

How do vocational students achieve their goals for wellbeing through online coaching

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Background

The vocational students' unhealthy behaviour and social problems have extended and more or less been ignored. The students' wellbeing has a big impact on their lives during education and on their employability after graduation.

To promote vocational students' wellbeing the multi-professional comprehensive eBoss coaching programme was developed and piloted in Central Finland.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to investigate how students can achieve their goals for wellbeing.

Intervention

The online coaching programme was built to support students' health and reduce unhealthy behaviour. Online material included topics such as everyday activities, sleep and relaxation, physical activity, social activity, nutrition and intoxicants, mental wellbeing and life management. Varied tasks and coaching material were used.

The coaching programme is based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) approach. Using ACT approach, students were helped to accept their thoughts, feelings, values and habits to develop understanding about their wellbeing.

Every student used activity trackers to monitor their own sleep, stress and activity to support their own goals. Additionally, some students used individually selected wellbeing mobile applications.

Each student set one meaningful goal with the support of coaches to improve his/her own wellbeing. The coaches supported the students to achieve their goals and to participate in online training or in group meetings.

Materials and methods

Participants:

Vocational school students (n=144; female n=98, male n=48). Students were 16-29 years old (M = 18,6). 124 of the students were native speakers of Finnish and 21 students were immigrants, whose first language was not Finnish.

Students participated in the three months' comprehensive wellbeing coaching programme in groups (n=12) during the years 2016-2018. 50 students participated in group meetings, 45 in online training and 51 participated in mixed training: both online training and some group meetings, e.g. physical training.

Data collection:

The data were collected by semi-structured interview and using Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) at the beginning and after the three months' coaching.

Data analysis:

The data were analyzed statistically. The raw scores from achieved GAS goals were used in the analysis.

Results

144 students started coaching programmes and 137 finished them. The most common drop-out reasons were graduation, removal or illness.

In group meetings the students were present in average 80% of the sessions and those who participated in online training completed 70% of the given tasks.

70% of the students achieved their GAS goals and many even exceeded them during the coaching programme. Almost all the rest of the students made progress with their goals. In group level students achieved their goals (Ka= 0.02, SD = 1.095). Fig. 2.

There were no group differences between contact meetings, online training and mixed training in the coaching programmes.



Students' achievement of their GAS goals

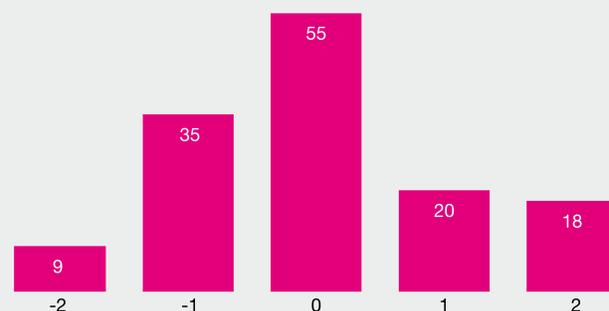


Figure 2. N= 137. 0= student's goal setting is achieved.

In conclusion

Students achieved their wellbeing goals during the coaching programme. Overall the students experienced that the coaching was beneficial to them and that using the activity trackers was meaningful and motivating to most of them.

The findings can be used as a tool for developing online counselling programmes and health technology to promote students' wellbeing in different settings during vocational education and in other environments as well like youth services.

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Figure 1. Process of the eBoss Coaching Programme

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