

Overcoming Stigma

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Overcoming the Effects of Stigma

- When it comes to rising above learning and other challenges, few things are more important than human understanding.
- And few things are more hurtful and damaging than human misunderstanding.
- This holds true for any number of challenges, ADHD included.

What Can Be

- Moving from stigmatizing to legitimizing views of ADHD and other learning differences
- Implications
- Role of CHADD

Self-Stigma

- The negative effects of stigma associated with a person's challenges can far outweigh the negative effects of the actual challenges!
- Those stigmatized, in time, may stigmatize themselves – self stigma
- Combating self-stigma

National Stigma Study - Children

- The National Stigma Study – Children (NSS-C) represents the first large-scale national survey of public beliefs and attitudes regarding children's mental health.
- Respondents were provided four vignettes, two describing children meeting diagnostic criteria for a mental health condition (one child meeting criteria for Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the other for Major Depression, and two control vignettes with no mention of a mental health condition (a child with asthma, a child with daily troubles (not clinically significant in nature).

National Stigma Study – Children (continued)

- Results - almost 1/2 believed that children diagnosed with a mental health condition and receiving services for this condition would experience immediate and lasting social ramifications, including rejection in school and later in life.
- More than 2/3 = negative views on psychiatric medications.
- When problems were labeled as a mental illness = more likely to perceive a level of dangerous beyond what the vignette described (Pescolido, 2007).

National Stigma Study – Children (continued)

- Significant percentage of the U.S. public perceives children’s mental health conditions and children receiving standard mental health services for these conditions in ways that will feel stigmatizing.

Self-Stigma

- Self-handicapping
- Stereotype Threat
- Why is it so hard for some to change self-views? (William Swann 1997)
- Fixed versus malleable views of intelligence

Overcoming Self-Stigma

- Learning to see challenges in a new light
- Among the protective processes identified in the lives of those who overcame exposure to a range of adverse childhood experiences
- Resilient in response to challenges

Preventing and Reducing Self-Stigma: Learning to See Challenges in a New Light

- Brainology
Carol Dweck, Ph.D. dweck@psych.stanford.edu
- WhyTry Program www.whytry.org
- Project Eye-to-Eye www.projecteyetoeye.org
- Learning Leaders
Maggie Kyger, Ph.D. e-mail: kygermm@jmu.edu
- Montgomery County GT/LD Model
www.gtldnetwork.org

Preventing and Reducing Self-Stigma: Learning to See Challenges in a New Light (cont)

- “Multiple Intelligences”
- Research on vocationally successful adults with LD and ADHD: stages of reframing – action phase (Paul Gerber)
- Shut Up About Your Perfect Kid.com
- Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival
www.mentalhealthfestival.dreamhosters.com
- Role of CHADD

The Impact of Social Climate

- Numbers of children/teens who won’t accept help – because they feel stigmatized (cont)
- Repelled by special placements
- Won’t speak to counselors
- Won’t take medication
- Would rather suffer in silence than be target of ridicule

The Impact of Social Climate (cont)

- Numbers of workers who won't accept help – because they feel stigmatized
- Won't speak to doctors or counselors
- Won't take medication
- Would rather suffer in silence than be target of ridicule

Resilience – In Context

For children at risk for serious emotional, behavioral, learning and later life adjustment problems, can simply going to school each day actually protect them from these negative outcomes years down the road?

Resilience – In Context (cont)

For adults impacted by various challenges including ADHD, can the understanding of co-workers and the availability of simple inexpensive accommodations determine one's level of success and eventual advancement?

Advances in Our Understanding of Human Resilience and of the Limits of Emotional Endurance

- We can be very different people in very different contexts.
- A child who fails in one school, then another school, can be successful in the next school.
- A person who struggles in one work setting, then another work setting, can be successful in the next work setting

Changing the Social Climate

- Key factors
 - lessons learned from studies of effective youth violence prevention programs
 - lessons learned from research in the field of traumatic stress exposure
- Establishing buy-in
- Changing bystander behavior

Changing Bystander Behavior: What Works

- Changing bystander behavior at school
- Changing bystander behavior in the workplace
- Overcoming common barriers

Bullying Prevention

- 3 reasons why it can be so hard to prevent and reduce bullying at school:
 - Bullies do their bullying in the shadows.
 - The child being bullied might be scared to death to tell anyone (or may have tried to no avail).
 - Others who see the bullying don't know what to do. They're bystanders.
- Bullying in the workplace

Changing the Social Climate – Promising Practices

- PeaceBuilders 8004PEACENOW
www.peacebuilders.com
- Bullying Prevention Program
nobully@clemson.edu
- The *Stop Bullying Now!* Campaign
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
- Jigsaw Classroom www.jigsawclassroom.org
- Project Based Learning?

Changing the Social Climate: Promising Practices

- University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior
 - Hill Walker, Ph.D. 541-346-3592
hill-walker@cmail.uoregon.edu
 - BEST Practices Jeff Sprague, Ph.D. 541-346-2465
jeffs@uoregon.edu
- School Wide Positive Behavior Supports – Wraparound in Schools – Lucille Eber
www.illinoispbis.org

Remembering the Role of Context

- Decades of research
- Effects on our health, well being, personal and professional relationships
- Common human blind spot
- Social climates can change for the positive
 - people can learn to embrace differences
 - examples – school, home, workplace

Preventing and Reducing Stigma Education

- Educating others so that those with stigmatizing views can get an accurate understanding of different challenges and conditions (Hinshaw et al 2008)
- Dominant mental health views over the last century believed various conditions were willfully brought on
- Dramatic change in thinking has occurred
- ADHD – a good example

Preventing and Reducing Stigma Education (Cont)

- Dispelling common myths/misconceptions about ADHD
- Individual strengths and talents –
 - Possible to be strong (sometimes extremely so) in sophisticated, complex intellectual areas, and/or areas that involve creativity and inventiveness and weak (sometimes extremely so), in areas that most others in your age range can master with little effort.
 - How one understands this unevenness in talents and abilities can have a profound effect on the quality of their life.

Preventing and Reducing Stigma (Cont)

- Families, caregivers the unsung heroes (Hinshaw)
- "Suffering is half pain and half being alone with the pain" Edwin Shneidman
- Support for families, caregivers, spouses, partners - preventing and reducing compassion fatigue
- Increased contacts between those feeling stigmatized and those with stigmatized views - shared goals; contact = regular, informal, comfortable – not forced (Hinshaw)

Preventing and Reducing Stigma

- Helping those suffering the effects of self-stigma to see challenges in a new light
- Helping those struggling with various challenges access contexts that legitimize rather than stigmatize challenges
- Challenging inaccurate media portrayals
- Fighting to change policies, open doors
- CHADD