The Embrace Mentoring Program: Mentors Benefit Too!
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INTRODUCTION

• The FIU Embrace Mentoring Program (EMP) was developed to enhance the post-secondary success of students with intellectual disability (ID).
• Mentors typically see improvements in career satisfaction, networking opportunities, and general life satisfaction, when engaging in a mentoring program.
• However, many mentoring programs fail to provide specialized training for mentors to create the most effective mentor-mentee partnerships.
• To be a successful mentor, training which targets the specific skills and knowledge needed to provide support and guidance to students with ID, is crucial.

AIMS

1. Design and implement a mentor certification program to enhance mentoring skills for faculty and staff mentors.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the mentor certification program to improve mentor competence and motivation for helping others.

METHODS

• 34 mentors comprised of faculty and staff representing several departments at FIU, volunteered to be paired with 35 Embrace students with ID.
• The EMP consisted of a two-semester commitment during which mentors and mentees meet once a week.
• Mentors help students set targets and accomplish measurable goals related to academic growth and future employment.
• Mentors attended the following 5 workshops through the academic year:
  1. Orientation
  2. Program Basics
  3. Disability Awareness & Essential Mentor Skills
  4. Communication & Employability
  5. Closing Ceremony
• Knowledge acquisition was assessed at each workshop using pre-post surveys containing 10 questions on workshop content.
• Annual pre-post data was collected on mentoring competence and motivation for helping others.

RESULTS

Table 1. Faculty and Staff Mentor Pre-Post Workshop T-Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Question Topic</th>
<th>Pre M</th>
<th>Pre SD</th>
<th>Post M</th>
<th>Post SD</th>
<th>T-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Basics</td>
<td>FERPA Guidelines</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>2.824*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Awareness</td>
<td>Appropriateness of the word</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.688*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Person first language for</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-2.204*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Person first language for</td>
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<td>1.17</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>1.620*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>person in a wheelchair</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-3.688*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open dialogue about disability</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>3.063*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Mentor Skills</td>
<td>Academic growth over</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>-2.204*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal enrichment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation; *p < .05

There was not a significant difference between pre-posts for motivation for helping others, and participants decreased slightly in competence from pre to post EMP.

CONCLUSION

Providing specific training to mentors of students with DD, can help faculty and staff mentors increase their knowledge in several mentor skill areas, contributing to more effective mentor-mentee partnerships.

REFERENCES