

Contents

Introduction	3
I. ADHD COACHING: FUNDAMENTALS AND BEYOND	7
1. An Overview of ADHD	9
2. A History and Overview of ADHD Coaching Interventions	29
3. Underlying Principles and Procedures Used in ADHD Coaching	39
4. The ADHD Coaching Framework—Beginning Sessions	53
5. The ADHD Coaching Framework—Middle and Final Sessions	75
6. The ADHD Coaching Toolbox	93
7. Your Coaching Practice	119
II. ADHD COACHING CASE STUDIES	139
8. Case Study: ADHD Coaching With a Young Professional Adult With Work and Lifestyle Issues	141
9. Case Study: ADHD Coaching With a Middle-Aged Adult With a Variety of General Life Challenges	165
10. Case Study: ADHD Coaching With a Student Adjusting to the Academic and Social Demands of College	181
11. Case Study: ADHD Coaching With a Middle-Aged Adult With Comorbid Mood Disorders Struggling With Job Advancement and Relationship Issues	201
12. Case Study: ADHD Coaching With an Adolescent With Executive Functioning Issues and Struggles With Parents	219

<i>Additional Resources</i>	239
<i>References</i>	251
<i>Index</i>	273
<i>About the Authors</i>	285

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many people have asked us, as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) specialists, to explain how to do ADHD coaching. Although we have conducted brief workshops or made presentations, they seemed inadequate. We have long been interested in helping others to develop their skills in this area, but outside of our training clinic and practice, this has not been possible. The first edition of this book (Prevatt & Levrini, 2015) provided a theoretical orientation, foundational knowledge, specific strategies, forms, and procedures that would help mental health practitioners to develop or improve their ADHD coaching skills. That book was quite successful; however, much new research has been conducted since that time, and we have continued to refine our approach. As outlined here, this second edition of *ADHD Coaching* was written to update the many changes in the field. Our approach not only discusses the way to do ADHD coaching, but it is based on empirically supported research documenting its efficacy. Like any therapeutic orientation, you will adapt it to fit your orientation and style.

ADHD coaching is a skill-based intervention that helps individuals diagnosed with ADHD (or who have symptoms of ADHD) to change the

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cognitions, emotional reactions, and behaviors that are frequently associated with ADHD. Coaching can be used as a complement to medication and other nonpharmacological alternatives. Most programs are based primarily on a cognitive behavior therapy approach, specifically targeting the core impairments of ADHD such as planning, time management, goal-setting, organization, and problem-solving; however, coaching programs can also address academic, vocational, emotional, and interpersonal life difficulties.

The ADHD coaching program we describe in these pages was developed over the past 20 years at the Assessment, Learning Evaluation, and Counseling Center (ALEC; formerly known as the Adult Learning Evaluation Center) in Tallahassee, Florida, in collaboration with the Psych Ed Connections model, a private practice specializing in ADHD coaching, with locations in the Washington, DC, and Jacksonville, FL, metro areas. ALEC is a not-for-profit psychoeducational center at Florida State University that provides training for graduate students in school psychology and counseling psychology. The program provides diagnostic and intervention services for high school students, college students, and adults from the local community who have learning difficulties, mental health issues, and ADHD. Although the basic program described in this book refers to the original ALEC model, at times we describe modifications as being “Psych Ed Connections,” Dr. Levrini’s private practice.

In the 2 decades we have spent developing our coaching program, much has changed in the field of ADHD. Prevalence rates have changed, two new versions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; *DSM-5*; and its text revision [*DSM-5-TR*]; American Psychiatric Association, 2013, 2022) have changed the criteria we use to diagnose ADHD, and practitioners are often now required to use the *International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11*; World Health Organization, 2025) criteria. Theories regarding the etiology of ADHD have advanced and, although debate continues, we have a better understanding of the likely brain processes involved in symptoms of ADHD. New evidence is emerging regarding late-onset ADHD. New medications are on the market that seem to have better efficacy with fewer side effects. More students with ADHD are attending college and receiving support services to help them achieve at the same rate as their peers without ADHD. Antidiscrimination laws in the workplace are providing support and protection for employees who choose to self-disclose their diagnosis. Many interventions are being promoted to help those with ADHD, and ADHD coaching is gaining acceptance as an effective clinical tool. We hope the second edition of this book will motivate you to cultivate your skills in this area. Some of you may be established

coaches, some may be early-career professionals, and some may be students in training. We do not believe that this book alone will make you an expert. We hope you will use it in conjunction with conference presentations and workshops, as well as supervised clinical experience. If you are a graduate student, we hope you will find practicum and internship opportunities to expand your skills.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS BOOK

Chapter 1 is a basic overview of ADHD. It includes updated prevalence rates, common symptoms, and types of impairment. We cover how ADHD may manifest in childhood and adolescence but focus more on college students and adults. We explain the etiology of ADHD and how it relates to executive functioning. We discuss common comorbidities and conclude with an extensive discussion of *DSM-5-TR* and *ICD* diagnoses of ADHD, as well as late-onset ADHD. Chapter 2 provides a general overview of ADHD coaching, including new research on the empirical evidence of its effectiveness. This is followed in Chapter 3 by a more specific description of the underlying theories and principles used in our ADHD coaching approach. There is updated information on disability rights relevant for those with a diagnosis of ADHD. New research in this chapter includes refinements in the theory of how executive functioning leads to impairment, the effects of medication on ADHD, and the importance of screening for substance abuse issues before beginning treatment. Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate how these principles can be applied in practice and explain the working elements of our coaching program. Here, the reader will learn a step-by-step approach to conducting coaching, complete with forms and rating scales. Chapter 4 focuses on the initial stages of working with a client (evaluating for suitability, doing an initial intake), and Chapter 5 discusses the middle and concluding stages of coaching and includes more samples of specific measures and techniques.

Chapter 6 goes into detail about several of our favorite coaching strategies. These include the ADHD Life Wheel, the Inspiration Toolbox, the Decision-Making Table, the Juggling Exercise, the Mental Flexibility Exercise, and the Eisenhower Matrix. Strategies are grouped according to the types of goals clients may set like improving social skills, healthy living and life skills, or decision-making. There are so many resources available that it is not possible to list all of them, but Chapter 6 provides some good basic strategies and techniques. The chapter concludes with a resources section that provides information on various tools you and your clients

may find useful, including planners, timers, apps and technology, and graphic organizers. Chapter 7 discusses the business of coaching and how to develop one's own practice and includes a list of resources to help you get started.

The five case example chapters illustrate specific goals and objectives used in various types of cases. These cases are based on clients with whom we have worked; however, all descriptions have been altered to disguise the clients' identities. Although the general principles in this book apply to clients of all ages, we focus primarily on adults and older adolescents. We do not recommend individual ADHD coaching for children; rather, we find that in the primary grades, the parents will almost always need to be involved. Parents (or teachers) will be involved in planning behavioral management plans and implementing rewards or consequences. The case examples include Lancia, a young professional adult with career issues (Chapter 8); Chris, a middle-aged professional adult with a variety of concerns (Chapter 9); Patrick, a college student with both academic issues and lifestyle issues (Chapter 10, which is new to this edition); Mira, a middle-aged adult with coexisting mood disorder (Chapter 11, which is also new to this edition); and Apple, an adolescent with academic issues (Chapter 12). Many of the forms and worksheets mentioned in this text are available online (<https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/adhd-coaching-second-edition>; see the Resources tab).

We have found that ADHD coaching is one of the most rewarding areas of clinical practice. Our clients are typically motivated, engaging, and enjoyable to work with. ADHD is a treatable condition, and we see remarkable gains over time. We hope this book facilitates your own work with this inspiring population.