# Development of Psychoeducational Transition Intervention – Instructive Knowledge Isn't Enough: A Preliminary Analysis

Sharon Medina, MOT, OTR/L, Consuelo M. Kreider PhD, OTR/L

## BACKGROUND

- College students with learning disabilities (LD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) face challenges to managing academics, social, and life demands [1, 4].
- Students with LD/ADHD experience executive function difficulties that can impact their participation in daily life tasks that extend beyond academic tasks [2].
- For successful management of LD/ADHD-related difficulties, students must have the essential skills needed to manage symptoms and access supports [3].
- The purpose of this research is to identify the knowledge needs of undergraduates with LD/ADHD for supporting their occupational performance as emerging adults within a college pathway.

## METHODS

- Qualitative analysis was used to assess knowledge needs of undergraduates with LD/ADHD who were enrolled in a larger study that tested campus-based supports for students with LD/ADHD.
- Participants were 52 undergraduates with LD/ADHD that engaged in study activities up to four academic semesters. Participants met as a cohort to engage in disability-related psychoeducational group meetings.
- A continuous improvement approach was used to refine psychoeducational topical content.
- Data were transcripts and educational content delivered during undergraduate cohort meetings over four academic years (N= 30).
- Structural coding was used to identify salient psychoeducational topics. Axial coding was used to examine the participants application of psychoeducational content.
- Rigor was enhanced by attendance of meetings and multiple coders of the data came to consensus of interpretation of the data.
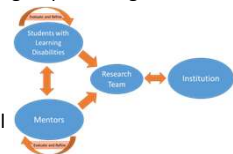
## RESULTS

**Table 1. Instructive knowledge and refined topical areas from 30 undergraduate group meetings held over four academic years**

| Topic | Description | Subtopics |
|---|---|---|
| **Campus resources** | Information about available university resources | • Classroom accommodations<br>• Support centers<br>• Assistive technology |
| **Social supports** | Reflection/discussion about social support impacts on college experiences and how to find supports | • Anticipatory guidance from exemplars<br>• Supportive others<br>• Mentorship from graduate students |
| **Mental health management** | Information and discussion centered around how stress presents and coping strategies for managing | • Stress management<br>• *Anxiety and depression symptom management**  |
| ***Stigma*** * | Information and discussion about what they wish others understood and strategies for understanding and coping with stigma | • Others understanding LD/ADHD differences<br>• Misconceptions from others<br>• Dealing with acceptance |
| **Executive function in real life** | Information about the cognitive process and strategies for situational appraisal, prioritization, and problem solving within everyday life | • Difficulties with task switching<br>• *Time: planning, organizing, and managing**<br>• Decision making<br>• Learning styles that work best |
| ***Awareness of LD/ADHD impacts** * | Discussion about LD/ADHD symptoms, different cognitive styles, and personalized understandings of how symptoms may manifest in every day life | • Strengths and challenges of LD/ADHD<br>• *Self-regulation strategies**<br>• *Personalized definition of LD/ADHD**  |
| **Communication and self-advocacy** | Information and skills for communicating with people within their lives and how to promote a more disability friendly environment | • Explaining LD/ADHD to others<br>• *Imparting wisdom for other students with LD/ADHD**<br>• Self-confidence |
| **Health management** | Information and strategies for managing healthy behaviors and promoting healthy daily routines | • Health literacy<br>• Health behaviors |
| ***Balancing multiple roles** * | Strategies for anticipating future goals, managing increased roles within their everyday lives, and thinking ahead | • *Strategies for managing work/school/daily/social**<br>• *Disability in the workforce**<br>• *Managing transitions with changing roles & anticipated transition out of college**  |

*\* Unexpected areas of needed supports; evolved from continuous improvement methods*
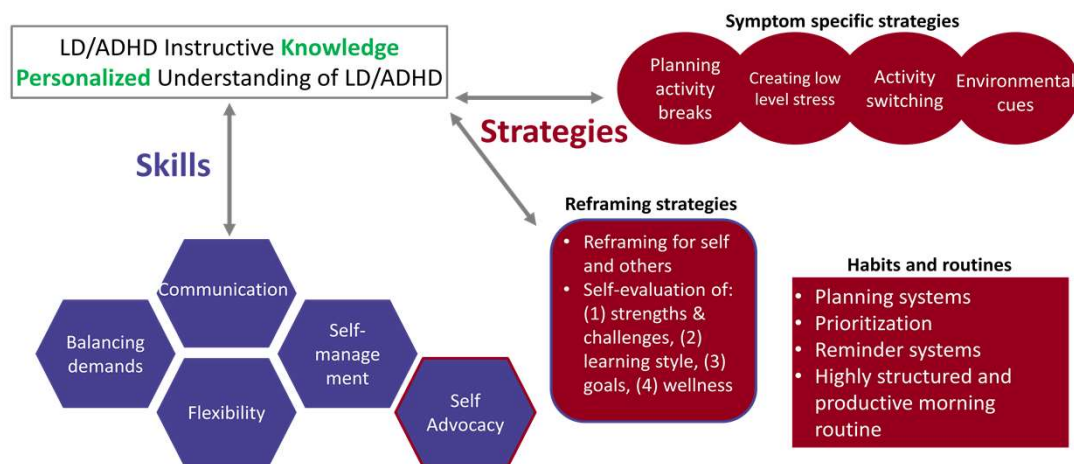


**Figure 1. Supporting strategy and skill development through instructive and personalized knowledge**

## DISCUSSION

- Study findings speak to the importance of helping young people create personalized understanding of their disability and related symptomatology needed to potentiate occupational performance and support participation.
- Results include information needs, types and examples from educational information that was presented to the undergraduates as well as feedback provided from the students which combine to explicate a framework for supporting students with disabilities who are enrolled in college.
- Findings can be used to develop and/or refine occupational therapy interventions for young adults transitioning through a college pathway, gearing information given to them to be useful and beneficial for success through this transitioning time.

## CONCLUSION

- The provision of instructive education in combination with strategy and skill development may be considered in occupational therapy interventions targeted at supporting students with LD/ADHD transitioning to adult roles.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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