importance)

- To enhance employment opportunities (1)
- To gain independence (2)
- To meet different people and make new friends (3)
- To set an example for my children (4)
- Because financial assistance is available (5)
- Because everybody should have an academic degree (6)
- Because higher education institution will do everything they can to help me (7)
- To set an example for my veterans' friends (8)
- To make more money (9)

- As an experience in higher education (10)
- To be more knowledgeable in several areas (11)
- To build self-confidence (12)

Display This Question:

If Do you use the disability services on campus? =Yes

Or Do you use the disability services on campus? =No

Question tag – Open 2

Before you entered the college/ university, what did you perceive as the most important disability services you would require? Or wish to have?

Question tag – Open 3

What services would you benefit from that were not yet offered to you in your current university/college that would make you a more effective student?

Question tag – Open 4

What recommendations do you have for future veterans with disabilities that are going to enroll as students?

End of Block: Accessibility services

Start of Block: Demographic end

Question tag – Age

How old will you be on December 31st 2018?

Question tag – Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Question tag – Where born

Did you born in Israel?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Question tag - Status today

what is your current service status today?

- Soldier in regular mandatory service (1)
- Citizen (8)
- In reserve service after regular mandatory service (3)
- Soldier in the permanent army (2)
- Civilian, in reserve service after permanent service (5)
- Retired citizen after permanent service (6)
- Other (99) _____

Question tag – Goal to study

Is this was your goal to go to higher education before you joined the army or before your injury during service?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Question tag – Academic year

In what academic year did you start your current studies in higher education?

- 2017-2018 (1)
- 2016-2017 (2)
- 2015-2016 (3)
- 2014-2015 (4)
- 2013-2014 (5)
- Other (99) _____

Question tag – Full/Part

Please indicate your current enrollment status:

- Full-time program (1)
- Part-time program (2)

Question tag – Action before enrolling

These items refer to a number of actions you might have taken before you enrolled to the university/college. Please indicate Yes or No for each statement.

	Yes (1)	No (2)
I researched different aspects of accessibility and disability services in higher education before I applied to any university/college.		
I spoke to former Israeli veterans with disabilities to gain insight about their academic experiences.		
I visited the university/college before I enrolled to learn more about the availability of accessibility and disability services on campus.		
I knew what kind of disability services I need before I applied.		
I searched for information on the university/college website to learn more about the availability of disability services on campus.		
I visited the disability services office on campus.		
I spoke to a professional (like a social worker) about my needs - at the university/college, at the rehabilitation department of the Ministry of Defense or at IDF Disabled veterans' organization Z.D.V.O.		

Display This Question:

If Did you born in Israel? = No

Question tag – Aliya 1

Indicate which country you were born in?

Display This Question:

If Did you born in Israel? = No

Question tag – Aliya 2

What year did you immigrate to Israel?

Question tag – Family status

What is your current marital status?

- Single (1)
- Married (2)
- Separated/Divorced (3)
- Widowed (4)
- Would rather not say (9)

Question tag – Relig/Nation

Religion/Nationality

- Judaism (1)
- Islam (2)
- Druze (3)
- Christianity (4)
- Other_____ (99)

End of Block: Demographic end

End of survey!
End survey messages:

End survey 1

Message Library - Students without disabilities 2

Thank you for your good will and for your response to the survey
This survey is intended only for people with disabilities due to their service in the IDF or other Israeli security forces, and who currently study in higher education in Israel.
Good luck and wish you all the best,

Einat Ben Dov
bendo101@mail.chapman.edu

End survey 2

Message Library - End and Thanks

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. If you agree that the researcher will contact you later on for a follow-up interview, you are welcome to send a message to the email address bendo101@mail.chapman.edu

Good luck and wish you all the best,
Einat Ben Dov

Appendix D

Interview Guide

Interview Guide:

The questions below for the interview sessions were designed based on Seidman's in-depth interview guide (2006; 2014). During the interviews themselves, the order of the questions and the manner in which the questions will be presented may change during the interaction with the participants.

Example of questions in the interview sessions:

Interview One: Focus on life experience and disability identity

How did the participant come to be a student-veteran with a disability? A review of the participant's life history up to the time he/she became to be a student-veteran with a disability in higher education in Israel.

- Tell me about yourself (some general info).
- During your time in high school did you have any difficulties or needs that you would like to discuss?
- Please explain your past army service (as far as you can) and the events leading to your injury.
- Tell me how your army service came to be.
- Please tell me about the event or cause of your injury during your military service if you can.
- Tell me about your injury diagnosis (in the field, at the hospital, by the Ministry of Defense, NII).
- Do you talk about the diagnosis in your home and with your immediate family?
- How do feel about it?
- How would you describe your transition to higher education after your injury and rehabilitation process?
- Why did you decide to go to higher education?
- When did you decide to go to higher education? Is this something you have planned before/after your injury?

1. Tell me how and why you have decided to study in the program/college/university you are studying now.
2. What were the main reasons for choosing this college/university?
3. Please describe what were your first steps?
4. Did you try to locate any information about accessibility and disability services?
5. How do you disclose yourself on campus?
6. To whom do you share your disability needs? (on-campus and outside off-campus).
7. Tell me about your educational needs and what actions did you take to overcome these challenges and when (before enrollment, after, during ...).
8. During your time in higher education did you have any disability needs that you would like to discuss?
9. What is/are the most important support service/s for you as a student-veteran with a disability in higher education?
 - a. What actions did you take?
 - b. What services did you ask for?
10. From what department/administrator/staff you have requested your services? (on-campus and outside off-campus).

Interview Stage Two: The Details of Experience

What is it like to be for the participant a student-veteran with a disability?

What are the details of the participant's school experience as a student-veteran with a disability?

1. How do you talk about the diagnosis with people outside your immediate family?
2. Tell me about your interactions outside of the home at college/university.
 - a. How do you talk about the diagnosis with people on campus?
 - b. Do you share your disability with other people on campus?
3. Tell me a story about something difficult that happened on campus.
 - a. Why do you think it happened?
 - b. How was it resolved?
4. Tell me about something wonderful that happened on campus.
 - a. Why do you think it happened?
 - b. How was it resolved?
5. Are you familiar with disability benefits and services in the higher education environment?
 - a. Tell me how you learned about your disability benefits as a veteran with a disability in higher education.
 - b. How did you learn about the disability support services that are available on your campus?
6. Do you use any disability support services at your campus?
 - a. How did you first start to use disability support services?
 - b. Tell me about your experiences while you were asking for accommodations and disability services (on-campus and outside of campus).
 - c. Did/do you make progress/benefit from these services?
7. How do your disability needs impact your overall student experience?

Interview Stage Three: Reflection on the Meaning

What does it mean to the participant to be a student-veteran with a disability? Given what the participant has said in interviews one and two, how does he/she make sense of his/her experience as a student-veteran with a disability?

1. What is your overall experience in this college/university?
 - a. How do your disability needs impact your overall student experience?
 - b. What were your most challenging experiences in general and as a student-veteran with a disability?
2. Has your understanding of being a student-veteran with a disability shifted over time? Why is this?
3. How have you come to understand disability support services?
 - a. What sense does it make for you?
 - b. What is/are the most important support service/s for you as a student-veteran with a disability in higher education?
 - c. What is/are the most helpful support service/s for you as a student veteran with a disability in higher education?
 - d. What service/s had the most benefits for you?
4. Describe how your educational experiences changed (if at all) once you began to use disability support services.
 - a. Does your use of disability support services grow over time? And how?
5. What is your level of satisfaction regarding this/these- service/s?
6. What would you like administrators and educators to know about student-veterans with disabilities?
7. What would you like people in the disability support services to know about student-veterans with disability needs in higher education?
8. What would you like rehabilitation people in the Ministry of Defense / Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization (ZDVO) / Beit Halochem to know about student-veterans with disability needs in higher education?
9. How do you think you will understand accessibility and disability support services and their benefits in the future?
10. What are your recommendations for future veterans who plan to go to higher education?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share?
12. Who should I turn to, to learn more about this topic?
13. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix E

Codebook (Maxqda)

Top Level Codes – Code System (MAXQDA)

1 Demographics
2 Positionality as student - Student Identity
3 Challenges
4 Negotiating disability identity
5 Support resources
6 Assessments - Students' experiences

Top Level Codes - Memos Examples and several narratives (in Hebrew) from Michals' transcript:

1 Demographics

Parent code refers to any demographic information about the participants. Includes age, education level, sex, gender, marital status, religious identification (religious Jew affiliation), military experience (combat/non-combat), and employment status (whether the participant is currently employed).

היום אני בת 33"

"הייתי לוחמת קרקל בשירות הצבאי, בין הראשונות אפילו 2003"

2 Positionality as a student - Student Identity

This is a parent code that includes various aspects of the self-perception of the participants as students at Israeli higher education institutions. It includes statements about participants' decision to enter into higher education, their motives to enter higher education after their military service, or any other identity statements relevant to their status as disabled IDF veterans students.

"היום אני דוקטורנטית במחלקה למדעי המדינה, אני כותבת דוקטורט על תרבות פוליטית בהודו"

3 Challenges

This parental code refers to the individual situation, and challenges that participant encounter as students in higher education in Israel: the transition to higher education after the injury, and challenging situations inside and outside the classroom.

"...התעלפתי לא, היו מצבים מאוד מוזרים"

4 Negotiating disability identity

Any statement by participants during the interview about their sense of self as students with disabilities (personal and social identity) and their disclosure strategies; Discourses of disability, sharing information about their disability with others, motives to disclose as disabled IDF veteran or a student with a disability, or disability concealed (including passing).

"אני לא מדברת על הפוסט טראומה, אני אומרת על הפציעה בברכיים, אני משתפת על מה שהיה שם אם הם רוצים, אני עושה את זה בעיקר עם קבוצות של צבא"

5 Support resources

A parent code represents all types of support a participant indicates has received during the time of his studies. This code includes both formal and informal sources of support on campus or outside of campus.

"...בסופו של דבר נתנו לי מבחנים בעל פה- זאת אומרת זה היה, זה היה כאילו ההקלה שקיבלתי"

6 Assessments - Students' experiences

Global theme - Student veteran's experiences in higher education in general, disability services usage experiences, outcomes, and insights. Expressions of opinions, issues, or offering of explanations about the Israeli Ministry of Defense and disability policy. Participants' advice and opinion.

"זה לא היה, זה היה מותאם לכולם, זאת אומרת זה לא היה משהו שהוא ספציפית לי"

Positionality as a student - Hierarchical Structure and Memos Examples:

2 Student Identity

This is a parent code that includes various aspects of the self-perception of that participant as students at Israeli higher education institutions. It includes statements about participants' decision to enter into higher education, their motives to enter higher education after their military service, or any other identity statements relevant to their status as disabled IDF-veteran students.

2.1 Self-perception as a student

Any statement by participants during the interview about an individual's sense of self build as a student in their higher education institution or any statement about their self-definition on campus as a student. Related to the survey question - How the participant chooses to identify

him/herself in their student life: regular student, a student with disabilities, or student veteran with disabilities.

2.1.1 Regular Student and Universal sense

Any statement by the participant about self as a regular student, a student without any disability needs. Self-sense as a regular student; A desire to be like everyone else and not externalize the disability.

"הימים הראשונים היו מוזרים), צוחקת (הייתי באה עם החולצות קרועות כאלה של הצבא, וככה עם סנדלים כאלה וזה, מאוד לא ידעתי מה קורה כאן "

2.1.1.1 Universal Sense metaphor

Any statement by a participant about their desire to be like everyone else and not externalize the disability. A universal sense of self gives rise to personal identity.

Feel like everybody else as a student - "I am a student"/ כמו כולם

"...כאילו, לבד הייתי, פרילנס כבר"

2.1.2 Student with Disabilities

Any statement about having a specific impairment not connected to military service; can be either physical, sensory, LD/ADHD, or mental health issues.

"זה כנראה הלקות שלי, שאני לא מצליחה לבטא את עצמי בכתב. הסמינריונים למשל בכתיבה, זה לקח לי חודשים על חודשים"

2.1.3 Disabled IDF veteran

Any explicit statements by participants about being self-identified on campus as a disabled IDF veteran.

"תמיד איכשהו זה מגיע לזה שאני צריכה לספר שאני נכת צה"ל עם פוסט טראומה, ואנשים לא כל כך יודעים להכיל את זה."

2.2 Disability Identity

Any statement by the participants about their disability identity and its impact on their, social interaction in general, and especially on the campus.

2.2.1 Disability Visibility

Visible disability and self:

Disability as a visible or invisible aspect that influences the student's self-experiences on campus: how much the disability visibility impacts the student's life and interactions on campus (with a disability service provider, faculty, staff, other students, and other people around as

well). The impact of disability type and its visibility on the student's' introducing self, and concerning his/her disclosure of his disability needs on campus.

2.2.1.1 Visible disability

Any statement by a participant about his/her disability is visible to others.

2.2.1.1.1 External identifier

Statements identifying official external seals such as disabled parking permit, disabled IDF certificate, blind certificate, or using a guide dog.

2.2.1.2 Hidden disability

Any statement of a participant about his disability is invisible to others.

"...זה פציעה שאי אפשר לראות אותה, זה גם היא באה פתאום וזה משהו שיכול להדליק את זה..."

2.2.2 Institutional attitude

Any statement by a participant about a positive institutional attitude toward veteran IDF disabled people as students (respectful attitude).

2.2.3 Social attitude towards disabled IDF veterans

Statements by participants about the social attitude towards disabled IDF veterans or impairment in general. Including references to perceptions of military injury as an ethos. as Zionist value.

Code System

1 Demographics	0
1.1 Gender	0
1.1.1 Woman	7
1.1.2 Man	6
1.2 Age	0
1.2.1 50-60	1
1.2.2 40-50	2
1.2.3 30-40	7
1.2.4 20-30	3
1.3 Military Service info	0
1.3.1 Military Experience	0
1.3.1.1 Non-combat	4
1.3.1.2 Combat	9
1.3.2 Compulsory service	52
1.3.2.1 Reduction in army service	16
1.3.3 Reserve service	9
1.3.3.1 Permanent service	2
1.3.4 Sharing Combat soldier experiences	53
1.3.5 Non-combat soldier experiences	8
1.4 Marital status	0
1.4.1 Widowed	1
1.4.2 Separated/Divorced	1
1.4.3 Single	2
1.4.4 Married	13
1.4.4.1 Married +	8
1.5 Student Status	10
1.6 Employment Status	104
1.7 Jewish identity	14
1.7.1 Country of origin and family traditions	27
1.8 Education background	0
1.8.1 K 12 experiences	13
1.8.1.1 High school	35
1.8.1.1.1 Matriculation exams	13
1.8.2 Non-academic studies	21
1.8.2.1 Academic Prep School	8
1.8.3 higher education studies	15
1.8.3.1 Academic degree	0
1.8.3.1.1 Previous Degree	0
1.8.3.1.1.1 BA	48
1.8.3.1.1.2 MA	8
1.8.3.1.2 Current Degree	0
1.8.3.1.2.1 BA	21
1.8.3.1.2.2 MA	43

1.8.3.1.2.3 PhD	1
1.8.3.1.3 First generation	3
1.8.3.1.4 Goal to go to higher education	5
1.8.3.1.4.1 After Army Service	10
1.8.3.1.4.2 Before Army Service	20
1.8.3.2 Major of Study	2
1.8.3.2.1 Changing the field of study	28
1.8.3.2.2 Engineering and Design	54
1.8.3.2.3 Humanities	13
1.8.3.2.4 Social Sciences	85
1.8.3.3 Institutional Type	0
1.8.3.3.1 Current Institutional Type	0
1.8.3.3.1.1 College	0
1.8.3.3.1.1.1 Private college	27
1.8.3.3.1.1.2 Public college	77
1.8.3.3.1.2 University	0
1.8.3.3.1.2.1 Open University	33
1.8.3.3.1.2.2 Other Universities	39
1.8.3.3.2 Prior Institutional Type	0
1.8.3.3.2.1 College	0
1.8.3.3.2.1.1 Private college	0
1.8.3.3.2.1.2 Public college	13
1.8.3.3.2.2 University	0
1.8.3.3.2.2.1 Open University	14
1.8.3.3.2.2.2 Other Universities	97
1.8.3.3.3 Location of institution	0
1.8.3.3.3.1 Close to home	6
1.8.3.3.3.2 Far from home	10
1.9 Other Israeli cultural factors	0
1.9.1 Key events after the injury	30
1.9.2 Israel's Strategic Security Situation	12
2 Positionality as student - Student Identity	0
2.1 Self-perception as a student	0
2.1.1 Regular Student and Universal sense	10
2.1.1.1 Universal Sense metaphor	7
2.1.2 Student with Disabilities	10
2.1.3 Disabled IDF veteran	60
2.2 Disability Identity	2
2.2.1 Visibility and identification	1
2.2.1.1 Visible disability	21
2.2.1.1.1 External identifier	1
2.2.1.2 Hidden disability	28
2.2.2 Institutional attitude	2
2.2.3 Social attitude towards disabled IDF veterans	1
3 Challenges	0

3.1 Impairment and medical condition	0
3.1.1 Military service-connected impairment	0
3.1.1.1 Newly acquired disability	15
3.1.1.1.1 Metaphor	12
3.1.1.2 Injury event	0
3.1.1.2.1 Injury during compulsory service	4
3.1.1.2.2 Circumstances of injury in the military service	0
3.1.1.2.2.1 Illness	2
3.1.1.2.2.2 Unknown reason	4
3.1.1.2.2.3 War or military confrontation	4
3.1.1.2.2.3.1 Battlefield injury	5
3.1.1.2.2.4 Military training	0
3.1.1.2.2.4.1 Basic training	1
3.1.1.2.2.4.2 Command course	10
3.1.1.2.2.4.3 Other training accidents	14
3.1.1.2.2.5 Daily tasks at the time of service	3
3.1.1.2.3 The story of the injury/illness	23
3.1.1.2.4 Year or Age of injury (+)	23
3.1.1.3 Impairment Type of Injury	0
3.1.1.3.1 PTSD	129
3.1.1.3.1.1 PTSD Symptoms	21
3.1.1.3.1.1.1 Depression	7
3.1.1.3.1.1.2 Anxiety	13
3.1.1.3.1.1.3 Communication problems	3
3.1.1.3.1.1.4 Sleeping problems	4
3.1.1.3.1.1.5 Fainting	16
3.1.1.3.1.2 Public Awareness	11
3.1.1.3.1.3 Metaphor	36
3.1.1.3.2 Fibromyalgia	20
3.1.1.3.2.1 Fibromyalgia History	5
3.1.1.3.2.2 Metaphor	1
3.1.1.3.2.3 Short-term memory loss	4
3.1.1.3.3 Spinal cord	14
3.1.1.3.3.1 Difficulty with Mobility	58
3.1.1.3.4 Skin cancer	34
3.1.1.3.4.1 Metaphor	2
3.1.1.3.4.2 Side effects	0
3.1.1.3.4.2.1 Anxiety	11
3.1.1.3.4.2.2 Body image	6
3.1.1.3.4.2.3 Fear of sun exposure	6
3.1.1.3.4.2.4 Depression and stress	3
3.1.1.3.5 Visual Impairment	63
3.1.1.3.5.1 Certificate of Blindness	10
3.1.1.3.6 Physical disabilities	0
3.1.1.3.6.1 Lower limb injury	27

3.1.1.3.6.2 Fractures in the body	8
3.1.1.3.6.3 Hand & Shoulders discharges	29
3.1.1.4 Disability Rate Condition	0
3.1.1.4.1 Permanent recognition	7
3.1.1.4.2 Temporary recognition	7
3.1.1.4.3 10-19	9
3.1.1.4.4 20-29	7
3.1.1.4.5 30-39	7
3.1.1.4.6 40-49	3
3.1.1.4.7 50-99	9
3.1.1.4.8 100- +100	5
3.1.1.4.9 Very low disability rates at first	5
3.1.1.4.10 Aggravation of injury or disability	21
3.1.1.4.10.1 Change in disability percentages	0
3.1.1.4.10.1.1 100- +100	0
3.1.1.4.10.1.2 20-29	1
3.1.1.4.10.1.3 30-39	0
3.1.1.4.10.1.4 40-49	1
3.1.1.4.10.1.5 50-99	0
3.1.1.4.10.1.6 10-19	0
3.1.1.5 How the military system addresses a medical or mental problem	26
3.1.2 ADHD and learning disorders	189
3.1.2.1 Accommodations in K-12	1
3.1.2.2 Time of diagnosis	21
3.1.2.3 Other family member with a learning disability	5
3.1.3 Disability, other injury, or illness after military service	1
3.1.3.1 Car Accident injury	27
3.1.3.2 Fractures in the body	16
3.1.3.3 Postpartum depression	13
3.2 Transitioning to higher education	27
3.2.1 Disability policy and bureaucracy	0
3.2.1.1 Financial aid and scholarship	3
3.2.1.1.1 Too many classes	1
3.2.1.2 Recognition Time	0
3.2.1.2.1 Before being a student	21
3.2.1.2.2 Immediately after the injury	3
3.2.1.2.3 After being a student	14
3.2.1.2.4 The duration of the recognition process	0
3.2.1.2.4.1 Bureaucratic time	6
3.2.1.2.4.2 More than 3 years	11
3.2.1.2.4.3 More than 2 years	2
3.2.1.2.4.4 During the first year	2
3.2.2 Self-Perception and Social Relationships:	0
3.2.2.1 Like other new students	4
3.2.2.2 Peers' Relationships	28

3.2.2.3 social stigma and labels of disability	31
3.3 Inside the classroom	0
3.3.1 Disability and Environmental design	4
3.3.1.1 Accommodations in class	0
3.3.1.2 Seating	107
3.3.2 Academic practices	0
3.3.2.1 Use of accommodation	2
3.3.2.2 Exams	11
3.3.2.3 Taking notes during the class session	2
3.3.2.4 Learning distraction in class	4
3.3.3 Social connections and collaboration	5
3.4 Outside of classroom	0
3.4.1 Environment barriers	0
3.4.1.1 Parking on campus	12
3.4.1.2 Class location	3
3.4.2 Academic practices at home	0
3.4.2.1 Missing classes	1
3.4.2.2 Coursework and assignments	2
3.4.2.3 Learning distraction at home	6
3.4.2.4 Chronic pains	69
4 Negotiating disability identity	0
4.1 Multiple disability Identities	46
4.2 Privacy and Internalization	57
4.3 Disclose	0
4.3.1 Why	0
4.3.1.1 Difficulties in Class	0
4.3.1.2 By Situation	2
4.3.2 When - Time of Disclosure	0
4.3.2.1 During class	2
4.3.2.2 Year date of injury	1
4.3.2.3 After failing in exam	0
4.3.2.4 At the beginning of school year	4
4.3.3 To whom	0
4.3.3.1 Employer	6
4.3.3.2 Department staff	23
4.3.3.3 Other students/Peers	29
4.3.3.4 Faculty	62
4.3.3.5 (Dis)ability Services	55
4.3.3.6 Registration staff	20
4.3.3.7 Other veterans with disabilities	19
4.3.3.8 Public safety unit	11
4.3.4 Externalization	18
4.4 Pass	0
4.4.1 try to be like everybody	2
4.4.2 Self strategies	6

4.4.2.1 Personal use of Accessories and assistive technology	0
4.4.2.1.1 Wheelchair	15
4.4.2.1.2 Neurofeedback	6
4.4.2.1.3 Assistance dog	13
4.4.2.1.4 Audio or video recording	11
4.4.2.1.5 iPad	8
4.4.2.1.6 Printer	1
4.4.2.1.7 Laptop	7
4.4.2.1.8 Folded long cane	1
4.4.2.1.9 Braille	1
4.4.2.1.10 OrCam MyEye	7
4.4.2.1.11 Visolux digital	10
4.4.2.2 Notetaking	23
4.4.2.3 Using other skills	4
4.4.2.4 Taking medication	0
4.4.2.4.1 Ritalin	27
4.4.2.4.2 Side Effects	7
4.4.2.4.3 Antidepressant drugs.	14
4.4.2.4.3.1 Natural alternative medicine	3
4.4.2.4.4 Painkillers	22
4.4.2.4.5 Sleeping pills	3
4.4.2.5 Parking	14
4.4.2.6 Stay at home	16
4.4.2.7 Reading aloud	3
4.4.2.8 Standing or going outside	11
5 Support resources	0
5.1 Formal support on campus	0
5.1.1 Disability Support Services	19
5.1.1.1 Support disability awareness	46
5.1.1.1.1 SAMAN	4
5.1.1.1.2 Comparisons	4
5.1.1.1.2.1 Open university VS other HE settings	4
5.1.1.1.2.2 University VS college	3
5.1.1.1.3 Lack of awareness	42
5.1.1.2 Conceptualizing accessibility	80
5.1.1.2.1 Institutional perceptions of accommodations	0
5.1.1.2.1.1 <i>Hatamot</i>	36
5.1.1.2.1.2 <i>Hakalot</i>	33
5.1.1.2.1.2.1 'Ezrot'	1
5.1.1.2.1.2.2 <i>Vitur</i>	2
5.1.1.2.2 Metaphor	5
5.1.1.3 DSS names	4
5.1.1.4 Do not use services	6
5.1.1.5 Use of Services	10

5.1.1.6 Reason for contacting support services	0
5.1.1.6.1 Exam Failure	1
5.1.1.7 Type of services used	0
5.1.1.7.1 Academic accommodations	14
5.1.1.7.1.1 Needs at class	1
5.1.1.7.1.1.1 Sub-class of reinforcement learning	6
5.1.1.7.1.1.2 Academic mentors	60
5.1.1.7.1.1.3 Accessible class	31
5.1.1.7.1.1.4 Recorded video lectures	1
5.1.1.7.1.1.5 learning strategies	63
5.1.1.7.1.1.5.1 Learning in a quiet room	5
5.1.1.7.1.2 Exams accommodations	88
5.1.1.7.1.2.1 Examination at a special time	23
5.1.1.7.1.2.2 Extended exam time	55
5.1.1.7.1.2.3 Oral exam	21
5.1.1.7.1.2.3.1 Oral testing/scribing	16
5.1.1.7.1.2.4 Exam location	11
5.1.1.7.1.3 Assistive Technology	1
5.1.1.7.1.3.1 Type of AT (+) (+)	21
5.1.1.7.1.3.1.1 Text to Speech	17
5.1.1.7.1.3.1.2 Transcription	1
5.1.1.7.1.3.1.3 Textbooks/study materials in alternate for	20
5.1.1.7.1.3.1.4 To be tested on a computer	36
5.1.1.7.1.3.2 Use at	0
5.1.1.7.1.3.2.1 Use at class	22
5.1.1.7.1.3.2.2 Use at home	5
5.1.1.7.2 Non-Academic services	0
5.1.1.7.2.1 Mindfulness	9
5.1.1.7.2.2 Psychologist	19
5.1.1.7.2.3 Better chair	7
5.1.1.7.2.4 Assistance dog	1
5.1.1.7.2.5 Photocard to make copies from friends' notebooks	1
5.1.1.7.2.6 Accessible parking	28
5.1.1.8 On-campus bureaucracy as an inefficient and frustrating	67
5.1.1.8.1 Financing Bodies	0
5.1.1.8.1.1 Ministry of Defense as a benefactor	16
5.1.2 Academic Support and Student Services	0
5.1.2.1 Administration support	0
5.1.2.1.1 Departmental staff	13
5.1.2.1.1.1 Positive experience	7
5.1.2.1.1.2 Negative experience	16
5.1.2.1.2 Registration staff	4
5.1.2.2 Student-mentors program	0
5.1.2.2.1 faculty support	11
5.1.2.2.2 Academic mentor	24

5.2 Informal support resources	0
5.2.1 Student peers	24
5.2.1.1 Group learning	23
5.2.1.2 Negative experience	43
5.2.1.3 Positive experience	29
5.3 Off-campus support	22
5.3.1 Ministry of Defense	0
5.3.1.1 Financial Aid Services	100
5.3.1.1.1 Student living allowance.	19
5.3.1.1.1.1 Reference to the economic situation	6
5.3.1.1.2 Financial aid services	0
5.3.1.1.2.1 Assistive technology	2
5.3.1.1.2.2 Social Mentor	8
5.3.1.1.2.3 Health services - Physical and Psychological	4
5.3.1.1.2.3.1 Psychological counseling	15
5.3.1.1.2.3.1.1 Bad experience	1
5.3.1.1.2.3.1.2 Good experience	2
5.3.1.1.2.3.2 Drug financing	3
5.3.1.1.2.3.3 Assistive technology and aids	0
5.3.1.1.2.3.3.1 Aids for the blind and vision-impaired	4
5.3.1.1.2.3.3.2 Shoes	1
5.3.1.1.2.4 Car	17
5.3.1.1.2.4.1 Disabled parking permit	16
5.3.1.2 Social worker support	96
5.3.2 Veterans groups and organizations	0
5.3.2.1 Support groups and associations for PTSD	27
5.3.2.1.1 Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization	16
5.3.2.1.1.1 <i>Beit HaLohem</i>	39
5.3.3 Family/friends' support	0
5.3.3.1 Family Support	0
5.3.3.1.1 Disability and Family Life	32
5.3.3.1.2 Response to injury and disability	3
5.3.3.1.2.1 Dependent and poor	4
5.3.3.1.3 Children	5
5.3.3.1.4 Sibling	14
5.3.3.1.5 Spouse	42
5.3.3.1.5.1 Spouse's family	5
5.3.3.1.6 Parents	58
5.3.3.1.6.1 Mother	13
5.3.3.1.6.2 Father	18
5.3.3.2 Military peers	14
5.3.3.3 Friends outside of school	15
6 Assessments - Students' experiences	0
6.1 Overall experience and satisfaction	1
6.1.1 Proof of ability	90

6.1.1.1 Metaphor	14
6.1.2 Negative experience	28
6.1.3 Positive experience	42
6.2 (Dis)ability Services experiences	0
6.2.1 Good service experience	106
6.2.2 Bad service experience	51
6.2.2.1 Metaphor	2
6.2.3 (Dis)ability Services personnel	13
6.2.3.1 Low availability	14
6.2.3.2 High availability personal attitude	10
6.2.4 Technical support staff	4
6.3 Faculty support experiences	1
6.3.1 Faculty perceptions and attitudes	20
6.3.2 Negative	43
6.3.3 Positive	38
6.4 Lessons learned and recommendations	1
6.4.1 Faculty	5
6.4.2 Ministry of Defense	4
6.4.3 OSS staff	9
6.4.4 College/university staff	8
6.4.5 Future disabled IDF veteran students	20
6.4.6 Research benefit for participants	20
6.5 Emotions	0
6.5.1 not interested ☹️	0
6.5.2 smiling 😊	3
6.5.3 disappointed 😞	9
6.5.4 laugh out loud 😂	2
7 Participants' commentary	1
7.1 Discourses of Disability Identity	0
7.1.1 Disability policy in Israel	1
7.1.1.1 The National Insurance Institute (NII)	0
7.1.1.1.1 NII support and use of benefits	17
7.1.1.1.2 Occupational perception	3
7.1.1.2 Ministry of Defense Recognition process	50
7.1.1.2.1 Occupational perception	8
7.1.1.2.2 Diagnosis for studies	24
7.1.1.2.3 Institutional difficulties	3
7.1.1.2.4 Department of Rehabilitation bureaucracy and procedure	73
7.1.1.2.4.1 Lawyer (+)	71
7.1.1.2.4.2 <i>Neche Meshukam</i> status	18
7.1.1.3 Ministry of Defense VS National Insurance Institute	20
7.2 Collective affinity	76
7.2.1 Values and beliefs	40
7.3 Organizational leadership	0
7.4 Other acquaintances who were injured or killed during the army	1

7.4.1 Friend	1
7.4.2 Uncle	1
7.4.3 Brother-in-law	5
7.4.4 Spouse	4
7.4.5 Father	6
7.4.5.1 Yom Kippur War 1973	1
7.5 District affiliation	3

Appendix F

Poetic Form Example (Michal)

שגם ככה היה לי סיפור עם הברך לפני, עברתי ניתוח [בתחילת השירות הצבאי].	סיפור הפציעה הייתי לוחמת קרקל בשירות הצבאי, בין הראשונות, זו הייתה חוויה מדהימה.
עלינו למוצב ולא הרגשתי טוב, לא הרגשתי טוב, הברכיים כאבו, הכל כאב לי, הגב, הברכיים, לא יכולתי ליישר את הגב.	[זה קרה] ב 2005 עמדתי במחסום, היינו הלוחמות הראשונות שעומדות בקלקיליה. זה היה [אחרי] משמרת לילה, בשעה 6-7 בבוקר.
פינו אותי לבית חולים, ואז הרופא אמר שיש לי פציעות יבשות בגב ובברכיים, הוא שיחרר אותי הביתה.	כבר היו אמורים להחליף אותנו, לא הייתי אמורה להיות שם. היה עומס, בגבול גזרה היה פיגוע דקירה.
[אני הייתי] בת 19, בכיתי להם שלא רציתי לסיים ככה את השירות [הצבאי], ואז אמרו לי 'טוב, לכי לבקו"ם', הלכתי לבקו"ם והשתחררתי. היה חסרה לי רק עוד החצי שנה הזאת [לסיום השירות].	הייתה שם איזה חיילת עם שתי [נשים] פלסטינאיות שכנראה לא עברו במעבר של הולכי רגל. הן התחילו לריב, [ללכת] מכות.
אבחון הפציעה במשך חודש שלם, פשוט לא ישנתי, צעקות ובכי.	אני נכנסתי לתוך זה, איכשהו מצאתי את עצמי על הרצפה זאת מרביצה לי, ומנסים להפריד, ואומרים לי שזה פיגוע.
כל הזמן אמרו לי – 'יש פה משהו מעבר, זה לא רק הברכיים, מערכת העצבים שלך קרסה'. לאבא שלי אמרו 'לילדה יש פוסט טראומה וצריך לעשות משהו עם זה'.	הכל מעורפל לי, לא סגורה בדיוק מה קרה שם. מה שאני זוכרת זה שבסופו של יום - לא יודעת. הייתי עם הברכיים על הרצפה, כאובה, כאובה מאוד.

לא היה לי את הסיום הזה כמו תמיד
[כמו אצל אנשים אחרים שטיילו].

ההכרה כנכה צה"ל

במרץ, 2006 יום אחד פשוט התקשרו אליי,
אמרו לי "יש לך וועדה רפואית בשמונה בבוקר"
ההכרה נעשתה לפני שהייתי סטודנטית.

האמת שיחסית אני חושבת שאני דווקא
הלך לי דיי קצר,
כי אי אפשר היה להתווכח איתי,
כולם היו בעד, תמימי דעים בנוגע למה שקורה לי.
אבל זה לקח איזה שנה הסיפור.
היו איזה שלוש ועדות,
אמא עזרה בכל הצד הבירוקרטי,
היא עשתה את הכל,
את העבודה קודש הזאת.

תמיד אמרו לי
תיקחי עורך דין,
תיקחי עורך דין,
אבל אמא פשוט עשתה הכל לבד.

רקע אקדמי

כל התארים למדתי כאן [שם המוסד להשכלה גבוהה]
זה מה שרציתי ללמוד בעקבות הפציעה [מתייחסת לתחום
הלימודים והמחקר – מדעי המדינה]
[אני] דוקטורנטית במחלקה למדעי המדינה.
אני כותבת דוקטורט על תרבות פוליטית בהודו,
כל המחקרים שאני עושה קשורים להודו,

מאותו רגע אני נכנסתי לאיזושהי סחרחורת
ולתיוג שיש לי פוסט טראומה.
לא ישנתי, לא תקשרתי עם אנשים,
כעסתי, [היו לי] התפרצויות זעם.

שיקום, טיול שיחרור

ותחילת לימודים בהשכלה הגבוהה

אחרי שנפצעתי הייתה איזה שנה שהייתי בבית
לא עשיתי כלום,
ואז החלטתי שאני נוסעת להודו,
הייתי שם שלושה חודשים.
פשוט הבראתי שם,
טיילתי, קצת השלמתי עם עצמי.
היה לי ממש טוב,
ונקשרתי עם אנשים.

יום אחד אבא שלי התקשר ואמר ש –
'את צריכה לחזור כי יש וועדה רפואית'
ואם אני רוצה להתחיל את הלימודים באוקטובר,
ושמשרד הביטחון יעזור לי עם זה [מימון הלימודים],
אז אני חייבת לחזור.

אחרי כמה ימים חזרתי
וזה פשוט השאיר בי צלקת,
כל המחקרים שאני עושה קשורים להודו:
סמינריונים, התזה, הדוקטורט, הכל על הודו.
אני מניחה שזה משהו שם
שיושב על זה שחסר לי,
לא היה לי את הקלוזר,

זה קשור גם לנכות שלי.

אתגרים - מוגבלות לא נראית

הצטלבות זהויות

אני חושבת שהבעיה הכי קשה בפוסט טראומה,
זה שאף אחד לא מבין אותך.
הם לא מבינים את ההתפרצויות,
הם לא מבינים את הנתק,
הם לא מבינים את האימפולסיביות,
הם לא מבינים את הבכי,
והם לא מבינים את הרגישות.
זה לא כמו פציעה בברך שרואים.

זה גם בטח אישה,

לגברים, אולי כן הייתה את המודעות הזאת.

אני לא אוהבת להחזיק בקלף הזה,

אבל זה עוד יותר קשה כשאת אישה.

באמת אני באמת לא אוהבת להשתמש בזה
אבל אנשים לא מבינים.

פציעות נוספות במהלך השירות הצבאי

בצבא אני נפגעתי בברך,

אני קיבלתי מכה בטירונות ממשאית בברך,

לא טיפלתי מזה כי רציתי להיות לוחמת,

אבל זה הגיע למיניסקוס ולרצועות,

ועשו לי ניתוח- הצבא עשה לי ניתוח.

חזרתי לשירות צבאי,

למרות שכתוב בדו"ח שקיבלתי מכה בברך במחסום,

עדיין הצבא לא מכיר לי בברכיים.

אני סובלת ממש ביום יום מזה.

הברך כואבת,

זהות כסטודנט

הסיפור שלי הוא קצת יותר מורכב,

[אני] נכת צה"ל, לוחמת בצבא, לקויות למידה.

אנשים אפילו לא מבינים מה אני אומרת

נראה להם שאני יותר מידי מורכבת.

התגובות של אנשים זה,

אין, אין תגובה אחידה,

חוץ מהרמת גבות.

בתחושה שלי ובחוויה שלי

פשוט לא רצו להתעסק איתי יותר מידי,

פשוט ככה עזבו אותי.

זהות מוגבלות -

מוגבלות לא נראית, כאבים

[הוא] הפוסט טראומה, הולך איתך כל היום,

זה לא כמו פציעה בברך שרואים,

זו פציעה שאי אפשר לראות אותה.

היא באה פתאום, זה משהו שיכול להדליק את זה.

שבוע לפני אני תמיד,

יש לי בעיות ברכיים,

כואב לי הגב,

אני לא מרגישה טוב.

ואז אני מסתכלת על הלוח שנה

ואני אומרת - 'אה, אוקיי, בסדר',

שבוע לפני תמיד יש לי

בעיות ברכיים, כואב לי הגב.

היו ימים שזה היה גומר אותי [הליכה מהחנייה]
ובזה הצבא לא מכיר בי.

נלחמתי, אבל זה,

אין עם מי לדבר שם.

אין לי תו נכה בערך,

בפיזי הם לא מתייחסים אליי.

לקות למידה והפרעת קשב

זה כנראה הלקות שלי,

שאני לא מצליחה לבטא את עצמי בכתב.

מסתבר שיש לי לקויות למידה והפרעת קשב.

מגיל צעיר אני זוכרת קושי בלימודים,

במיוחד במתמטיקה.

אני מאוד מבלבלת,

כי בהתבטאות בעל פה אין עליי!

בהתבטאות בכתב, אני פשוט חרא בלבן [צוחקת].

אני תמיד זוכרת שהיתה התעסקות סביבי,

סביב ההתבטאות בכתב, סביב המתמטיקה,

סביב זה שיש לי קצת קושי להשתלב [חברתית],

למרות שאני מאוד חברותית.

אבל תמיד אני ככה,

יש את החבורות ואני תמיד ביניהם כאילו.

בתיכון היה מאוד כיף כי הייתי בתיאטרון,

למי אכפת מתיאטרון כאילו,

תיאטרון אז היא לא צריכה...

וגם בצבא למשל –

נגיד עמדות סטטיות לא היו נותנים לי,

כי ידעו שאני לא,

לאנשים עם הפרעות קשב, פוסט טראומה זה מאוד,

זאת אומרת מאוד ברור למה חטפתי את הפוסט טראומה
הזאת,

זה מאוד קשור אחד לשני.

[כשאת התגייסת הצבא ידע על ההפרעת הקשב שלך?]

לא. רק אחרי הצבא ידעתי .

רק כשהלכתי להשלים את הבגרות, לשפר.

לפני שנסעתי להודו.

עשיתי בגרות במתמטיקה,

הייתי צריכה לשפר.

והמורה אמר לי על השיעור הראשון –

'או שתיקחי את הכסף חזרה הביתה

או שתלכי לאבחון, כי את לא תצליחי'.

הלכתי לאבחון,

מסתבר שיש לי לקויות למידה והפרעת קשב,

אז טיפלתי בזה,

זאת אומרת הוראה מתקנת, ריטלין וכו',

וכשהגעתי לפה היה לי קשה ,

אתגרים בהשכלה הגבוהה – כללי

סך הכל מאוד טוב לי,

יש קשיים, יש ,

זה לא בא לי בקלות,

זה בא בהרבה עבודה קשה.

אתגרים בהשכלה הגבוהה - מעבר להשכלה הגבוהה

כשהגעתי לפה היה לי קשה .

זאת אומרת לא ידעתי איך להסתדר פה ,

הכל היה לי גדול כזה

והלכתי לאיבוד פה בהתחלה.

ידעתי מה הולך כאן,
והם [הסטודנטים האחרים] נורא התלהבו מזה
שיש פה מישהו שמבין.

כי אם הם בשוק, אז אני עוד יותר בשוק,
אבל הצלחתי לתעל את זה לאיזושהו מקום טוב.

כל פעם שאני צריכה לספר על הנכות,
זה תמיד היה אחרי איזה סיפור קשה שעברתי פה.
כאילו שהייתי צריכה להצדיק למה זה קרה.
לא יודעת, לא מצליחה [לדבר על הפוסט טראומה],
זה קשה מדי.

תמיכת עמיתים – סטודנטים בכיתה

אני דרך אגב, לא הייתי לומדת ממני,
הייתי לוקחת מאחרים,
כי לא ידעתי איך להתמודד עם שלי.

התאמות בבחינות – בחינה בעל פה
[קבלת האבחון בהשכלה הגבוהה]
במקרה, כי זו מישהי מאוד ככה,
שהיא גם פסיכולוגית וגם מאבחנת דידקטית,
היה שם מישהו שהיה את שניהם
והם קיבלו את זה.
יום אחד עשיתי בחינה אמריקאית, קיבלתי 60.
זה מקצוע שאני אלופה בו.
ניגשתי למרצה ואמרתי שיש לי בעל פה וכו'.
עשינו את הבחינה בע"פ וקיבלתי 90.

הוא אמר לי- 'זה פשוט מטורף',
אמרתי לו – 'כן, זה כנראה הלקות שלי',

אתה לא יודע לאן אתה הולך,
אתה לא יודע מה יהיה שם.
ההתמודדות היא מאוד מאסיבית ואינטנסיבית.

זה פשוט -זה לא פשוט!

הימים הראשונים היו מוזרים [צוחקת]
הייתי באה עם החולצות קרועות כאלה של הצבא
וככה עם סנדלים כאלה וזה,
מאוד לא ידעתי מה קורה כאן.

לא יכולתי להיפרד מזה,
כי הזהות הצבאית הייתה מאוד חלק ממני.
לא רציתי להיפרד ממנה,
חלק מזה היה כאילו -
'תנו לי להתחבר אליכם דרך זה'.

קשיים ואתגרים אקדמיים - בכיתה

הקשיים באמת היו בארגון,
באיך להתמודד בכיתה, בסיכומים.
נגיד אני הייתי כותבת הכל בהרצאות,
אז [הם] לקחו את ההרצאות שלי,
אבל סטודנטים ידעו שהכל אצלי מבולגן.
מישהי ישבה וערכה אותן ושלחה לכולם.
זאת אומרת כולם היו לומדים ממני,
אבל אחרי שזה היה עובר עריכה כזאת,
איזושהו סדר.

אסטרטגיות התמודדות עם זהות – אי-חשיפה

הייתי הסטודנטית היחידה פה,
שלמדה חמישה ימים מלאים.

INFORMAL

קבלת משאבי תמיכה בקמפוס-מרצים

רק אחרי שדיברתי איתו [המרצה שסייע לה].
לא, לא סיפרתי לכולם.
לא מינפתי את זה [את העזרה של המרצה].
קיבלתי אותו הסתפקתי בזה
פשוט באתי עם הבעל-פה וזהו.

תמיכה חיוביות וקבלת מענה לצרכים [מרצים]

הייתה לי עזרה מאיזה מרצה שבאמת ככה,
שמע את הסיפור שלי,
וזה נגע לו ככה ללב.
רמת הסולידריות הייתה מאוד גדולה איתי.

הוא מאוד ליווה אותי ומאוד עזר לי,
בלעדיו זה לא היה קורה,
אין סיכוי.

אני הרווחתי מישוהו שהוא ככה,
לא יודעת אם הוא ריחם עליי,
אבל הוא ככה מאוד לקח אותי
כפרויקט כזה אישי שלו.

הוא ממש עזר לי בכתיבת עבודות,
בלהתכונן למבחנים.

הוא ממש ראה בזה איזושהי תרומה ככה לחברה
וזה הציל אותי.

אין, אם לא הוא באמת,
לא הייתי ממשיכה פה.

חוסר מענה לצרכים / תמיכה שלילית

אף אחד לא הציע, לא ביקשתי.
זוכרת שאפילו היה איזה יום אחד,

שאני לא מצליחה לבטא את עצמי בכתב.

הסמינריונים למשל בכתיבה
זה לקח לי חודשים על חודשים,
שהם היו יושבים פה יומיים לפני ועושים,
אני כבר הייתי חודשים לפני כל יום בספרייה יושבת
וכותבת.

עשיתי ידני [מבחן בסטטיסטיקה, באנגלית]
ולא יודעת איך עברתי את זה,

זהות מוגבלות - חשיפה [לא פורמלית-מרצים]

יום אחד הייתי בקורס,
היא [המרצה] אמרה לבחור נושא לעבודה,
ואני רציתי לבחור שילוב נשים בצה"ל- לוחמות,
אני פשוט 'יריתי לעצמי ברגל', אני סבלתי,
אני הייתי צריכה לשבת ולקרוא פרוטוקולים
ולקרוא מסמכים על בנות לוחמות,
ועל היחס של צה"ל כלפי הדבר הזה,
זה פשוט היה מזעזע מבחינתי.

הגעתי ממש שבוע-שבועיים לפני הגשת העבודה
והתחננתי בפני המרצה,

'אני לא יכולה לעמוד בעבודה הזאת,
זה עושה עליי נטל נפשי מאוד מאוד קשה',
ואני צריכה לספר לה שאני נכת צה"ל וכו'.

היא בסופו של דבר הבינה אותי,
ונתנה לי להחליף את נושא העבודה.

זו היתה חוויה מאוד קשה,

איך לקחתי נושא כזה פשוט והפכתי אותו
לאישיו מאוד גדול אצלי וזה היה סיפור אחד.

שלא הרגשתי טוב, הייתי בפיזיותרפיה,
ביקשתי מהמרצה, המתרגל שלי שיעזור לי עם הבוחן,
'אני לא יכולה,

והוא אמר פשוט "כל עוד אין לך הקלות,
אין לך ... תלכי מפה".

זה היה ככה על התפר,
[לפני] המכתב הרשמי.

המרצים, אנשים חושבים שזה שטות [מבחן בעל פה]

בא לי מרצה ששאל אותי על משהו שהוא אמר
בשיעור הראשון,

קחי שנה אחורה,

אני צריכה לזכור מה הוא אמר בשיעור הראשון?
זה בחינה בעל פה.

תמיד הייתי מסתכלת על הבחינה בכתב,
על הבחינה שאני עשיתי,

פער של שמיים וארץ.

הם היו עושים, אני לא יודעת אם זה היה בכוונה,
אבל הבחינה בעל-פה הייתה הרבה יותר קשה.

ואם הם רק היו רואים,

שאני ככה מהססת או מגמגמת,

הם היו ככה מאוד נבהלים.

זה היה מאוד לא פשוט ,

תמיד גם כאילו אחרי שניים-שלושה מבחנים,

הבנתי שלשם זה הולך,

זה ככה מאוד תסכל אותי,

שתמיד אצלי זה יהיה יותר קשה,

גם לא ידעתי למה להתכונן.

קחי את הלחץ שסטודנט רגיל נמצא בו,

בתקופת מבחנים של 12 מבחנים בחודש,
תוסיפי לזה לקויות למידה ופוסט טראומה והכל,
זה היה קשה.

מרכז תמיכה לסטודנטים עם מוגבלות – חשיפה

ניגשתי לאחד המרצים,

והוא אמר לי שיש מעורבות חברתית,

ללכת לשמה, לברר מה מגיע לי .

מקום – אוניברסיטה

[בתואר ראשון]

היבחנות בעל פה.

נתנו לי מבחנים בעל פה,

זה היה כאילו ההקלה שקיבלתי.

אם בכתב אז גם הארכת זמן.

הזדהיתי רק אחרי שדיברתי איתו [עם המרצה].

לא, לא סיפרתי לכולם.

[בתואר שני]

כבר פריילנס, הייתי לבד, כאילו,

אף אחד לא הציע לי, לא אמר לי ,

לא אמרו לי שיש עזרה.

הבנתי שאין לי מה לבקש, אין לי עם מי לדבר ,

פשוט לא היה לי מישהו שעזר לי [תואר שני]

לא היה מי שיעזור לי מולם.

[בתואר שלישי]

כלום, כלום,

[והיום, בלימודים שלך היום?

ואת גם מלמדת היום]

בכלל לא.

מרכז תמיכה - חוויות תמיכה חיובית וקבלת מענה

לצרכים

יום אחד עשיתי בחינה אמריקאית, קיבלתי 60.

זה מקצוע שאני אלופה בו.

ניגשתי למרצה ואמרתי שיש לי בעל פה וכו'.

עשינו את הבחינה בע"פ וקיבלתי 90.

הוא [המרצה] אמר לי- 'זה פשוט מטורף',

אמרתי לו – 'כן, זה כנראה הלקות שלי,

שאני לא מצליחה לבטא את עצמי בכתב'.

[כמה היה לך משמעותי באמת

זה שקיבלת את ה- להיבחן בעל פה?]

מאוד, אני לא.. לא, לא הייתי מצליחה פה,

הבעל-פה מאוד עזר לי,

לא הייתי שורדת את תקופת הבחינות הראשונה.

הייתי קמה והולכת.

[שביעות רצון מהבחינה בעל פה]

חבל על הזמן,

אבל זה לא מצה"ל [משרד הביטחון],

זה מפה באוניברסיטה.

אני זוכרת שהיה גם איזה מחשבון

או משהו שלאחרים לא היה [במבחן בסטטיסטיקה].

מרכז תמיכה - חוויות תמיכה שלילית

ואי-קבלת מענה לצרכים, בירוקרטיה

הלכתי לשם וכמו כל בירוקרטיה,

זה היה מאוד מאוד קשה.

הם לא כל כך הבינו מה אני רוצה,

היה לי הרבה ת'אקלים איתם.

נכת צה"ל, לוחמת בצבא, לקויות למידה.

זה כאילו נראה להם שאני יותר מידי מורכבת

זה כאילו בתחושה שלי ובחוויה שלי .

פשוט לא רצו להתעסק איתי יותר מידי,

פשוט ככה עזבו אותי.

זה היה נורא, זה היה נורא,

הייתי צריכה להביא מסמכים.

הם לא הבינו מה אני רוצה.

גם לקבל את הבחינה בעל פה,

היה משהו כאילו חריג ביותר.

זה הגיע לדיקן ,

הייתי צריכה לקבל את האישור שלו ספציפית.

כל שנה היית צריכה לבוא לחדש את זה

התייחסו אליי מאוד מוזר.

הקשיים בדרך לזה [לקבלת ההתאמות]

המסע ייסורים בדרך לזה,

זה היה קשה משהו.

אני קוראת את כל המיילים ואף פעם,

לא יודעת, לא נתקלתי במשהו שמתאים לי,

הם עשו פה כמה קורסים לאסטרטגיות ודברים כאלה,

אני חושבת שאפילו פעם אחת הלכתי למשהו.

אבל זה לא היה- זה לא היה רציני,

זה לא היה ,

זה היה מותאם לכולם,

זאת אומרת זה לא היה משהו שהוא ספציפית לי,

אז הלכתי לאיבוד קצת.

לא היה מיקוד [התאמה אישית].

[את היית מבקשת משהו שהוא יותר

מ-רק ההיבחנות בעל פה?]

העניין של ההוראה מתקנת,

כי בחוץ זה מאוד יקר, ושילמתי את זה ממני,

אבל חבל שאין את זה ,

חבל שאין את האופציה,

שיש פה איזה קורס או משהו,

שמישהו ילווה אותך עם זה.

בריאות הנפש ותמיכה רגשית

[ניסית לחפש באתר של האוניברסיטה

אם יש בכלל איזושהי עזרה?]

לא עלה בדעתי אפילו .

תמיכה חיצונית - אגף השיקום של משרד הביטחון

אף אחד לא הציע לי , לא אמר לי ,

לא אמרו לי שיש עזרה .

לא היה מי שיעזור לי מולם [מול מרכז התמיכה],

אני חושבת שמהר מאוד היא [עובדת השיקום]

ויתרה עליי,

כאילו כי לא שיתפתי כל כך פעולה.

אני מבחינתי מה שקיבלתי ממשרד הביטחון ,

זה רק את המלגה ללימודים.

עזרה בתואר ראשון במימון של התואר ,

מלגה וגם את הדמי מחייה.

זה דרש ממני לקחת קצת יותר קורסים.

עזרו לי במימון התואר השני,

הייתי צריכה משהו חריג [נכה משוקם']

כל הזמן ווידאו ,

שמה שאני לומדת זה מה שמתאים לי.

תמיכה חיצונית - אגף השיקום של משרד הביטחון

מדיניות מוגבלות בישראל - מדיניות קצבאות

ההתמודדות עם משרד הביטחון,

היא התמודדות מאוד לא פשוטה.

כל פעם שאני מתמודדת איתם,

אני מוצאת את עצמי בטיפול פסיכולוגי.

אני עכשיו צריכה להחליף רכב -

א' - דחיתי את זה עד שהיא התקשרה ואמרה לי

שצריך להחליף רכב,

וכאילו אם לא אבא שלי , לא הייתי מחליפה,

אם הוא לא היה לוחץ על זה,

כי אני לא יודעת להתעסק איתם,

צריך כוחות מנטליים שלפעמים אין לי אותם מולם.

היא [עובדת אגף השיקום] בעצמה גם אמרה לי -

'את לא מנצלת חצי מהזכויות שלך',

ואמרת לה 'אין לי, אני לא מסוגלת ממכם'.

השכלה גבוהה כמקום משקם/מרפא

מקום להזדמנויות תעסוקה

הודו זה המקום המרפא שלי,

אז לקחתי את זה כמה צעדים קדימה.

אני זוכרת ,

יכול להיות שאני עושה רומנטיזציה,

אבל בימים הראשונים,

היה לי ככה כייף לגלות את הידע,

לשבת ולשמוע דברים,

זה קצת עשה לי שקט,

פתאום היה לי שקט,

פתאום התעסקתי עם דברים אחרים,

לא בחדר, זה היה כף.

הייתי הסטודנטית היחידה פה,

שלמדה חמישה ימים מלאים.

לקחתי כל מיני קורסים וזה עשה לי טוב.

הייתי פה כל היום,

זה היה המקום מחסה שלי.

אני מצאתי חצי משרה בספרייה פה,

מקום שקט, אני עובדת בו,

גם מבחינת התעסוקה אני מאוד בבעיה,

כי ניסיתי בחוץ ולא כל כך הולך.

תמיד איכשהו זה מגיע לזה

שאני צריכה לספר שאני נכת צה"ל עם פוסט טראומה,

ואנשים לא כל כך יודעים להכיל את זה.

זה המקום העבודה היחידי שאני שורדת בו,

מאוד ברור למה,

כי אין לי תקשורת כל כך עם אף אחד,

זה רק אני והסטודנטים,

זה מה שנקרא,

הקש היחיד שמחזיק אותי.

[אבל את לקחת את עצמך עכשיו ולימדת חמישה קורסים,

ועוד עושה את הדוקטורט, זה המון לחץ.]

המון [לחץ], ככה אני אוהבת,

ככה עכשיו אני מתפקדת בגלל זה,

בימים שאין לי תעסוקה

אני נכנסת למקומות לא טובים.

אני צריכה את ההתעסקות,

[בשביל] למה לקום בבוקר,

כי אחרת אני הולכת לאיבוד.

המלצות ועצות

קודם כל הם [המרצים],

צריכים לדעת שיש נכי צה"ל בכיתה.

אני רק לא יודעת,

התפקיד של מי להגיד לי את זה,

הסטודנט, או לא יודעת,

צריך איכשהו למפות את זה.

חשוב שתהיה את המודעות,

כי זה, זה לא התייחסות אחרת,

אבל זה גישה אחרת שצריכה להיות,

המודעות שזה הדבר הכי בסיסי צריך להיות,

אין מודעות לזה.

גם אני לפעמים- אני כאילו [כיום כמרצה],

לא עולה בדעתי להכנס לכיתה ולשאול

'מי פה נכה צה"ל?'

אבל אני מצפה ש- או שאני רוצה לצפות,

שמי שנמצא לי בכיתה

הוא נכה צה"ל שכן יבוא וידבר,

שכן יגיד לי את זה, וזה אף פעם לא קרה לי

אלא אם כן הנכות ממש קשה ורואים.

[איזה חוויית לימודים מיטבית טובה יותר

עבור סטודנטים נכי צה"ל?]

מבחינת התמיכה,

התמיכה החיצונית שהם לא מקבלים

[התמיכה מאגף השיקום במשרד הביטחון]

איך לקרוא את המאמר שצריך לשיעור?
איך ניגשים לדברים האלה בכלל?

קרקע יותר בטוחה,
פורייה ללמידה.

שנדע עליהם,
לוודא איזה כלים המוסד נותן להם,
למי אפשר לפנות שם,
להקשיב, לא לוותר.
אז באמת הכוונה לאיך להתנהל בכיתה?
מה זה אומר?
היחס, אני חושבת שהיחס,
ואוקי- חוץ מבעל פה,
מה עוד אתם יכולים לתת לי?
כי יש דברים שבאמת,
יכול להיות שיכולתי לקבל ולא עשיתי עם זה משהו.
איך לקחת את החולשות שלי ולחזק אותן דווקא,
זאת אומרת- איך לעבוד עליהן?
מה יותר טוב לי שמיעה או כתיבה?
אפילו ברמה של מחשב או מחברת,
אסטרטגיות למידה - איך ללמוד את מה?

It was after a night shift,
at 6 to 7 a.m.

The story of the injury

I was a Karkal combatant
in the military service,
among the first ones.
It was an amazing experience.

In 2005, I was standing
at a checkpoint,
We were the first combat women who
were standing in Qalqilya.

We were already supposed
to be replaced.
I was not supposed to be there.

The area was “loaded,”
[Everybody was engaged elsewhere]
at the border, there was a stabbing
attack.

There was a female soldier there,

with two Palestinian women,
who apparently did not pass through the
pedestrian crossing.

I was taken to the hospital,
where the doctor said I had
dry wounds in my back and knees
He released me to go home.

They started fighting, beatings.
I got into it,
somehow I found myself on the ground.
One of them was hitting me,
and [others are] trying to separate,
and they tell me it's a terrorist attack.

Everything is vague to me, not sure
exactly what happened there.
What I remember is that
at the end of the day,
I was with my knees on the ground,
sore, very sore.
Even so, I [already] had experienced an
episode with my knee, I had undergone
a surgery
[at the beginning of the service].

We went to the military post and I did
not feel well,
I did not feel well, my knees ached,
It all hurt, my back, knees,
I could not straighten my back.

[I was] 19, I cried in front of them,
that I did not want to end the military
[service] like this,
Then they said to me, 'Well, go to
the *BAKUM*'
[The Reception and Sorting Base].
I went to *BAKUM* and was released.
I only needed another six months to
finish the service.

Diagnosis of the injury

For a whole month,
I just did not sleep,
shouts and cries.

I was constantly told,
“There's something beyond here,
it's not just the knees,
Your nervous system has collapsed.”
My dad was told “the girl has post-
trauma and there is a need to do
something about it.”

From that moment on, I felt some
kind of dizziness,
And stigma that
I have post-trauma.
I did not sleep,
did not communicate with people,
I was angry, with outbursts of rage.

Rehabilitation, release trip and the beginning of studies in higher education

After I was injured, I was at home
for about a year,
I did not do anything,
Then I decided I would travel
to India,
I was there for three months.

I just recovered there,
I traveled,
I reconciled with myself
a little,
I had a really good time,
And I connected with people.

One day, my father called,
and said that,
“You need to come back because
there is a medical committee,”
and if I want to start school in
October, and that the Ministry of
Defense will help me with
[tuition funding], then I must return.

After a few days, I came back,
And it just left a scar on me.
All the research I do is related
to India.
Seminars, thesis, dissertation,

all about India.

I guess it's something,
that I was missing,
I did not have that closure,
I did not have this ending as always
[like other people].

***Recognition as a disabled IDF
veteran,***

In March 2006, one day
I got a call,
I was told, "You have a medical
committee at eight a.m."
The recognition was made before I
became a student.
The truth is that I think, for me, it
was actually pretty short relatively,
because it was impossible to
argue with me.
Everyone was in favor,
unanimous about what was
happening to me,
but it took about a year, this process.

There were three committees,
Mom helped with all of the
bureaucratic side.
She did everything,
This "holy" work.
I was always told,

"Get a lawyer,
Get a lawyer."
But Mom just did everything
on her own.

Academic background

All the degrees I studied here,
This is what I wanted to learn
following the injury,
I am a Ph.D. student in the
Department of Political Science.
I am writing a dissertation on the
political culture in India.

All the research I do is related to
India.
It's also related to my disability.

Identity as a student

My story is a little more complex,
Disabled IDF veteran, combat
woman in the army, learning
disabilities.
People do not even understand
what I am saying
It seems to them that I am too
complex.

People's reactions to this...
no, no uniform response,
besides raising eyebrows,

As I see it, and in my experience,
they just did not want to
mess with me too much,
That's just how they left me.

***Disability Identity –
Invisible disability, pain***

The post-trauma,
goes with you all day.
It's not like a knee injury
that you can see,
This is an injury that cannot be seen.
It comes suddenly, it's something
that can turn on.

A week before [the date of the
injury]
I always have knee problems,
my back hurts,
I do not feel well.
Then I look at the calendar,
And I say: "Oh, okay, okay,"
A week before I always,
I have knee problems, my back hurts.

***Invisible disability – challenges
Intersection of identities***

I think the most difficult challenge in
post-trauma
is that no one understands you.

They do not understand the
outbursts, they do not understand the
disconnect, they do not understand
the impulsivity,
They do not understand the crying,
and they do not understand the
sensitivity.

It's not like a knee injury that you
can see.

It's a woman too, so like,
men may have had that awareness.
I do not like to hold this card,
but it's even harder when you're a
woman.

I really do not like to use it
But people do not understand.

In the army, I was injured in the
knee,
I got a hit in the knee by a truck
during basic training,
I did not take care of it because I
wanted to be a combatant,
but it affected the meniscus and the
knee straps,
and I had surgery,
the army did the surgery on me.
I returned to military service,
although it is written in the report.
that I got hit on the knee at the
checkpoint,

still the army does not recognize the
knee injury.

I really suffer from it every day.

The knee hurts,

There are days it could finish me,
[walking from the campus parking
lot]

And regarding this, the army does
not recognize me.

I struggled, but it's,
there is no one to talk to there.

I do not have a disability
parking permit,

For the physical issue, they do not
refer to me.

This is probably my disability,
That I fail to express myself in
writing.

It turns out I have a learning
disability and attention deficit
disorder.

From a young age, I remember the
difficulty in school,

Especially in math.

I was very confused
because I was the best
in oral expression,
in written expression,
I'm just white shit.

I always remember there was a fuss
around me,

around written expression, around
mathematics,

around the fact that I have some
difficulty integrating,
although I am very friendly.

But I was always like that,
there are the gangs,
and I am always among them.

In high school, I really had fun
because I was in the theater class,
who cares about theater like,
Theater class, so she does not need

...

And in the army, for example,
static positions
they would not give me,
because they knew I did not ...

for people with ADHD,
post-trauma is very,

I mean, it's very clear why

I got this post-trauma,

They are very much related to each
other,

[When you enlisted in the army did
you know about your attention
deficit disorder?]

Only after the army, did I know.
Only when I went to complete my
matriculation exams, to improve.
before I went to India.

I did a matriculation exam in math,
I needed to improve [the grade].
And the teacher told me
in the first lesson,
“Either you take the money back or
you go for a diagnosis because you
will not succeed.”

I went for a diagnosis,
it turned out I have a learning
disability and attention deficit
disorder.
So I did take care of it,
I mean, remedial teaching,
Ritalin, etc.,
And when I got here
I had a hard time.

Overall, it is very good for me,
there are difficulties, there are,
It does not come easily to me,

Overall, it is very good for me,
There are difficulties, there are,
It does not come easily to me,
It comes with a lot of hard work.

When I arrived here
I had a hard time.
I mean, I did not know how to get
along here,
Everything seemed so big to me
And I got lost here at first.

You do not know where you're
going,
You do not know what will be there.
The coping is very massive and
intense.
It's simple – it's not easy!

The first days were weird [laughs]
I would come with
torn army shirts,
and with such sandals.
I did not know what was going on
here.

I could not disconnect from it,
because the military identity was
very much a part of me.
I did not want to disconnect from it.
Part of it was like:
“Let me connect with you
through this.”

The difficulties really were in

self-management
[executive function skills],
In how to cope in class,
in taking notes.
Like I would write everything
in my classes,
So they [peers] took my lectures,
but students knew that
everything was messy.
Another student sat and edited my
notes and sent them to everyone.
I mean everyone was
learning from me,
but after they would undergo
such editing, to have some order.
I was the only student here,
who studied for five full days.
I knew what was going on here,
and they [peers] were very excited
about having someone here who
understands.

Because if they are in shock,
then I'm even more in shock,
But I managed to direct it to some
good place.
Every time I have to tell
about the disability
it was always after some hard story,
I went through here.

As if I had to justify why it
happened.
Do not know, I cannot [talk about the
PTSD], it's too hard.
I'm by the way,
I would not learn from me,

I would take from others [notes].
Because I did not know
how to deal with mine.

***Formal Support – Office of Support
Services Faculty –
Accommodations, Oral Exam, and
Positive Experiences***

[They received my diagnosis of LD,
ADHD]
Because this is someone
who is both a psychologist
and a didactic diagnoser,
so they accept it.
One day I did a closed exam,
I got 60.
This is a field of study
in which I am a champion.
I went to the faculty member and
said
I have accommodation for taking an
oral exam and so on.
We did an oral exam and I got 90.
He said to me: "It's just crazy."

I told him –
“Yes, that's probably my
impairment.”
That I fail to express myself in
writing.

***Challenges – Exams, Writing Class
Papers***

The seminar papers for example
It took me months upon months
to write,
That they [peers] would sit here
[in the library] two days before
and do it,
I was all ready for months before,

every day in the library
sitting and writing.

I did the exams by hand in English
[as well as in statistics],
and do not know how I passed them.

***Informal Support – Faculty
[by situation, positive attitude]***

One day, I was in a class.
She said to choose a topic for
paperwork.
And I wanted to choose a topic
of the women integrating into the
IDF, women combatants,

I just “shot myself in the foot,”
I suffered,
I had to sit and read protocols and
read documents about women
combatants and the IDF's attitude
towards this thing,
It was just shocking for me.
It was just a week or two before
submitting the paper.

and I begged the faculty,
“I cannot make this work,
It is affecting me mentally in a very
bad way,” and I had to tell her
that I am a disabled IDF veteran, etc.

She finally understood me
and let me replace the topic of the
paper.
It was a very difficult experience of-
how I took such a simple topic and
made it a very big issue for me,
and it was one example.

Only after I shared with him my
story
[faculty [male]]
No, I did not tell everyone.
I did not leverage it.
I got it, and it was enough was for
me

I just came with the oral exam, and
that is it.

I had support from some faculty
[male]
who heard my story
and it touched his heart.
His level of solidarity
was great with me.

He was very supportive,
and he helped me a lot.
Without him, it would not have
happened. Not a chance.

I earned someone who is like that,
I do not know if he felt sorry for me,
but he really took me that way,
as such a personal project of his.
He really helped me write papers,
To prepare for exams,
He really saw it as some kind of
contribution to society,
and he saved me.
No, without him, I would not have
continued here.

Informal Support – Faculty
[Lack of response, negative attitude]

No one offered, I did not ask.
I remember there was even one day,

I did not feel well,
I was in physical therapy
I asked the practicing teacher to help
me with the quiz,
“I can't do it,” and he just said,
"As long as you do not have the
'reliefs', you do not have ...,
go away."
It was like that on the
seamline before the official letter
[of the diagnosis].

The faculty members ...
people think it's nonsense
[accommodation of oral exam],
A faculty member came and asked
me [during the oral exam],
about something he said
in the first class
a year back.
Do I have to remember what he said
in the first lesson?
This is an oral exam...
I would always look
at the written exam,
and on the exam,
I did [oral exam],
there is a gap
between heaven
and earth.
They would do [faculty],

I do not know if it was on purpose,
but the oral exam was much more
difficult.

And if they only saw
that I was so hesitant or stuttering.
They were so very frightened.
It was very difficult.

Like always also,
after two or three exams, I realized
that's where it's going
It's very frustrating,
that it's always going to be
harder for me.
I also did not know
what to prepare for.

Take the stress that a regular student
has during the exam time,
with 12 tests in a month,
add to that a learning disability and
post-trauma and everything.
It was difficult.

***Formal Support – Office for
Support Services – Awareness and
Disclosure***

I approached one of the faculty
members,

And he told me there was “Social
Involvement,”
To go there and
Find out what I deserve.

It did not even occur to me
[that they had mental health
support].

Formal Support – Time and Place

[Bachelor's degree]
They gave me oral exams,
That was like the “relief” I received.
If the exam was by hand, then I also
had an extension of time.
I identified only after talking to him
[faculty member, male].
No, I did not tell everyone.

[M.Sc.]
Already a freelancer,
I was alone,
No one offered me, did not tell me,
I was not told there was support.
I realized I had nothing to ask for,
I had no one to talk to,
I just did not have anyone to help
me,
There was no one to help me in front
of them [Office of Support Services].

[Ph.D.]
Nothing, nothing,
today not at all, not at all.

***Formal Support – Office for
Support Services - Experiences
[Positive]***

Very meaningful, I do not,
No, I would not succeed here,
The oral exams helped me a lot
I would not have survived
the first exam time.
I would get up and leave.

I was very satisfied especially with
the oral exam,
But this is not from the Ministry of
Defense, this is from here, from the
university.

I remember there was also a
calculator [during the exams],
something that other students did not
have [exam in statistics].

***Formal Support – Office for
Support Services - Lack of response,
bureaucracy [Negative experiences]***

I went there, and like any other
bureaucracy,
It was very, very difficult.

They did not quite understand
what I wanted,
I had a lot of conflicts with them.

It was awful, it was awful,
I had to bring documents,
And they did not understand what I
wanted.

Also, to get the oral exam,
It was something
as if extremely unusual.
It's come to the dean,
I had to get his specific approval.

Every year you had to come and
renew it,
I was treated very strangely.
Difficulties along the way
[for the accommodations],
A journey of torment
was the way to get it,
it was very difficult.

I read all the emails,
and I never, I do not know,
I did not come across anything
that fit me,
They did some courses here for
learning strategies and things like
that,

I think I even went to something once.

But it was not serious,

it was not,

It was for everyone,

I mean it was not something

that was specific for me,

So, I got lost a little bit.

There was no focus.

The matter of remedial teaching,

Because outside, it's very expensive,

and I paid for it,

Too bad there is no option for some

course or something that someone

will guide you ...

***External support – Ministry of
Defense, Rehabilitation Division***

No one offered me, did not tell me,

I was not told there was support.

There was no one to help me

facing them

[Office of Support Services].

I think very quickly she [the social
worker in the rehabilitation division]

gave up on me.

As if I did not cooperate so much.

In terms of what I received from the
Ministry of Defense,

It's just the scholarship for my
studies.

In undergraduate, financial aid for
the degree funding, scholarship,

It required me to take a few more
courses.

They helped me fund my master's
degree.

I needed something unusual

[*Neche Meshukam*],

All the time, they confirmed that

What I was learning is what fit me.

***External Support – Ministry of
Defense, Rehabilitation Division
[Negative experience – Benefits
policy]***

Dealing with the Ministry of
Defense,

Is a very difficult struggle,

Every time I deal with them,

I find myself in psychotherapy.

I now have to change cars.

I postponed it until she [the social
worker] called and told me that I
need to replace my car.

And already as if my father [did not help] I would not replace it, if he had not put pressure on this issue, Because I do not know how to deal with them, You need mental powers that sometimes I did not have to face them. She also told me, “You are not using half of your rights.” And I said to her, “I have not, I cannot face you.”

Higher Education as a Place of Rehabilitation – Rebuilding, Healing

India is my healing place, So I took it a few steps further.

I remember, Maybe, I'm romanticizing, but in the early days, I had so much fun discovering the knowledge, to sit and hear things, It made me a little quiet, Suddenly, I had inner peace. Suddenly, I was preoccupied with other things, not in the room, it was fun.

I was the only student here who studied for five full days. I took all kinds of courses, and it gave me a good feeling. I was here all day, it was my place of shelter.

I found a part-time job in the library here, quiet place, I work in it, also in terms of employment I am very much in trouble, because I tried out [of the academia], and it did not work out.

It always somehow gets back to the fact that I need to tell that I am a disabled IDF veteran with post-trauma, And people do not so much know how to accept it.

This is the only workplace where I survive. It is very clear why because I do not have so much communication with anyone. It is just me and the students, this is what is called, the only straw that holds me.

The pressure that is how I like,

that is how I function now,
because of this,
On days when I have nothing to do
I get into bad places.
I need to occupy myself,
the reason to get up in the morning,
because, otherwise, I get lost.

Recommendations and Tips

First of all, they [faculty]
should know that there are disabled
IDF veterans in the classroom.
I just do not know,
Whose job it is to tell me that,
The student or I do not know.
There is a need to somehow map it.
It is important to have awareness,
because this is not another
reference,
but that's another approach.
that should be,
awareness is the most basic thing
that should be,
There is no awareness of this.

Me too, sometimes I'm like
[today as a lecturer]
It does not occur to me to enter a
classroom and ask who here is a
disabled IDF veteran?
But I expect that, or I want to expect,

That of those in my classroom
whoever is a disabled IDF veteran,
[he/she] will come and talk,
That he/she will tell me this.
But it has never happened to me
unless the disability is really severe,
and visible.

In terms of support, the external
support, they do not receive,
[the support from the Ministry of
Defense, there is a need for]
Safer ground.
Fertile for learning.

We should know about them.
Make sure what means the institution
gives them,
Who you can contact there
To listen, do not give up.
So really referring to how to manage
yourself in class? What does it
mean?
The attitude, I think the attitude,
And ok, except for oral [exam],
What else can you give me?
Because there are things that really,
Maybe I could have accepted and not
done anything with it.

How to take my weaknesses and
strengthen them instead,
I mean how to work on it.
What is better for me to hear or
write?
Even at the level of a computer or
notebook,

Learning Strategies –
How to learn what?
How to read the article needed
for the class?
How do you approach these things
in general.