Health Coaching in Context: A Descriptive Case Study

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Introduction

Persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) often report challenges with accessing employment, reliable transportation, and opportunities for social engagement, resulting in decreased independence and self-efficacy. When challenges, with or without an acute SCI, participation in valued activities is possible and supports social-emotional health, physical health, and quality of life.1,2 “Health Coaching in Context” is a skillful dialogue that adheres to coaching competencies and draws from the tenets of health coaching and positive psychology. “Health Coaching in Context” reflects authentic client centeredness, and develops problem solving skills that address solutions that lead to meaningful engagement in everyday living despite the presence of a health condition or other personal or environmental factors. (Fig. 1)

Purpose and Methods

- Identify the impact of “Health Coaching in Context” on self-efficacy, and performance and satisfaction of self-identified coaching goals
- Examine the coaching client’s reactions to “Health Coaching in Context”

Study Design

Descriptive case study
Pre-post intervention, outcome measures (Fig. 2) administered before and at the completion of coaching relationship.
- Provided by two doctoral students (first and second authors) who: participated in 5, 60 minutes coach training sessions provided by a certified positive psychology master coach (third author); practiced coaching with iterative feedback for three month period; Conducted in client’s home over 7 weeks; Each session informed by the process CONNECT-CLARIFY-CREATE (https://www.schoolofcoachingmastery.com/); Each session lasted between 45-60 minutes and audiorecorded

Health Coaching in Context

- 41 year old adult living in the community
- Sustained C5 level SCI at 13 years of age

Coaching Client

- 41 year old adult living in the community
- Sustained C5 level SCI at 13 years of age

Results: Improvement in Self-Identified Goals

COPM4
- Semi-structured interview
- Rate importance from 1 to 10 (1=very important to 10=not important) and satisfaction from 1 (cannot, not satisfied) to 10 (without a problem, very satisfied)

GAS5
- Rating ranging from -2 to +2, with 0 representing the expected outcome, -2 below expected outcome, +2 above expected outcome
- Co-constructing description of expectations and goals developed in collaboration with the participant

MSES6
- SCI-specific measure
- 16 item measure self-efficacy in performing daily activities and social participation
- 7-point Likert scale ranging from very uncertain (1) to very certain (7)

Figure 2: COPM = Canadian Occupational Performance Measure; GAS=Goal Attainment Scale; MSES = Moorong Self-Efficacy Scale; all patient reported outcome measures

Results: Improvement in Self-Efficacy

- MSES score improved from 93 to 106, out of 112 possible points.
- Item level analysis showed improvement in following:
  - Personal hygiene
  - Sexual relations
  - Social interactions
  - Health and well-being
  - Perception about the future

Results: Gas Met or Exceeded Expected Outcomes

Figure 4: Average change score = 2.6 points; each goal met (m=1) or exceeded (m=3) expected outcome.

Y-Axis: 0=expected outcome, -1 and -2 = below expected outcome, +1 and +2 = exceeded expected outcome

Discussion

- Study illustrates the positive impact of Health Coaching in Context
- Few interventions are substantiated to directly impact participation outcomes
- Positive outcomes are particularly notable given the significant number of years since injury

COPM Performance and Satisfaction Differential
- Nutrition and Budgeting
  - Performance scores for 2 goals were unchanged
  - Satisfaction scores improved from baseline by 2 (6 to 8) and 7 (3 to 10)
- Potential explanations aligning with the tenets of response shift bias

Generalizable Self-Efficacy Improvement
- Substantial improvement in self-efficacy is not addressed during coaching
- Intent of coaching to promote problem solving skills that can be generalized
- This outcome should be noted as a potentially unique outcome of coaching that further validates it as a useful approach.

Implications for Practice

- Health Coaching in Context promotes solution-focused problem solving skills that generalize beyond the coaching goals
- Those who utilize coaching should have formal coach training to ensure fidelity of coaching intervention.

References


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