

Article

Promote self-awareness among health professionals through self-coaching intervention. A protocol of a randomized controlled trial

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Abstract

Self-awareness is a crucial aspect of personality development and a key concept in psychology. It refers to the ability to understand oneself, including thoughts, feelings, and behaviors at a given time. Being self-aware means being able to recognize and understand one's own needs, desires, limitations and values, as well as reflecting on how we relate to others and the world around us. This research project presents a randomized controlled trial designed to evaluate the impact of self-coaching on self-awareness. Its main objective is to investigate whether this approach can increase self-awareness among participants. The self-coaching method will be implemented through a structured journal that aims to guide participants in achieving a greater understanding of themselves and their abilities. Participants in the study will be randomly assigned to two groups: an experimental group where participants will be taught the self-coaching method and a control group that will receive a video on self-awareness through a Youtube platform. The results obtained will be analyzed to assess any significant differences in self-awareness between the two groups, thus offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of this approach in promoting self-awareness.

Keywords: coaching, self-awareness; self-coaching; wellbeing.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, the field of psychology has largely shifted from treating mental illness to promoting well-being [1]. In particular, Coaching represents an

effective method to improve personal intuition and to shape and reinforce desired behaviors in different contexts [2].

According to Passmore et al. "Coaching is a Socratic dialogue, focused on the future, between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client), that is meant to stimulate self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant " [3].

According to the International Coaching Federation (2015) the key principle of coaching is collaborating with clients in a creative and challenging process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potentials (ICF, 2015).

Several aspects are common to almost all forms of coaching, such as the fundamental hypothesis that people have an innate ability to grow and develop, as well as the ability to focus on building solutions and processes to achieve goals more than just analyzing problems. In addition, the coaching process is seen as a systematic process and is typically intended to promote continuous self-directed learning and personal growth [2].

Experiencing personal growth and developing oneself are essential goals in coaching to promote self-awareness. This can be broadly defined as the extent to which people are consciously aware of their internal states and their interactions or relationships with others. Self-awareness has long been seen by practitioners and researchers as both a primary means of alleviating psychological distress and, as the path to self-development for psychologically healthy individuals. [4]. The importance of self-awareness goes beyond well-being and mental health to include substantial impacts on daily functioning [4].

Being self-aware helps to recognize and reduce stress, improves interpersonal relationships, prevents burnout, improves communication skills and helps develop empathy and resilience. In healthcare, being self-aware is essential in improving critical thinking as well as decision-making and inter-relational skills [5].

Research on the effects of coaching supports its popularity: studies have again demonstrated the positive effects of coaching on both well-being (e.g., stress reduction and training) and performance outcomes (e.g., goal achievement) [1].

An alternative to traditional coaching is self-coaching, which allows you to cultivate "your personal development by accessing your inner wisdom" [6]. In traditional coaching, an outside guide is involved, usually a trained professional. Self-coaching, on the other hand, is an internal process capable of promoting self-control, personal development and introspection. Both approaches can be complementary to each other, with traditional coaching providing external perspectives and self-coaching promoting intrinsic growth [6].

David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva [7] state that: “organizations and individuals move in the direction of the questions asked”. On the basis of what has been said, it could be equally true that: giving the employee of a company the opportunity to question himself in an appropriate way, with respect to situations that concerns himself, both at a professional and private level, could be useful to the relationship that the latter has with himself and the organization. An introspective activity that promotes self-awareness, such as that favored by self-coaching, would create a sounding board which could positively influence the entire working community. In this regard, the self-coaching method called S.M.I.L.E. [8] has been created.

The aim of the study is testing the effectiveness of the S. M. I. L. E. self-coaching method in a group of health professionals through the assessment of self-awareness, psychological well-being and perceived stress.

Methods

Study design and population

Randomized and controlled study directed to health personnel of the Unit of Cardiological Intensive Care, Teaching Hospital Policlinico Umberto I in Rome and Residents in Public health and Occupational Medicine of Sapienza University of Rome. The study will be carried out in a time frame of 45 days scheduled between April and May 2024 (14 nurses, 3 physiotherapists, 5 specialists, 2 structured doctors, 10 residents).

Preliminarily, the staff involved in the research project will be informed and informed consent is sought from them for inclusion in the study. In the first phase we will proceed to randomization of the sample with the formation of an experimental group called SML, and a control group called CNT. The experimental group will be given a self-coaching diary containing the S.M.I.L.E. method. The control group will be given the link to follow an online self-awareness video via Youtube platform.

Description of the tool and how to compile

The self-coaching tool (S. M. I. L. E.) consists of a paper diary form to complete with one's reflections. The purpose of the diary is to focus the participant's attention and reflection on five areas of their life: relational; personal autonomy, leadership, life purpose and strategic thinking. The subject will be asked open-ended questions in the style of coaching. In order to promote self-awareness and reflection it will be recommended that the diary be completed at times of the day when the subject feels it is most appropriate, away from distractions.

Data collection

The first phase of the study includes the administration, to both study groups, of the Italian version of the SAOQ (self-awareness outcome questionnaire), PWS (Psychological Wellbeing Scale) and PSS (Perceived Stress Scale) in anonymous closed-ended form. In the second phase the self coaching diary S. M. I. L. E will be assigned to the experimental group (SML).

The SML group will be briefed on how to fill in the questionnaire through a specific seminar.

Interviews with the experimental group will be held in the premises of the UOC Cardiological Intensive Care Unit.

The third phase will include a follow up period. Every two weeks, both CNT and SML groups will be given an Italian version of PWS (18 item) and PSS (10 item). At the end of the 45 days, both groups will be given the PWS, PSS and SAOQ scales.

The fourth phase will involve data collection and statistical analysis.

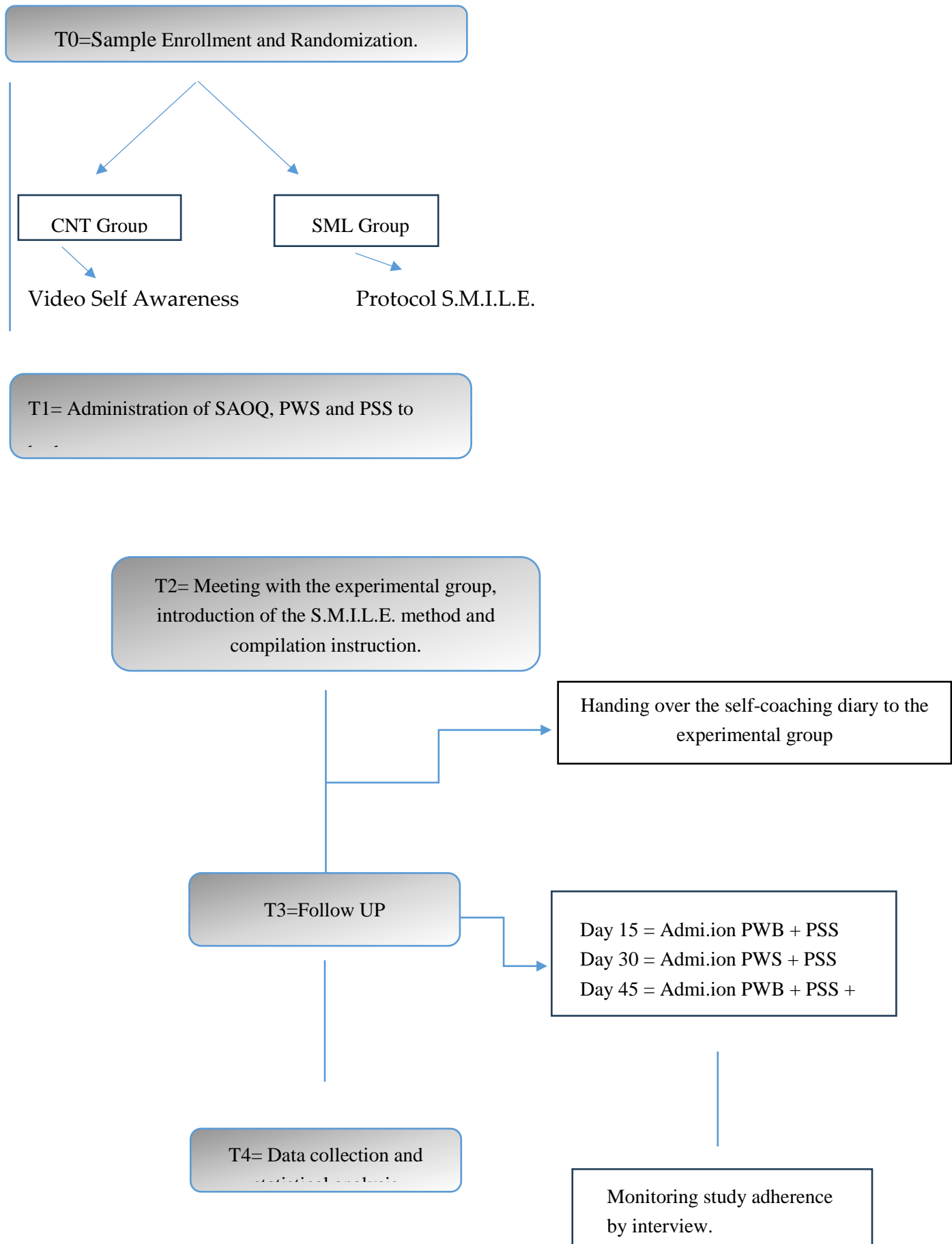
Data analysis

For the sample size calculations, the following parameters were used:

- Mean and DS of the scale Reflective Self-development SAOQ 4.23 (0.42)
- Increase in SAOQ in the experimental group by 50%: 6.34
- Increase in SAOQ in the control group by 30%: 5.80
- Mean 1 = 5,80 - Mean 2 = 6.34 - SD = 0.42
- Significance = 0.05; Power = 80%
- Sample Size 9 (each group)
 - 18 (overall)

Based on a possible dropout of 10% of participants, it is estimated to have to enroll 10 people in each group. Statistical analysis will involve the use of non-parametric tests. Mann-Whitney test, in particular, will be used for the evaluation of the differences in the two groups for quantitative variables.

Flow chart



VARIABLES OF INTEREST

Dependent variable

The main variable of interest concerns self-awareness, measurable through the Italian version of (self-awareness outcomes questionnaire) SAOQ which include the following subscales:

Reflexive Self-development (RSD)

Acceptance (Acc)

Proactive at work (Pro)

Emotional involvement

Independent Variables

Other variables of interest will be taken into consideration such as:

Psychological well-being evaluable through the Italian version of the PWS (18 items) and perceived stress through Perceived Stress Scale (10 items).

The following socio-demographic variables will be considered: Age; Sex; Marital status; Children; Region of residence; Level of education; Profession; Seniority; Service area.

CONCLUSIONS

From this research study one might expect that self-coaching participants will show greater self-confidence, better stress management, and greater resilience to everyday challenges.

In addition, a positive link between self-coaching and self-awareness may emerge, highlighting how working on these issues can have a significant impact on the quality of life of the people involved in the study. The expected results could contribute to the validation of the effectiveness of self-coaching as a tool for personal development and the promotion of the importance of self-awareness in the path of individual growth. This type of research could therefore have a positive impact both at the individual and at the collective level, offering new perspectives and tools for personal improvement.

From the union of the results, taking into account the existing literature, it would be possible to improve what are the tools and methods of psychosocial risk management in healthcare companies and help to emphasize the research related to coaching.

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