Becoming Self-Determined & A Self-Advocate: Supporting College Students with Disabilities in Becoming Their Own Champions

University of North Alabama & University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Agenda

● Self-Advocacy vs. Self-Determination

● UNA Self-Advocacy Workshop
  ○ Research Study/Findings
  ○ Program Development

● UNLV Self-Determination Study
  ○ Research Study/Findings
  ○ Plans for the Future

● Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination
  ○ Differences
  ○ Similarities
Presenters

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What is self-advocacy?

- Speaking up for yourself
- Knowing what you want/need & making sure you have access to it
- Effectively communicating your interests, desires, needs and rights (Stamp, Banerjee & Brown, 2014)
What is self-determination?

- Human Motivation & Behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985)
- External vs Internal Motivation
- Basic Psychological Needs of Self-Determination
  - Competence
  - Autonomy
  - Relatedness
UNA Self-Advocacy Workshops

- Research & Development
- Pre/Post Survey
- Workshop Program
- Research Findings
- Tips/Recommendations
What Students Need to Understand

Empower yourself with knowledge and understanding of your disability by asking the following questions:

- What is your diagnosis?
- How does it affect you and your daily functioning?
- What do you need to have access?
UNA Self-Advocacy Workshop Overview

- Self-Advocacy PowerPoint (30 minutes)
- Terminology (10 minutes)
- Break (15 minutes - Door Prize Drawings)
- Role-play Scenarios (45 minutes)
- Wrap/Questions (10 minutes)
Self-Advocacy Workshop Breakdown

- **Self-Advocacy PowerPoint** (30 minutes)
  - Identify their strengths and areas needing improvement
  - Identify individual and academic supports
  - Develop communication skills
  - Employment Activity
UNA Self-Advocacy Workshop Breakdown Cont.

- **Terminology** (10 minutes)
  - ADA/AA
  - Reasonable Accommodations
  - Eliminating Barriers/Functional Limitations
  - Assistive Technology
  - Equity
UNA Self-Advocacy Workshop Breakdown Cont.

- **Role-Play/Scenarios**
  - Meeting with Professors
  - Group Project with Other Students
  - Workplace Accommodation Request
Participant Demographics

- 25 students participated
- African-Americans (20%), White (72%), and Multiracial (8%)
- Women (52%) and Men (48%)
- Average age = 25 years old
- The most common reported diagnosis among the sample was anxiety with other prevalent diagnoses including mood disorder (depression, bipolar, etc.), ADD/ADHD, reading disability, math disability, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
Outcomes & Pre/Post Test Analysis

- Significant at the p < .001 level
  - Speak up for myself
  - Advocate for what I want and need in order to be sure I have access to those things
  - Request reasonable accommodations from future employers

- Significant at the p < .01 level
  - Explain the legal rights I have in receiving reasonable accommodations
  - Initiate change instead of reacting to events that happen to me
  - Persevere despite difficulty or delay in achieving success
  - Request reasonable accommodations from professors and/or staff members
Findings from Follow-Up Interviews

- 12 students participated
- Experiences of disability in relation to other identities (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation)
- Lack of familial acceptance of mental illness diagnoses and/or psychiatric disabilities in several communities of color
- Fear of being perceived as incapable and unintelligent due to diagnosis and/or diagnoses
- Difficulty interacting with others, being social, making friends, dating, and establishing autonomy with family
What UNA Learned & Future Recommendations

- Collaborate MORE
- “Bring a friend”
- Provide Incentives - gift cards
- Utilizing University Peer Mentoring programs across campus
- Virtual attendance option
- Past attendees to provide feedback and role play
UNLV Self-Determination & Coaching

- Coaching creates a working relationship to promote growth (Spence & Oades, 2011)
- Coaching & Self-Determination (Parker & Boutelle, 2009)
  - Coaching & Competence
  - Coaching & Autonomy
  - Coaching & Relatedness
  - Executive Function Coaching
Becoming Self-Determined

(Field & Hoffman, 1994, 2015)
Becoming Self-Determined

- 12-week dissertation study conducted at UNLV with college students with disabilities ($n=4$)
- Innovation: *Self-Determination for College Success* (SDCS; Field & Hoffman, 2005)
  - Direct Student Interaction
  - Coaching
  - Self-Determination Notebook
Becoming Self-Determined

● Preliminary Observations
  ○ Students have been struggling to manage their disability and navigating the college environment
  ○ The often lack a strong support system
  ○ Do not always know who to go to for support on campus

● Study Impacts
  ○ Understanding one’s disability and how it impacts them
  ○ Belonging to a supportive group
  ○ Being empowered to make goals and decisions for themselves
How are we the same and different?

- Help students understand their disability and how it impacts their lives
- Empower them to make goals
- Give students the tools they need to guide themselves through life
- Create an environment that allows for relationship building
Self-Advocacy / Self-Determination

● Stripes or spots
  ○ It’s the same - by any other name it is still the same

● Doing similar steps for the same outcome:
  ○ coaching students to learn about themselves
  ○ their diagnosis
  ○ how to seek access

● Creating small communities to allow for relationship building and collaboration
References


