Empathy as Healing: Lessons Learned from the UCLA GRIT Coaching Program

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UCLA GRIT Coaching Program
RISE Center
Resilience and Healing-Centered Practices

Consultant | Mentor | Optimist
Grounding Practice

Mind Dump
Journaling

Pair Share

*Introduce yourselves...*

Identities
Role/Organization
What do you hope to gain from this session?
Session Goals

Healing through Empathy: Successes of the UCLA GRIT Coaching Program

Empathy-in-Action Skill to use in daily interactions

About grit ucla
Peer coaching

strategy in which individuals of equal rank or standing coach one another towards achieving some higher level of performance

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GRIT Program Background

- GRIT: Guidance, Resilience, Integrity & Transformation
- Pilot Year: 2014-15
- Funded by Student Fees Advisory Committee and the Pritzker Foundation
- From Bruin Resource Center to RISE
To provide UCLA students with individualized support from trained peer coaches, with the aims of enhancing student resilience and improving academic and personal successes.

**Mission of GRIT**

- Empathetic listening space
- Applicable coping skills and strategies to meet goals
- Campus resources and referrals

**Some Benefits of Peer Coaching**

- Time tailored to individual needs
- Direct interaction promotes active learning
- Peer coaches reinforce their own learning by instructing others
- Students feel more comfortable and open when interacting with a peer
- Peers and students share a similar lived experience, allowing for greater understanding
- Financially efficient alternative to hiring more staff members
- Promotes positive trauma-informed practice

6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

1. SAFETY
2. TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY
3. PEER SUPPORT
4. COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY
5. EMPOWERMENT, VOICE & CHOICE
6. CULTURAL, HISTORICAL & GENDER ISSUES

SAMHSA & CDC
Coaching & Therapy Relationship

Continuum of Resilience/Wellness Services

**COACHING**
- Partnering with student in a creative process that lets them discover how to maximize their potential and success
- Focus is on present to future
- Provide tangible action steps each session
- Actively promote growth mindset

**Therapy/Counseling**
- Focuses on treating mental health issues
- Focus on past to present
- Can offer advice and guidance on how to shift behaviors

Program Infrastructure

**Program Director**
- Admin. Assistant
- Senior Coach
- 15 Peer coaches
- 3 Guardian Scholar Coaches
- 5 Student Case-Load
Training

Coaching Skills
Coaching Framework
Cultural Humility
Generous Listening, Empathy
Trauma-Informed Approach
Risk Management
Boundaries & Self-Management

Inner Grit Skills
Self-Regulation & Mindfulness
Growth Mindset and Grit
Wellness & Stress Management
Positive Psychology

Outer Grit Skills
Goal Setting/Strategizing
Assertive Communication/Advocacy
Time Management
Accessing Campus Resources

Resilience Strategies

How thoughts affect well-being
Shifting from a fixed mindset to growth
Mindfulness/Deep Breathing for Anxiety
Constructive Decision-Making
Strategic Goal-Setting
Understanding values & beliefs
Communicating authentically
Self-soothing Strategies
Resource Referral
## Risk Management

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Campus Entity</th>
<th>Function</th>
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| Program Director (PD)                  | • Conducts Coach Training  
|                                        | • Leads weekly group Case Management Meeting                             |
| Coach Case Manager (experienced Peer Coach) | • Bi-weekly small group meetings with coaches (1-2 coaches present)  
|                                        | • Meets with PD weekly to discuss cases                                   |
| Professional Staff Case Manager        | • Designated Case Manager supports high risk students as needed in conjunction with the coach |
| Counseling Center                      | • Partner closely with CAPS to cross refer/manage high risk cases         |
| Campus Assault Resources & Education (CARE) + Title IX | • Partner closely to usher students in to seek resources and victim advocacy support |
| Peer Coach Partners                    | • Coaches meet weekly with each other 1-1 to coach each other, problem solve, maintain balance |

### Program Outcomes (AY 2018-19)

- 170 Unique Students
- 25% returning
- Waitlist of 20 students/quarter
- 1,300 Coaching Sessions
10/13/19

91% participants said that their coaching experience positively impacted their ability to handle challenges as they came up. (n = 103)

86% reported feeling more confident in their ability to succeed academically & personally. (n = 49)

86% participants found this program a valuable use of their time. (n = 73)

99% participants would likely recommend this program to other students. (n = 99)

Data collected Spring 2015-Fall 2016

Our coachee student population represented through various identifiers from targeted community groups by the Bruin Resource Center. Our diverse coachee cohort received one-on-one coaching sessions with our GRIT coaches to discuss topics of stress management, mindfulness, goal setting, and more.
"I definitely realized that in order for me to perform well in anything I do, I must understand the benefit it brings me personally because everything is not always a positive experience, but [we] must still grow from them."

--Guardian Scholar Coachee Spring '16

"This program is a great way for UCLA students to have someone there for them. This campus is huge and many students do not feel that they have a person to speak with when something is wrong, or just as friends. This program has helped me to think in a positive way each and every day. I appreciate what I have learned and I will continue to teach my friends and family members about the things I learned in this program."

--GRIT Coachee
Ways to Implement this Work

- Peer Mentoring Program
- Professional Staff Coaches
- Growth Mindset in the Classroom
- Strategic Case Management
- Skill Building Workshops (Resilience Tool Kit)
- Staff/Student Leader Trainings
- Other?

Programs Served

- Imperial Valley College
- Orange Coast Community College
- Pierce College
- LA Valley College
- Cal State Long Beach
- Cal State Northridge
- UC Los Angeles
- Norco College
- College of the Canyons
- Rio Hondo College
Empathy

- “THE ABILITY TO SHARE SOMEONE ELSE’S FEELINGS.” - MIRRIAM WEBSTER
- “FEELING WITH PEOPLE.” - BRENÉ BROWN
- “ENTERING INTO ANOTHER PERSON’S FEELINGS.” - VOCABULARY.COM

Strategic Empathy
Interdependence

100% Responsibility

100% Responsibility

✓ “Just Right” Balance in the relationship
✓ Authenticity and mutual respect
✓ Balance of inner reflection and steps toward outer effort
✓ Attunement & trust

Co-Dependence

120% Responsibility

80% Responsibility

✗ Imbalance in the relationship
✗ Emotional Contagion (Too much feeling)
✗ Cognitive Contagion (Too much thinking)
Strategic Empathy

Promotes

• Biological growth
• Emotional regulation
• Connection, Safety & Healing
• Growth Mindset
• Self-Esteem
• Healthy Independence

Empathy-in-action:

Effective Praise
About Effective Praise

A targeted form of praise that seeks to identify, reinforce and link specific behaviors to a desired positive outcome.

Helps one to value their micro-efforts so that the behavior can be repeated and translated in the future.
Promotes a growth mindset and boosts confidence.

I learned how to listen to my body. It helps me with working less hours and being more productive overall.

I highly appreciate my GRIT coach for taking the time to meet with me every week to provide a space to talk openly about pretty much anything on my mind, and I believe just having that opportunity helped my mental well-being substantially.

I thought often about what my GRIT mentor would say and decided not to be too hard on myself.

Vague Praise
"I studied and studied, but I couldn't understand standard deviations. So I went to office hours and now I get it, but I felt like a loser needing to get help from my professor."

"When you felt confused, you went to office hours. That move helped you to better understand statistics. This is what successful students do. Keep reaching out for support, Claudia!"

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Example: Effective Praise

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Acknowledged specific positive behavior

Example

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Identified the Benefit
Example

“When you felt confused, you went to office hours. That move helped you to better understand statistics. This is what successful students do. Keep reaching out for support, Claudia!”

Encourage continuing the positive behavior

Let’s Practice: Effective Praise

“When I was young, I had friends and did well in school. Now, being here on this campus I feel like an outsider. It’s hard for me to be here. I don’t think this stuff is for me.”

1. **Acknowledge**: describe the positive behavior or quality you wish to reinforce

2. **Impact**: Identify the benefit of the behavior or quality

3. **Encouragement**: Applaud continued use of the behavior or quality
It makes sense that you feel isolated on campus. What’s great is that you took the brave step to share this with me, and now we can explore ways for you to make friends. This is the first step!

“...When I was young, I had friends and did well in school. Now, being here on this campus I feel like an outsider. It’s hard for me to be here. I don’t think this stuff is for me.”

Let’s Practice: Effective Praise

Effective Praise Key Points

- Praise often!
- Name the behavior
- Actively grow skills (“tough love”)
1. **Prioritize** self-care and well-being
   - Give your 100%—not more, not less
   - Honor your human capacity
   - It is not your job to “fix”
   - Model good boundaries: maintain consistent check-in to your inner experience to guide you in self-regulation
2. Invest in your continued growth and evolution
   – Get a mentor, therapist, life coach
   – Body-based practice: meditation, yoga, tai chi

3. Be awake to your story and share it!
4 Recommendations

4. You’re doing a great job! You are valuable! Celebrate your successes every day!

Key take-aways? Questions?
For more information, contact

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THANK YOU