

Education strategies in National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) programs.

Brenna Swanson, MS, RDN, LRD, CDCES, NBC-HWC
Cheryl Hunter, PhD

Introduction

Extensive studies highlight the effectiveness of health and wellness coaching (HWC) in preventing and managing chronic diseases. Lifestyle has an increasing impact on morbidity and mortality caused by chronic conditions. This key career field will address lifestyle change and requires knowledge and skill in theories and methodologies, including motivational interviewing, self-determination theory, and behavior change theory.

Since its inception in 2016, the NBHWC has emerged as a leader with over 122 programs and 10,000 coaches. The NBHWC has defined HWC and established comprehensive training competencies.

This research explores education strategies utilized in NBHWC programs.

Methods

- Qualitative analysis of program coordinators and instructors
- twelve of 117 responded to a survey and completed the semi-structured one-on-one interviews
- Female (11) and male (one)
- Fall of 2023
- Transcription, coding, and grouping using a top-down approach.
- Codes were analyzed using a thematic analysis

Results

For program coordinators, experiential learning, feedback, discussion, and assessment are extra important in the curriculum for the NBHWC programs.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: “When we want to test certain skills like we want someone to have the experience with talking about diabetes...we use more role-play.”

- Role play
- Peer coaching
- Real life

Results (continued)

FEEDBACK: “Our mentor coaches are credentialed...They give our coaching students feedback regarding their coaching process...Typically, they're not academicians at all. They're practicing coaches where that is their primary job.”

- Experiential practice
- Mentorship

DISCUSSION: “I don't know how you teach the coaching process without heavy discussion. You know, and pointing things out. What do you guys think could have gone this way? What if she would have said this? What do you think would have happened?”

- Small & large group
- Sense of community

ASSESSMENT: “We do have a written exam at the end, so they can test their knowledge in that way.”

- Exam
- Practical skills assessment

Conclusions

- Research on pedagogy informs how program coordinators/instructors develop curricula for teaching future health coaches.
- Instructors want to be effective and efficient in instructional practice to
 - improve the student experience,
 - increase chances of success on the NBHWC exam,
 - and add to the rigor and progress of the health and wellness coaching field.

More information

Brenna.joy.swanson@und.edu

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to my research advisor Dr. Cheryl Hunter.