



Beverly H. Rohman



Family Focused on ADD

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), or Attention Deficit / Hyperactive Disorder (AD/HD) as it is officially known, is the most common psychiatric disorder of childhood and often persists into adulthood. While we really don't know what exactly causes ADD, we do know that it runs in families...and it is good news!

When parents are presented with a child struggling in school and seek counsel or testing that confirms a diagnosis of ADD, they often learn a lot about themselves. Reflecting on their own similar patterns of behavior in school --- organization and time management, focus, stimulation, impatience, and other characteristics --- is usually the first clue that parents or adults have in identifying their own past and present challenges...and possible ADD. Understanding the influences that ADD has on the parent, the child and the family is primary to a happy, successful and fully functioning family life.

“Like many traits of behavior and temperament, ADD is genetically influenced, but not genetically determined,” says Dr. Edward Hallowell. He believes that “environment combines with genetics to create ADD. (Experts) estimate that about 5 to 8 percent of a random sample of children have ADD. But if one parent has it, the chances of a child developing it shoot up to about 30 percent; if both parents have it, the chances leap to more than 50 percent. But genetics don't tell the whole story. You can also acquire ADD through a lack of oxygen at birth; or from a head injury; or if your mother drank too much alcohol during pregnancy; or from elevated lead levels; perhaps from food allergies and environmental or chemical sensitivities; from too much television, video games, and the like; and in other ways we don't yet understand.”

Looking into family history and unraveling some of these medical and environmental realities are extremely important in the treatment of ADD. Whatever the cause or influence, finding the right treatment, therapist, coach, organizer, or other ways of dealing with the issues of ADD can help create the ADD-friendly home and life that you seek.

“ADD is a family affair,” says Dr. Patricia Quinn, developmental pediatrician, best selling author and expert on ADD. “Everyone is affected when family members have ADD, and all need to work together to create an environment in which each family member can feel and function better.” From taking good care of yourself, to education, support

networks, structure and strategies for success, she understands and promotes ways to manage the needs of the entire family. Dr. Quinn will speak more to the management of ADD at an evening event at the Avalon Theatre on September 20, 2007, from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm. For information or to register on line go to www.mhamdes.org

Unlike some medical problems, ADD touches everybody in the family in a daily, significant way. It affects early morning behavior; it affects meal time; it affects vacation; it affects busy times; it affects quiet time. We need to learn how to let each member of the family become a part of the solution to any of the problems and pains that exist. And, if you are a parent and also have ADD and are struggling, it has a special impact on the whole family. Before you can help your child with their learning issues or ADD, you need to first get help for yourself. If you are having trouble organizing your own life, how can you manage the schedules, daily activities and belongings of your children? Learning about your ADD and how it can be used as a positive force in the family is key. Finding a support system that will help you discover your strengths and talents while getting help to develop structures, skills, and strategies that are so useful not just for those who have ADD, but useful for life. Helping to discover ways to view ADD as a gift will have huge benefits for your own life and your child's. Few people can match the energy, creativity and out of the box thinking that individuals with ADD possess. Always keep in mind the positive aspects of ADD -- energy, creativity, intuition, and good-heartedness. Many people with ADD do extremely well in life. When ADD seems to be the primary focus in your family or your life realize that you are on an amazing journey and life is an exciting adventure. That's the good news..... and smile!

For more information about families or adults struggling with learning differences and ADD, or to learn more about the event on September 20, 2007, please contact The Learning Connections, at 12 West Dover Street, Easton, MD 21601, 410-763-7097, or write to beverly@thelearningconnections.net

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