

Trajectories of Global Self-Worth in Adolescents with ADHD: Associations with Academic, Emotional, and Social Outcomes.

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Abstract

Resilience models suggest that there are likely to be multiple trajectories of self-worth and that despite experiencing impairment, some youth with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may maintain a positive self-worth, which could buffer them against negative outcomes. The present study used a cohort-sequential longitudinal design to evaluate developmental trajectories of global self-worth in a sample of 324 middle-school-age adolescents (71% male) diagnosed with ADHD between ages 11 and 14 in predicting outcomes at age 15. Sex, medication status, and ADHD/oppositional defiant disorder symptom severity were included as covariates in the models. Using growth mixture modeling, 3 distinct self-worth trajectory groups were identified: (a) high and increasing (44.4% of participants), (b) moderate and decreasing (48.8%), and (c) low and decreasing (6.8%). Participants with high and increasing global self-worth were less likely to exhibit co-occurring depressive symptoms and had better social functioning and higher grades at age 15 relative to those in either decreasing trajectory. Implications of these findings for monitoring and supporting positive global self-worth for adolescents with ADHD are discussed.