

ASSESSMENT OF AN ADHD COACHING APPROACH FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Introduction:

Young adults and issues related to the transition to and ongoing management of college has been an issue of growing relevance over the past many years (Hibbs & Rostain, 2019). College students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are a group that has composed a significant portion of students seeking accommodations and for whom specialized supports and treatments are indicated. ADHD Coaching is a field and an approach that has also proven to be useful for college students (Parker et al., 2011; Prevatt & Levrini, 2015), including as a component of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) adapted to ADHD in college students (Anastopoulos et al., 2020).

Objective:

This study employing certified coaches trained with an established, accredited coach training school, examined the impact of a coaching program, on young adult college students, including those with ADHD. The coaching program was created as part of a retention effort to help students feel more connected to the university and their university experiences. A coaching approach was employed that focused on various facets of self-regulation relevant to college because it was assumed that it would be more acceptable to students than approaches framed as counseling or psychological.

Study Method:

Study participants were comprised of 30 students enrolled in a large university in the Southeastern United States who signed up for the coaching program at the start of the semester and consented to participate in the IRB-approved study. Pre- and post-coaching measures of domains of life satisfaction, affect, hope, self-efficacy, and self-regulation were used to assess outcomes.

Measures: Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al, 1985), PANAS (Watson et al, 1988), Trait Hope scale (Snyder et al, 1991), General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995), Self-Regulation scale (Schwarzer et al, 1999)

Predictions:

1. It was predicted that completion of the specialized coaching program would be associated with improved scores on all measures when compared with baseline scores.
2. It was predicted that the sub-group of students with ADHD would demonstrate significant improvements on all post-coaching measures.

Results:

A repeated measures t-test was used to compare changes in participants on self-report measures of satisfaction with life, emotions, self-control, hope, and motivation from pre-coaching (after the initial meeting with the coaches) to post (at the end of the fall semester) and then again at a follow up at the end of spring semester. Pre- and post-coaching measures for the 30 subjects who completed the coaching program indicated that those who completed coaching demonstrated statistically significant improvements on measures of self-efficacy and knowledge of personal learning style (both $p < .05$). No other post-coaching outcome measure met statistical significance.

Pre- and post-coaching measures for the 11 subjects identified with ADHD who completed the coaching program were compared using t-tests. Of the group of 11 participants with ADHD who completed the coaching program, results indicated statistically significant improvements on measures of self-control ($p < .05$). No other post-coaching outcome measure met statistical significance. (see Figure 2)
(see Figure 1)

Figure 1. Overall means from Pre-test to Post-test for all Participants (N=30)

	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>
<i><u>self-efficacy</u></i>	<i>29.43</i>	<i>31.87*</i>
<i>self-control</i>	<i>23.87</i>	<i>24.97</i>
<i>SWLS</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>26.93</i>
<i>Hope</i>	<i>48.67</i>	<i>49.03</i>
<i>PANAS</i>	<i>11.93</i>	<i>9.33</i>

Know Strengths 3 3.2**

Know Learning
Style 3.07 3.33*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .10$ **

	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>
<i>self-efficacy</i>	27.45	30.00**
<u><i>self-control</i></u>	17.45	20.64*
<i>SWLS</i>	22.64	24.91**
<i>Hope</i>	45.09	46.81
<i>PANAS</i>	3.1	2

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .10$

Figure 2. Means from Pre-test to Post-test for Participants with ADHD (N=11)

Conclusions:

Prediction 1 was partially supported, as those who completed coaching demonstrated statistically significant improvements on measures of self-efficacy and knowledge of personal learning style (both $p < .05$), but not on any other outcome measures.

Prediction 2 was partially supported, as those students with ADHD who completed coaching reported increased self-control, which may be a foundation for later improving in other domains.