

The college experience for students with ADHD

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Students who have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are impacted by ADHD in their academic pursuits in higher education. The purpose of this study was to investigate, explore, understand, and offer a voice to the students directly affected by ADHD. 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 have been diagnosed with ADHD. The framework for the research was based on Ryan and Deci's (2000) Theory of Self-determination. The data was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Findings included early diagnosis and identification as an essential factor in an individual's growth and academic success as well as the influence of their support systems on their self-awareness and self-confidence. This study specifically looked at the impact of early diagnosis as it relates to the establishment of one's identity. Participants did not define themselves by their disability but by identity they created throughout their college journey, being aware of their disability allowed them to become self-advocates and primary contributor to their success.

Also, the importance of balancing both internal and external motivation for college students with ADHD was essential to their well-being and effectiveness in a college setting.

Biography

Maricla Pirozzi is a higher education management professional working across cities, states, and countries with higher education institutions, industry, and governmental organizations to drive educational partnerships and promote global education and competence. She is fluent in English, Spanish, Italian with several years of experience in the public and private sector and also in higher education working with students, faculty, staff, and senior-level administration. Her role is internal to the institution and various constituents outside the institution, locally and overseas, helping to expand strategic goals.

Maricla is an experienced professional assessing new program development, branch campus expansion, best practices in education, student needs, and the online market. Her experience also spans working with graduate students and adult learners in various markets internationally. She is a culturally aware and sensitive professional with solid project management and leadership skills and a solid ability to relate with and advise diverse populations and responsible facilitator on crisis management within an international context.