

Application of Self-Efficacy Theory in Counseling Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Authors : Nancy A. Delich, Stephen D. Roberts

Abstract : This case study explores using self-efficacy theory in counseling deaf and hard of hearing students in one California school district. Self-efficacy is described as the confidence a student has for performing a set of skills required to succeed at a specific task. When students need to learn a skill, self-efficacy can be a major factor in influencing behavioral change. Self-efficacy is domain specific, meaning that students can have high confidence in their abilities to accomplish a task in one domain, while at the same time having low confidence in their abilities to accomplish another task in a different domain. The communication isolation experienced by deaf and hard of hearing children and adolescents can negatively impact their belief about their ability to navigate life challenges. There is a need to address issues that impact deaf and hard of hearing students' social-emotional development. Failure to address these needs may result in depression, suicidal ideation, and anxiety among other mental health concerns. Self-efficacy training can be used to address these socio-emotional developmental issues with this population. Four sources of experiences are applied during an intervention: (a) enactive mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological and affective states. This case study describes the use of self-efficacy training with a coed group of 12 deaf and hard of hearing high school students who experienced bullying at school. Beginning with enactive mastery experience, the counselor introduced the topic of bullying to the group. The counselor educated the students about the different types of bullying while teaching them the terminology, signs and their meanings. The most effective way to increase self-efficacy is through extensive practice. To better understand these concepts, the students practiced through role-playing with the goal of developing self-advocacy skills. Vicarious experience is the perception that students have about their capabilities. Viewing other students advocating for themselves, cognitively rehearsing what actions they will and will not take, and teaching each other how to stand up against bullying can strengthen their belief in successfully overcoming bullying. The third source of self-efficacy beliefs is verbal persuasion. It occurs when others express belief in the capabilities of the student. Didactic training and pedagogic materials on bullying were employed as part of the group counseling sessions. The fourth source of self-efficacy appraisals is physiological and affective states. Students expect positive emotions to be associated with successful skilled performance. When students practice new skills, the counselor can apply several strategies to enhance self-efficacy while reducing and controlling emotional and physical states. The intervention plan incorporated all four sources of self-efficacy training during several interactive group sessions regarding bullying. There was an increased understanding around the issues of bullying, resulting in the students' belief of their ability to perform protective behaviors and deter future occurrences. The outcome of the intervention plan resulted in a reduction of reported bullying incidents. In conclusion, self-efficacy training can be an effective counseling and teaching strategy in addressing and enhancing the social-emotional functioning with deaf and hard of hearing adolescents.

Keywords : counseling, self-efficacy, bullying, social-emotional development, mental health, deaf and hard of hearing students

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