Ask the Expert Webcast Chat Series

Presented by the National Resource Center on ADHD
Ask the Expert
Can Mental Health Professionals be ADHD Coaches?
How to effectively integrate coaching methods into your counseling practice

Abigail Levrini, PhD
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Ask the Expert
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ADHD Coach
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To Ask A Question:
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ADHD Coaching Theory

- The ADHD coaching model described Dr. Levrini’s new book (APA, In Press) uses two primary theoretical models: CBT and psycho-education. In addition, we rely on executive functioning (EF) as a way of understanding client difficulties and formulating coaching goals. EF is becoming increasingly more popular in the literature as a way of describing the etiology of and the deficits associated with ADHD.

- According to Barkley, ADHD is not a skill deficit, but a difficulty with behavioral execution and self-regulation. Due to executive functioning deficits, those with ADHD will have significant difficulty implementing and persisting with coping techniques. They find it very difficult to sacrifice an immediate reward either to gain some longer-term reward or to avoid some later harm (Levrini & Prevatt, 2012).
# Coaching vs. CBT

Common Elements of ADHD Coaching and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (adapted from Thomas, Rostain, & Prevatt, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements Associated with Both ADHD Coaching and CBT</th>
<th>Elements Primarily Associated with ADHD Coaching</th>
<th>Elements Primarily Associated with CBT</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Case conceptualization</td>
<td>• Academic skills</td>
<td>• Behavior analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Information and psychoeducation</td>
<td>• Life management and healthy lifestyle (finances, maintaining a home, nutrition, exercise, sleep)</td>
<td>• Mindfulness training</td>
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<td>• Goal setting</td>
<td>• Referral for additional treatment of extensive comorbidities (depression, anxiety, substance abuse)</td>
<td>• Cognitive restructuring</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prioritizing</td>
<td>• Direct treatment of comorbidities (depression, anxiety, substance abuse)</td>
<td>• Emotional regulation</td>
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<td>• Motivation</td>
<td>• Family dynamics</td>
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<td>• Organizational skills</td>
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<td>• Planning and scheduling</td>
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<td>• Problem solving</td>
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<td>• Maintaining attention and reducing distractibility</td>
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<td>• Changing procrastination to persistence at tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stress management and relaxation techniques</td>
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<td>• Impulse control and anger and frustration management</td>
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<td>• Confidence and self-esteem building</td>
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<td>• Relationships and communication skills</td>
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<td>• Memory improvement</td>
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<td>• Between session homework activities</td>
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<td>• Medication management as adjunctive to treatment</td>
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Basic Rules of Coaching

- **The Coach is not a teacher or a parent.** The Coach will not tell the client what to do. The Coach might make suggestions and give options, but the Coach will primarily help the client determine their own effective strategies and solutions.

- Coaching helps the client learn how to manage their life by using a problem solving approach. Together, the Coach and client will identify the issue or goal, brainstorm potential solutions, discuss pros and cons of each strategy, select a solution, discuss specific barriers that might arise and how to overcome them, implement a task or strategy in the following week, re-evaluate the strategy the following week, and either redo the strategy (if barriers were encountered) or select a new issue/goal if the strategy was successful.

- **Motivation is a critical part of Coaching.** Incentives and consequences are routinely used in Coaching. Initially, the Coach may provide external motivation (reminders, test messages), and play a major role in helping the client manage their incentives and consequences. However, as Coaching progresses, the client will be encouraged to manage their own incentives/consequences and work towards utilizing more internal motivation.
Goal directed behavior occurs when a person is able to hold a Long Term/Monthly Goal (LTG) in their awareness and use the abstract image of that goal to guide and direct their actions.

For individuals with ADHD or EF dysfunction, this knack does not come easily. Without the capacity to hold a goal in mind with consistency and focus, the ability to overcome obstacles as they are presented becomes increasingly difficult, further hindering the completion of any LTGs.

Being **S.M.A.R.T–P** makes for an effective LTG:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Action Driven**
- **Realistic**
- **Time Sensitive**
- **Process Based (rather than Outcome based)**
Specific Strategies

- Specialty Timers
- ADHD Life Wheel
- Metaphors
- Inspiration Toolbox
- Decision Making Table
- Juggling Exercise
- Processing Exercise
- Eisenhower Grid
- Learning Style
- PEC Planner
- Graphic Organizers
- Career Tools
- Apps and Web Products
QUESTIONS???

THANK YOU!
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