



“College Coaching, ADHD and Self-Advocacy”

It is that time of year again....the time our young adult children to leave for university. For most parents, there is a certain degree of angst. For those of us who have children with a history of ADHD, executive functioning challenges or a learning disability, the worry is magnified. Will my son keep up with his assignments? Will my daughter get into “the wrong crowd” because of her impulsivity issues? I know he is registered with the disability office for extra time on test and assignments....but will he think to use these services?

One of the first items I assess when working with a college coaching client is their level and propensity to self-advocate. I often ask them what self-advocacy means to them. No matter where the student goes to school, the typical response is, “Well, that means I can stand up for myself.” This is a perfectly acceptable response and sets the platform for the next level of conversation.

Self- advocacy is often inter-changeable with being self-aware. It is knowing your limitations and being self-aware in order for to communicate that you may need help. It is the ability to express your worry and anxiety when it is not always comfortable to do so. I often give the example of when you are at a very nice restaurant and the meal you ordered is absolutely dismal. Under-cooked, over-cooked, soggy - you name it! First, I ask my college student, “Would you call the waiter over immediately to ask for something else, would you ponder over it or would you just eat the meal that was served?” Going through this step by step process is important because I am entering the world of the student’s thought process.



This measure of self-advocacy is not very different than asking their professor to allow for a two day extension on a paper when the student also has two tests and another paper due on the same day!

I express that both events are a bit uncomfortable. No one wants to complain or feel vulnerable but the result is very often positive, as long as you ask in a respectful and tactful manner. A meal they are happy to eat and a paper that will be a better reflection of their ability represent the rewards of self-advocacy!

I role play with the student so they feel comfortable self-advocating since many of my clients never had experience with this in high school. My goal for them is to be confident and comfortable having these real world interactions because these skills will serve them long after college in their personal and professional lives.

For a complimentary phone consultation, please call Christine L. Robinson, M.Ed. Certified ADHD Coach/Educational Consultant at 617-842-0634 or Christine@ADDActionCoach.com.

Skype or Face time sessions are also available.
