

The Perception of the College Experience for Students with ADHD

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Abstract: Students diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are impacted by ADHD in their academic pursuits in higher education. This study aimed to investigate, explore, understand, and offer a voice to the students directly affected by ADHD. The framework for the research was based on Ryan and Deci's (2000) Theory of Self-determination. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight students currently enrolled at Northeastern University pursuing an undergraduate degree who disclosed to the Disabilities Resource Center that they had been diagnosed with ADHD. The data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Findings include early diagnosis and identification as an essential factor in an individual's growth and academic success and the influence of their support systems on their self-awareness and self-confidence. Also, balancing both internal and external motivation for college students with ADHD was essential to their well-being and effectiveness in a college setting. With little research conducted on college students with ADHD, this research provides the potential for further research to enhance faculty preparation and address conditions or disorders.

Keywords: Special education, College students, Higher education Special education, ADHD with higher education

Introduction

ADHD is a neurological disorder with different clinical indicators, such as lack of attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity (Swartz et al., 2005). Prior knowledge has shown that learners with ADHD commonly register academic underachievement. Compared with their age mates without ADHD, they are also not likely to complete high school (Barkley et al., 2000; Young et al., 2003). A considerable number of school-aged children continue to be diagnosed with ADHD compared to the past. More children will join higher education institutions soon (Daley & Birchwood, 2010). By understanding the importance of ADHD and how it impacts children at the high school level, college administrators need to be better prepared to help students transition into college life. Thus, the phenomenological research explored how college learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are affected during their higher education pursuit at Northeastern University.

The researcher aimed to understand college learners' experience by identifying support services for learners diagnosed with ADHD. Support services help the students develop the cognitive, social, and behavioral skills necessary for successful college-level learning outcomes. The research study adopted a phenomenology design as

the ultimate methodological framework to explore the experience of being a college student with ADHD. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) aimed to present an understanding of persons with and without ADHD.

Further, the present study responded to the problem of practice across colleges and other higher learning institutions. They continue to enroll learners with ADHD without a clear understanding of how these students experience and construct meaning from the various environmental contexts. This limitation calls for more education about this population so that higher education institutions can provide more resources to aid those students who suffer from this disorder. The study will also provide insights to educators within the higher learning sector on effectively accommodating and promoting learners' success with this particular condition.

ADHD is one of the primarily diagnosed disorders in children (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Nevertheless, most educators are not skilled and do not understand how to handle this particular disorder's implications within the classrooms (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). For most students, this disorder requires unique accommodations. It is thus necessary to offer support services to retain them in schools. In most situations, learners diagnosed with ADHD do not have ready access to the resources at the college level.

Similarly, those learners who have chosen not to disclose their diagnosis do not have access to appropriate services. According to the American Disabilities Act, all students at the college level who have been clinically diagnosed with ADHD are supposed to be provided with suitable accommodations. The overall need for services to support college learners with this disorder has risen. However, there is still a need to offer ideal learning tools for college educators to succeed with these unique learners (Lee et al., 2008).

Individuals with ADHD have the likelihood to witness stigmatization, discrimination, and prejudice. As earlier mentioned, this particular disorder considerably impacts learners' academic, social, and behavioral functioning within schools. Despite what is known about ADHD, its impact on college students needs more research. The researcher aimed to present an interpretation of lived experiences of learners currently attending college to inform continuous coming up with strategies for improving the needed services to this unique population and, at the same time, guarantee both their academic and life success. The study aimed to discover and close existing gaps and contribute answers to create new questions that can be explored in future research work (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011; Vanderlinde & van Braak, 2010).

Research Question

The study investigated and explored and offered a voice to the people directly affected by ADHD. The study also aimed to reveal how learners with ADHD viewed their experiences by measuring support services at the college level. Hence, the research question of this particular study is: How do undergraduate college students, who are working through the Disabilities Resource Center, based on a diagnosis of ADHD, perceive their college

experiences with student support services such as particular strategies, technology, or accommodations that are particularly helpful for their learning experience?

Participants

With Disability Resource Center (DRC) help at Northeastern University, the researcher recruited 35 potential participants to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of college students diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Once potential participants were obtained, a follow-up email was sent to collect preliminary information regarding the student's demographics and educational pursuits. Upon receiving the initial information, participants were contacted for interviews. The final cohort included eight participants, three males, and five females, with interviews spanning eight weeks. Each of the study's participants attended Northeastern University; seven of the participants were located on the university's Boston campus. One was located on the university's regional campus in Charlotte, North Carolina. Each college at Northeastern University was represented, except for the College of Professional Studies. The University's Bouve College of Health Sciences was represented twice, as one participant was in Boston and another was in Charlotte. Participants' diverse locations helped gain knowledge about how ADHD is perceived and addressed across the university's regional campuses.

Table 1 provides a brief demographic overview of the students who volunteered to participate in this study. Listed alphabetically by the participant's pseudonym, the table also includes participants' program of study, GPA, the college they attended, and their disclosed disabilities.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

First Name	GPA	Classification	College**	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Disability
P1	3.204	Sophomore	1	White	F	ADHD/Dyslexia
P2	3.854	Junior	4	White	M	ADHD/Dyslexia
P3	3.667	Sophomore	5	Indian	F	ADHD/BiPolar Stuttering/Synesthesia
P4	3.400	Senior	2	White	F	ADHD
P5	3.768	Junior	3	White	F	ADHD/Dyslexia
P6	3.500	Senior	1	White	F	ADHD/Dyslexia
P7	3.465	Junior	6	White	M	ADHD/Dyslexia
P8	2.882	Freshman	7	White	M	ADHD/Dyslexia

** 1 = Bouve College of Health Sciences, 2 = College of Arts, Media Design, 3 = College of Social Science & Humanities, 4 = College of Engineering, 5 = College of Science, 6 = D'Amore-McKim School of Business, 7 = Khoury College of Computer Sciences

Method

The research study's theoretical framework will focus on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to serve as the research project's main lens. The self-determination theory framework will align with the research questions to better understand how learners diagnosed with ADHD perceive support services offered by higher educational institutions in which they are enrolled.

The SDT was proposed by Edward Deci and Richard M. Ryan about 40 years ago. Since then, the theory has proven to be "a major theory of human motivation" (Gagne & Deci, 2014, p. 1). The model is adopted to provide an understanding of how persons can function optimally. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the SDT serves as "an organismic meta-theory that highlights the importance of humans' evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation" (p. 68).

This illustrates that the model is mainly centered on the internal elements likely to offer required support to the development of self-regulation and healthy personality traits, including competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The model has broad motivation-precise implications necessary to recognize the ultimate experiences of college learners diagnosed with ADHD. Several factors demonstrated that the model is a suitable theoretical model for understanding the interplay between self-motivation and the external factors in determining student well-being. The researcher plans to use SDT as the theoretical framework to understand how the essential psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competency promote optimal health and well-being for college students with ADHD. Further, numerous studies using SDT suggest that intrinsic motivation results in quality learning because it involves doing interesting and enjoyable activities. Learners with ADHD are likely to experience competence whenever they are being challenged and provided with prompt feedback. Additionally, these students are believed to experience autonomy whenever they perceive that they are empowered to discover, take the lead, and develop alternatives for their specific problems.

Learners tend to experience relatedness as they receive feedback and encouragement from others. They are also more intrinsically inspired and actively involved in their learning. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation, a sub-theory of SDT, derives from external sources to offer explanations about varying ways externally motivated behavior is controlled. The researcher aimed to assess the impact of motivational factors such as teachers, grades, and university administration, on student well-being and mental health.

The available literature demonstrates that self-determination results in substantial benefits to learners with learning shortcomings (Field et al., 2003). The literature review also revealed that self-determination is closely linked to several positive outcomes among learners with disabilities. For example, it is linked to improved self-esteem, physical and psychological health, and improved overall well-being (Anctil et al., 2008). This is an indication that successful learners acquire augmented levels of self-awareness and comprehension of their disabilities. Ward (1988) termed self-determination as a perception that encourages persons to describe goals by

themselves and undertake specific initiatives to realize their outlined goals. The definition of self-determination is perceived as a strategy or a series of actions that entails determining objectives, identification of actions required accomplishing the purpose, and removal of barriers likely to hamper goal realization (Ward, 1988). In their study, Argan et al. (2000) employed a self-determination learning framework of instruction. The study revealed that 89% of the learners were able to realize individual goals. Additionally, the model was established to be valid for disabled learners.

ADHD Global Disorder

The review of relevant literature demonstrates that ADHD is a common disorder that is diagnosed across the world. Nonetheless, the diagnosis of this particular disorder is problematic and is influenced by multiple factors of a child's upbringing, including parents/guardians, health practitioners, society, and educators. The knowledge concerning appropriate diagnosis, as well as treatment of this disorder, is critical. A successful diagnosis of ADHD depends on the child's family and the community's active participation. Without acknowledging the importance of diagnosis and treatment, and generally, without having a clear understanding of ADHD, there will continue to be obstacles that hinder the ability to implement more effective treatment and engagement by healthcare workers and educators alike.

More breakthroughs in the clinical research space can improve diagnosis approaches and disseminate relevant information. The diagnosis of ADHD has continued to expand within varying nations and cultural backgrounds. Different countries face equivalent rates to those witnessed across the United States and the United Kingdom since the identification of ADHD back in the 1970s (Faraone et al., 2009).

There are varying concepts and views concerning ADHD as a result of distinct cultures, political and historical backgrounds, and individual factors. Very few studies assessed the impact that cultural perspectives have when diagnosing and treating ADHD empirically. Additionally, the market for pharmaceutical medicines has expanded considerably. For instance, the use of MPH has increased as a treatment for ADHD. There are also several support groups to encourage self-diagnosis as well as identification of ADHD. The approaches have boosted the disorder's awareness and have developed a technique for diagnosing via "disease brokers" involving parents and educators (Conrad & Bergey, 2014).

Being diagnosed with the disorder does not necessarily hinder learners from achieving their education or their career objectives. Nevertheless, persons with ADHD normally underperform compared to their age mates without the disorder (Bernfort et al., 2007). Bernfort et al. (2007) further posited that learners struggling with this disorder face challenges in social situations and have problematic communication at both personal and professional levels. It was also reported that persons with this disorder have fewer years of formal education, low graduation rates, low grades, and failed courses, which are likely to adversely influence their employment outcomes and career selections.

The review demonstrates that ADHD considerably impacts a learner's academic achievement, social functioning, learning, and behavioral functioning. Due to this disorder, university learners experiencing challenges vary from the general populace who have not enrolled for a college education. Their enrollment in colleges has seen them excel academically at the secondary school level and develop valuable compensatory skills (Glutting et al., 2002). Nonetheless, when learners with this disorder are compared to typical college peers, they are at high risk of underperforming, exhibiting emotional instability, and dropping out of school (Lee et al., 2008).

While there is an increasing number of people with an ADHD diagnosis seeking post-secondary tutoring, most learners' lives are challenging. Post-secondary education often has higher organizational demand and is absent of direct parental or teacher support; thus, persons with the condition often find difficulty transitioning from adolescence to maturity while pursuing a college degree. Their life changes, combined with the symptoms of ADHD, result in a challenge for ADHD students navigating a post-secondary setting. Students with an ADHD diagnosis find that their academic performance is negatively affected, resulting in education failures, early school dropout, and increased potential issues with drugs and alcohol. Advanced diagnosis and improved screening methods of ADHD may be appropriate for these institutions to better serve this student population's needs.

College learners with ADHD require detailed documentation of various disabilities to secure accommodations in their post-secondary level, so additional support and accommodations may be necessary to help students with ADHD overcome the challenges of attending post-secondary educational institutions. This is to ensure these students can reach their full academic potential. Colleges can adopt numerous intervention strategies to assist learners with this condition. These forms of interventions involve accommodations, prescribed medicines, and educational-based interventions, such as self-management and coaching treatment. There is a need for further research to explore the impact of ADHD treatments on long-run educational accomplishment. The use of pharmacological treatment can treat ADHD symptoms and promote executive functioning and result in a higher success rate at the college level. The realization of non-medical interventions, such as coaching and CBT, can help them complete their academic studies successfully. ADHD-based coaching assists participants in developing relevant skills, behaviors, and strategies to cope with the disorder.

The diagnostic criteria for ADHD tend to raise serious queries among clinicians and social scientists (Singh et al., 2013). There has been a move from the therapy framework to the skill/coaching model to consider how individuals may have access to ADHD treatment (Hartmann, 1993). Technological advances might offer practitioners guidance concerning the best approach for deliberating about the cultural dissimilarities linked with ADHD worldwide.

The review demonstrates that learners impacted by the disorder are highly exposed to the risk of stigma, discrimination, and prejudices. The chapter also suggests that it is necessary to explore an education program's effectiveness in identifying an instruction for learners with unique needs and the extent to which these programs are likely to assist future school leaders in offering differentiated instructions. It is also vital to ensure teacher

professional development to positively influence learners' academic successes with ADHD. Designs for future research need to focus on enhancing educators' knowledge concerning ADHD. Previous scholars support the notion that educators' familiarity with learners' diagnosed with this disorder connects them to the students (Kos et al., 2004). Education regarding ADHD enhances learners' knowledge (Barbarese & Olsen, 1998). Continuous research efforts serve as the only way to transform the education process that can positively affect the lives of learners struggling with ADHD.

The results of the review showed that higher learning institutions, as well as school districts, have failed to prepare special educators adequately. A significant amount of resources in terms of time, personnel development, effort, curriculum, and execution seem to bear minimal effects on educators' preparedness to handle learners with ADHD. Professional development of educators can be fulfilled via the findings of the present research. Universities/colleges and other educator's education programs need to improve overall preparedness to handle this particular disorder that impacts learners' experience (Guerra & Brown, 2012). Educators can impact every students' success by increasing their awareness of this disorder and educating those concerning ways to develop strategies that assist learners with ADHD to become successful.

Results

In this study, eight college students were interviewed individually by the researcher to explore their college experiences as students with diagnosed ADHD. The researcher explored the participants' college experiences through various questions that sought to investigate their disability identity, internal and external support systems, and interactions with the DRC. The participants responded to these questions and other supplemental follow-up questions, providing insight into their college experience and university resources.

After the interviews were concluded, three central themes were identified from the data collected. The reoccurring themes were as follows:

- Disability Identity
- External Support Systems
- Internal Support Systems

The researcher worked to understand the perceived experiences of undergraduate college students with diagnosed ADHD with respect to the support services that utilized "strategy, technology, and accommodations" that were helpful in their college experiences. During the participants' time in college thus far, their social connections and gained freedom worked to empower them to excel in their studies at the university. This resulted in the individuals of this study gaining an enhanced sense of ownership of their successes and shortcomings to better navigate their academic pursuits. It was exposed through the research that the participants of this study benefitted from an early ADHD diagnosis, a combination of treatment (both medication and tools), and the general setting of college. In the college setting, the participants gained an enhanced perception of their identity and self-worth.

When participants were diagnosed at an early age, they were better able to accept and learn with their disabilities. Also, discovering and implementing tools or medication helped them to better navigate the world around them. Early diagnosis, internal acceptance of disability, and treatment of ADHD through medication were the key elements to their growth and academic success at college.

The research also demonstrated the importance of how external systems impacted the participants' lives and wellbeing as they navigated college. Parents, siblings, friends, professors, and the DRC were all identified in this study as important contributors to their college journeys. According to the participants varying experiences, backgrounds, and relationships impacted their identities and abilities to navigate stigmas associated with their ADHD. The research showed that parents, siblings, and friends were factors that were both encouraging (i.e., they helped with diagnosis and providing support) and discouraging (i.e., parents sometimes struggled to locate resources and sibling relationships offered unfair comparisons). Overall, the individuals of this study were satisfied by the resources provided by the DRC, navigating and utilizing tools such as testing accommodations, and one-on-one advisor sessions.

Additionally, the DRC provided the participants with a "safe-space" to advocate for additional accommodations and/or resources. Although the DRC was a positive entity in the participants' lives, some participants struggled to coordinate their accommodations with other university offices and remained anonymous amongst their classroom peers. Both university affiliated entities and personal relationships provided external support elements that positively impacted the participants' college journeys.

This study's participants shared external factors that impacted them the most as they transitioned to college life. The researcher also investigated the interplay between personality traits and the surrounding academic and social environment. The participants described how their environments and resources worked to help them grow. Additionally, each participant's characteristics also reflected how they navigated through challenges and sought opportunities to grow and learn. How each participant approached their learning varied, leading to an array of reactions from friends, family, and educators. The environment and the support systems in which the participants found themselves played a large role in their college experiences. All of the study's participants received accommodations from the university and the DRC, potentially correlating with increased self-autonomy.

As the participants of this study increased their amount of self-autonomy, it was often correlated with the amount of self-regulation they exhibited. This process of proactively using one's abilities to define and develop effective learning strategies was exhibited through the following:

- Defining goals and creating strategies to be able to achieve them
- Reflection of one's actions and steps taken to reach goals
- Delegating time and effort towards goals and tasks
- Reflecting and evaluating one's approach to retaining and gaining knowledge

Internal and external motivational factors impact students with ADHD as they navigate college life, as seen in the participants of this study. The participants made their own choices and accomplished their academic goals through developing adaptive behaviors that encourage self-regulated living and learning. Connections made at home, on the sports field, in the college community, and in the classroom worked to facilitate a balanced life and solidify the participants' awareness of their disabilities related to the world around them. The researcher found that self-governance and the ability to identify themselves as learners were essential to the participants' successes in college. In the coming chapter, the researcher will explore the limitations of students with ADHD in college settings and provide recommendations and future research needed to better support students with ADHD across university academic and social resources.

Recurring Themes

The purpose of this study was to investigate how undergraduate students at Northeastern University perceived their educational journey with ADHD, their knowledge and awareness of ADHD, how their disabilities affected their lives, including their upbringing and educational journey, how their disability identification came to be, and salient moments in their development as learners. The analysis of the gathered data yielded three super-ordinate themes and 10 corresponding subthemes. Super-ordinate themes and subthemes were identified as those recurring in at least five participants' interview data.

Table 2 presents a list of each super-ordinate theme and its accompanying sub-themes.

Table 2. Recurring Themes

Super-Ordinate Themes/Subthemes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Theme I: Disability Identity								
Importance of Early Diagnosis/ Acknowledgment of Disability	x	x	x				x	x
ADHD & Another Disability	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Medication/Stigma								
Impact of ADHD on College Setting/Education	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Theme II: External Support Systems								
Parents/Siblings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Friends	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
DRC	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Theme III: Internal Support System								
Internal motivation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Self-awareness of disability	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Conclusions

Eight undergraduate students, who self-disclosed their ADHD through Northeastern University's DRC, were the voices of this study. During in-depth one-on-one interviews, participants were asked a set of semi-structured questions. This qualitative study sought to understand college student's experiences with the phenomenon of ADHD and how their experiences impacted their self-awareness as a learner. Furthermore, this study aimed to understand the external and internal factors that impacted their college journey and provide university personnel with recommendations to guide better, support, and serve this student population. Subordinate themes of this study included disability identity, external support systems, and internal support systems allowing the researcher to identify all factors relevant to the college experience for the ADHD student population.

The first research question aimed to understand the interplay between individuals with ADHD's personality traits and their surrounding academic and social environments. The first element of this study sought to understand a college student's ADHD diagnosis and acknowledge themselves. The first finding was that early diagnosis of an individual's ADHD is an essential component to an individual's ability to grow and succeed in a college environment. This study specifically looked at the impact of early diagnosis as it relates to the establishment of one's identity.

For study participants diagnosed with ADHD before entering college, their disability and their parent's approach towards their disability extensively shaped their identity. Their parents' approach to obtaining accommodations for their children while in K-12 was similarly exhibited by the students of this study in their approaches to obtaining their accommodations at college. When participants were diagnosed earlier, it gave them time to better understand and navigate their education with their disability. The utilization of their prescribed medication to alleviate their ADHD symptoms further helped the individuals of this study.

The second research question of this study aimed to understand how college students with ADHD utilized university support services (i.e., particular strategies, technology, or accommodations) to enhance their educational experiences and identify the internal and external motivational factors that impact their college life. Additionally, this component sought to identify and understand the impact that external support systems have on college students with ADHD. The second finding of this study was that individuals with ADHD who have strong connections with family, friends, university personal, etc. are more successful in their pursuits.

The interviews conducted in this study were essential in identifying family, friends, professors, coaches, disability service personal, and others as influential critical components in this study's lives. Currently, policies and procedures exist to help guide these supportive external entities. However, the research has illuminated that implementing these elements is fragmented and challenging to navigate for the individuals they established to assist. Support services at universities and people of influence work to help college students with ADHD navigate a productive path of well-being, academic success, and social endeavors.

The third question of this study aimed to understand how college students with ADHD make their own choices and work to accomplish their chosen life goals. The third finding of this study was that internal motivation and awareness of one's ADHD works to establish a sense of self and enhance one's ability to excel across various environments. This study's interviews illuminated that when college students with ADHD understand the challenges their ADHD presents, awareness allows them to navigate obstacles and self-advocate. Understanding themselves, their learning styles, and how to excel as individuals with ADHD empowers decision-making and solidifies independence. Additionally, practicing and exhibiting the ability to manage one's time allows students with learning disabilities to motivate internally and promote self-determination. Self-awareness and self-confidence are essential for students with ADHD in their college pursuits, fueling their internal motivation.

The examination of the qualitative data that emerged from this study provided footing for continuing research to inform laws and practitioners contracted to teach at institutes of higher education. The following sections discuss the impact and prospects for future research, college recommendations, and potential consequences of implementing the discussed recommendations.

Recommendations for Practice

The research goal was to interpret lived experiences of students with ADHD attending college to reflect on how to continue developing strategies for enhancing the services to this population and ensuring their academic and life successes. The following recommendations are suggested based on the finding discussed previously.

Create Education and Awareness about ADHD among Faculty and College Personnel

Faculty are under-prepared for or are lacking awareness and knowledge of ADHD inclusive methodologies and interpersonal skills, laws and legal obligations, and perceptions and attitudes about students with ADHD. Implications include the need for college-based interventions to support students with ADHD. The lack of skills and training for educators regarding how to handle students with ADHD is an important topic. This study investigated how educators handle students diagnosed with ADHD in college. These findings highlight that higher education institutions have not successfully prepared the special education preparation needed for college personnel. Implications for policy, future research, and practice point to a need for a more intentional and holistic approach to faculty personnel preparation.

Research indicates that it is essential to empower students with ADHD for academic success and educate others about their disability (Kurth & Mellard, 2006). The goal is to provide equal access in all areas of the campus. To accomplish this goal, educators must actively educate themselves on their current issues and work to infuse the campus community with this knowledge. Access should not be limited to classroom learning; rather, the entire campus environment should be shaped according to universal design principles. Leadership must view an essential aspect of campus diversity and allocate funding to support educational initiatives.

Promote Multi-disciplinary Collaborative Leadership

Higher education institutions should commit to collaboration, distributed leadership, and involving others in their work. Empirical evidence from research studies has suggested a positive correlation between distributed leadership and change outcomes (Harris, 2008). Research studies also suggest that distributed leadership can benefit ADHD intervention (Meyers & Bagnall, 2015). For ADHD programs to be effective, involving as many stakeholders as possible should be executed when implementing programming (Meyers & Bagnall, 2015).

Research suggests that administrators, faculty, college personnel, advisors, psychologists, and social workers should be involved in planning, adopting, implementing, and evaluating university ADHD programming (Meyers & Bagnall, 2015). Colleges should take on a college-wide approach to ADHD programming. All members are involved, and that approaches to teaching college students with ADHD are taught across the curriculum and tied into all aspects of the college (McCormick & Mohiuddin, 2018).

Equip Learners with Tools to Strengthen Autonomy and Self-regulation

The objective is to provide learners with methods and tools to help learners achieve a balanced approach to internal and external motivation. As demonstrated through this study, learner autonomy is an important goal to be successful academically and socially. By encouraging self-assessment and control, learners would fine-tune their approach to learning through self-regulation.

The external motivational side, faculty, academic advisors, disability resource center staff, and other various student groups may contribute by providing guidance that strengthens the students' learning, study strategies, and self-regulated behavior. There is ample evidence that creative student engagement strategies will improve retention and higher graduation rates of students with ADHD. Explicit opportunities could be demonstrated through program or learning outcomes, co-curricular programming, or academic policies.

Facilitate Self-advocacy

The value of human dignity and self-advocacy must be honored in working with students with ADHD. Increased learner autonomy depends on self-regulated behavior when it comes to learning. Participants should be encouraged to construct and share meaning related to their ADHD and their social and learning challenges.

The Disability Resource Center staff can contribute by hosting workshops and discussion sessions with transitioning students who self-identify as having ADHD. In exchange, participants will share their sense of who they are with others, such as their peers. Through this process, they will learn how to speak for themselves and push for their rights.

Mentorship Groups

Research conducted in this study leads to the recommendation to create two mentorship programs that provide college students with ADHD a space to discuss and navigate the social and academic challenges. One group should comprise trained professionals that help students navigate their challenges while transitioning to college and throughout their time at college. Another recommendation is an ADHD peer-to-peer group run by upper-classmen with ADHD, providing a space for others with ADHD to share their experiences and create a community in the college setting. Instituting a peer mentorship program for students with ADHD allows them to access someone of their age who is experiencing similar struggles/successes both academically and socially. This will help students with ADHD recognize that their peers faced familiar challenges and that sharing success stories and best practices is an effective way of navigating college challenges, building self-confidence and resilience.

Peer ADHD group discussions will help advisors and teaching faculty better understand the tools needed to develop effective mitigating strategies. The establishment of allies that students with ADHD create helps them during their college experience. Assembling a group of individuals (i.e., peers, professors, university staff, etc.) can help affirm who they are and create an environment for students with ADHD to feel to share concerns and achievements, inevitably enhancing self-confidence and ability to excel a college setting.

Strategies and Tools

Another recommendation is to create a newsletter, allow for early course registration for students with ADHD, and provide an ADHD-specific testing environment. The newsletter would be focused on students with ADHD and highlights workshops for students and staff/faculty, give recommendations of practices, highlight student successes, announcements, and more. Additionally, allowing students with ADHD to register early for their classes and prioritizing their registration would allow this population to best manage their classes. It also can mitigate any anxiety about their course selections and allow for them to select classes that synchronize with their medication. Lastly, creating an optimal testing space that meets ADHD college students' unique needs will allow them to thrive during their course specification evaluations best.

As emphasized previously, the transition from high school to college presents challenges for those with ADHD. Implementing effective processes, strategies, and tools to navigate this pivotal moment are needed. When establishing these processes, the impacted students must identify their support structures gradually reduced throughout their lives. When students with ADHD are in high school, their parents are their primary advocates, but when they start college, that responsibility shifts onto themselves (Schiffrin et al., 2013).

Having university resources to help with this transition and providing the correct support structures is essential to these students' success throughout their college experience. Having workshops, webinars, or readily available information provided by the university to transitioning ADHD diagnosed students, as their needs differ from the

neurotypical peers, will promote self-regulatory behavior and increase autonomy. The implementation of this support element will improve the college experience of those with ADHD, overall reducing their transitional concerns while increasing their ability to effectively self-regulate and nourish their well-being.

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