



ADHD STRENGTHS

AN OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK TO SHARE WITH YOUR KIDS

IF YOU HAVE A CHILD WITH ADHD, YOU ARE PROBABLY
WORKING HARD TO HELP THEM DEAL WITH THEIR
SYMPTOMS AND THRIVE.

THIS PRINTABLE EXPLORES SOME POSITIVE ASPECTS THAT
COME WITH THE ADHD TERRITORY

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HEY, THERE! HAVE YOU BEEN STRUGGLING WITH ...

- ✓ LOSING THINGS
- ✓ FORGETTING SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS
- ✓ SITTING STILL AT SCHOOL
- ✓ GETTING FRUSTRATED EASILY

DO PEOPLE TELL YOU THAT ...

- ✓ YOU TALK TOO MUCH
- ✓ YOU INTERRUPT WHEN OTHERS SPEAK
- ✓ YOU DO THINGS WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES



SOME KIDS WHO STRUGGLE WITH THOSE THINGS HAVE
SOMETHING CALLED ADHD.

THEIR BRAIN HAS DIFFICULTIES PAYING ATTENTION, SLOWING
DOWN, AND THINKING BEFORE ACTING.

THERE ARE MANY STRATEGIES THAT CAN HELP WITH THAT. AND,
ALTHOUGH IT OFTEN FEELS HARD TO KEEP UP WITH EVERYTHING
GOING ON AROUND, THERE IS ALSO SOME GOOD NEWS

SOMETIMES, THE THINGS THAT FEEL LIKE BIG PROBLEMS TODAY,
TURN OUT TO BE SUPERPOWERS IN THE FUTURE.

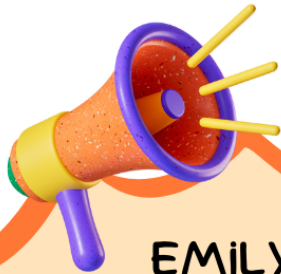


LET'S EXPLORE SOME
SUPERPOWERS OF ADHD...

THE SUPERPOWER OF ...

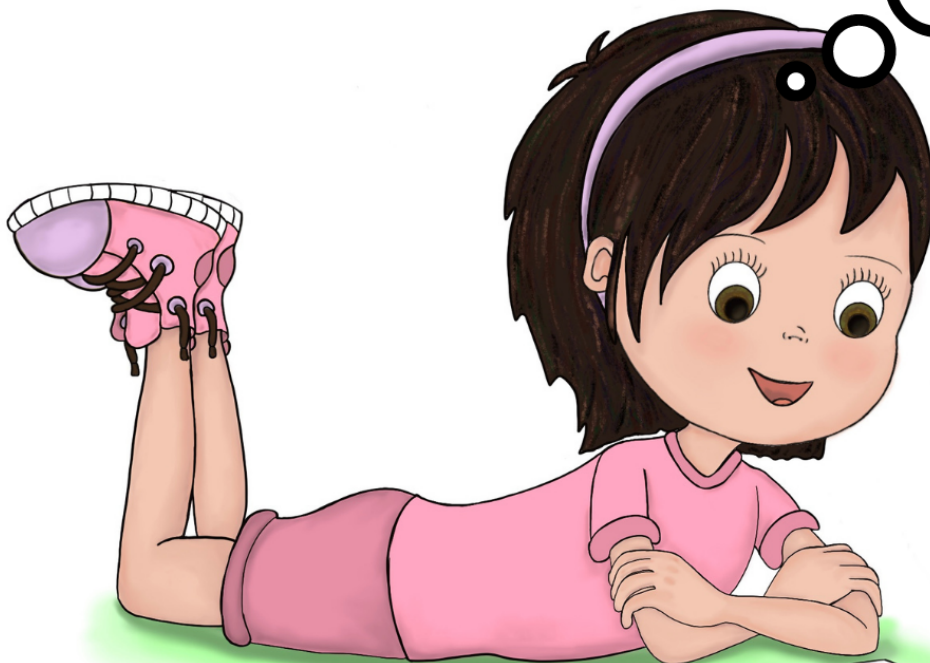
HYPERFOCUS

YOU CONCENTRATE ON THE THINGS YOU LOVE SO MUCH
THAT YOU LOSE TRACK OF EVERYTHING ELSE GOING ON
AROUND YOU



EMILY, I'VE
ALREADY CALLED
YOU A THOUSAND
TIMES!

SO, THIS IS HOW
YOU TRAIN A
DRAGON!
I WISH I HAD A PET
DRAGON!



THE SUPERPOWER OF ...

ENDLESS ENERGY

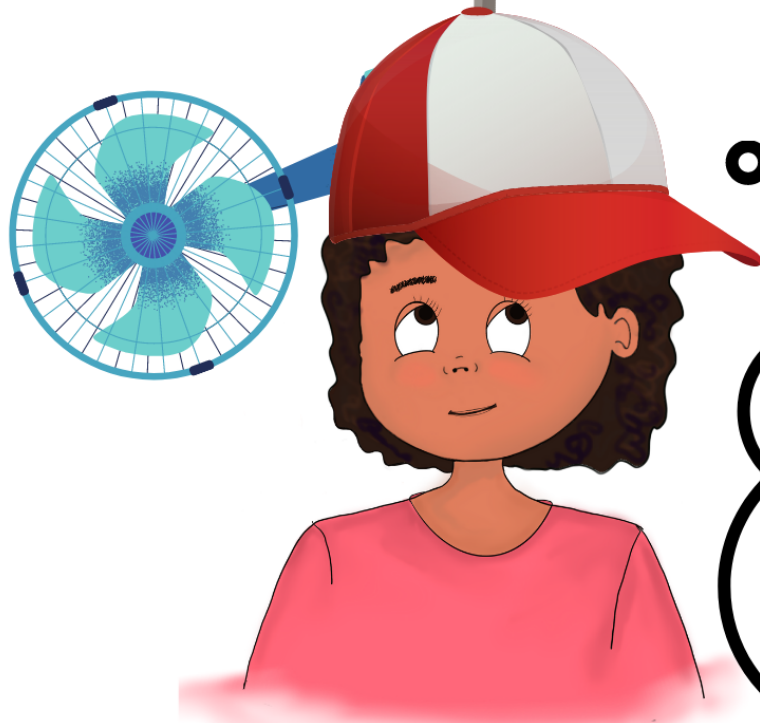
SOME KIDS WITH ADHD HAVE WHAT IS CALLED HYPERACTIVITY. IF THAT'S YOU, YOU MAY HAVE REALIZED THAT YOU HAVE HIGH LEVELS OF ENERGY EVEN WHEN EVERYBODY ELSE SEEMS TO NEED A BREAK.

OH, COME ON! GET UP! LET'S DO A RACE NOW!



THE SUPERPOWER OF ... **CREATIVITY**

YOUR MIND IS FULL OF IDEAS THAT KEEP POPPING UP AT A GREAT PACE. WELL, THAT MAY MEAN THAT YOU ARE A VERY CREATIVE PERSON THAT COMES UP WITH LOTS OF INTERESTING AND UNEXPECTED IDEAS



AND THIS IS THE
PERFECT YEAR-
ROUND CAP, WITH
AN UMBRELLA FOR
THE RAIN AND A FAN
FOR SUMMER

THE SUPERPOWER OF ...

SPONTANEITY

SOME PEOPLE CALL IT IMPULSIVITY. I CALL IT
SPONTANEITY!

SOMETIMES YOU COME UP WITH THESE GREAT IDEAS AND
THEY NEED TO HAPPEN **RIGHT NOW!**

MOM, I'VE INVITED
ALL MY CLASS FOR
A PLAYDATE!



THE SUPERPOWER OF ...

DARING TO TRY!

TAKING RISKS CAN BE A BAD THING WHEN WE GET
OURSELVES IN A DANGEROUS SITUATION.
BUT THERE ARE ALSO SITUATIONS IN LIFE WHEN BEING ABLE
TO "DARE TO TRY" CAN BRING MANY BENEFITS, LIKE WHEN
PEOPLE DECIDE TO START A BUSINESS



THE SUPERPOWER OF ...

STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE

IF YOU HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WHAT IS RIGHT AND
WRONG, FAIRNESS, JUSTICE, SINCERITY...
THEN, THIS IS ANOTHER OF YOUR SUPERPOWERS!



THE SUPERPOWER OF ...

GREAT CONVERSATIONS

ALL THESE IDEAS BUBBLING IN YOUR MIND CAN SHAPE UP
AS FUN AND ENGAGING CONVERSATIONS!

WHAT DO YOU DO
OVER THE
WEEKEND

WHAT IS FASTER A
DOG OR A CAT?



I GOT SOME SUPER
COOL STICKERS,
WANNA SEE THEM?

SHOULD WE GO
FOR AN ICE-
CREAM?

THE SUPERPOWER OF ...

NOTHING GOES UNNOTICED!

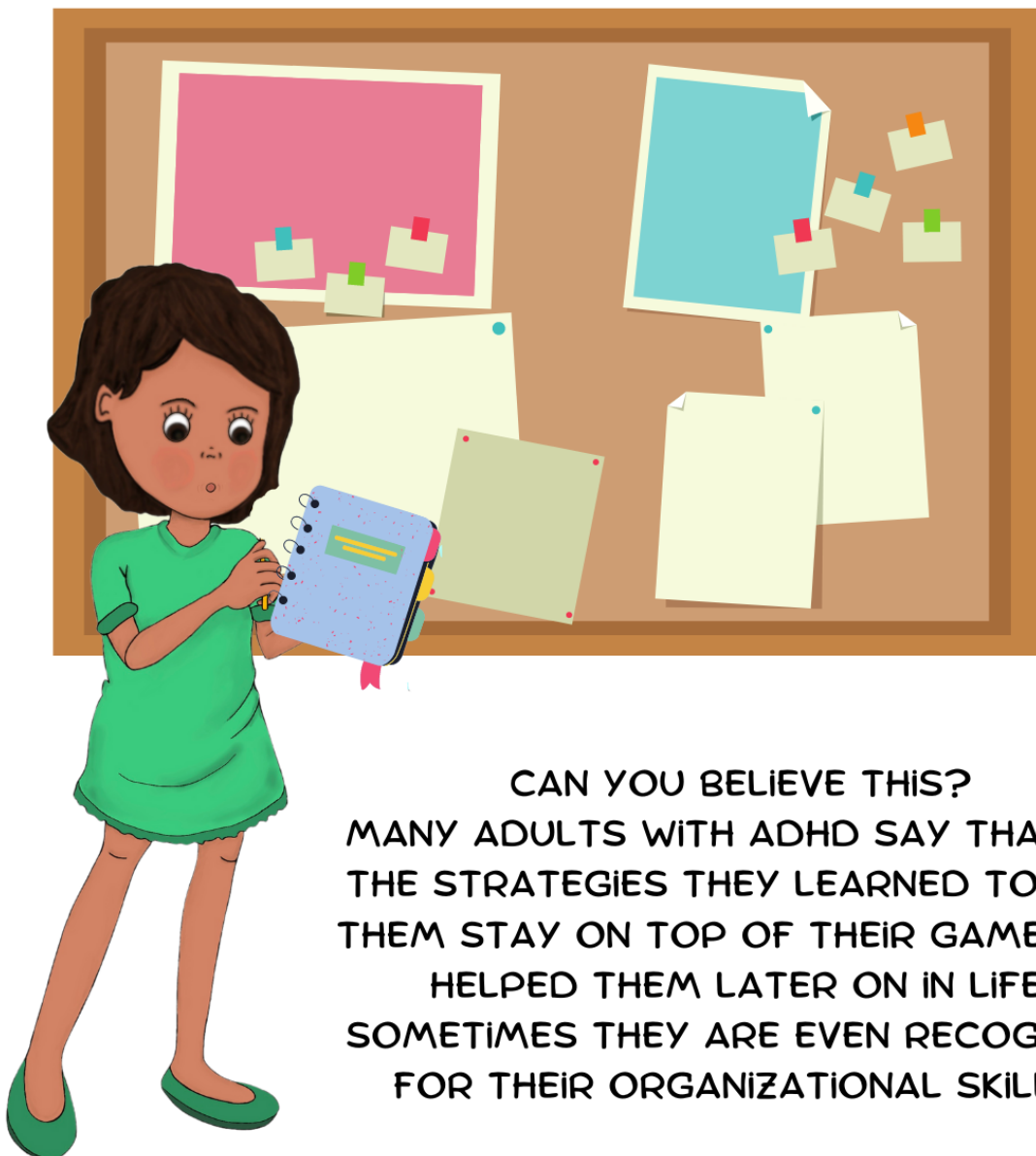
SOME KIDS WITH ADHD GET EASILY DISTRACTED BY
ANYTHING HAPPENING AROUND THEM.
COULD WE SAY THEY HAVE AMAZING OBSERVATIONAL
SKILLS?



THE SUPERPOWER OF ... **ORGANIZATION**

SURPRISE, SURPRISE!

IT IS SO DIFFICULT TO KEEP UP WITH ROUTINES, SCHOOL HOMEWORK, AND SO MANY OTHER THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO LEARN STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK (TO-DO LISTS, FILING SYSTEMS, WEEKLY PLANNERS, SCHOOL PLANNERS, GOAL PLANNERS...)



**CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS?
MANY ADULTS WITH ADHD SAY THAT ALL
THE STRATEGIES THEY LEARNED TO HELP
THEM STAY ON TOP OF THEIR GAME HAVE
HELPED THEM LATER ON IN LIFE.
SOMETIMES THEY ARE EVEN RECOGNIZED
FOR THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS!**

OTHER RESOURCES

LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES:

- [ANGER CONTROL FOR KIDS](#)
- [EMOTIONS \(WORKSHEETS, PUZZLES & PLAYDOUGH MATS\)](#)
- [ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR KIDS](#)
- [POSITIVE AFFIRMATION CARDS](#)
- [YOGA CARDS FOR KIDS](#)
- [FOOD JOURNAL FOR PICKY EATERS](#)



Window of Tolerance

Hyperarousal



Point of overwhelm



@creative.clinical.psychologist

Regulation

Optimal
(window of tolerance)

Escalation trigger



Feeling OK

©Juliet Young

Hypoarousal



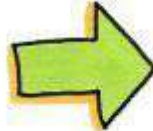
Comfort and something sweet

REFRAME THE BEHAVIOUR

"KIDS DO WELL IF THEY CAN"

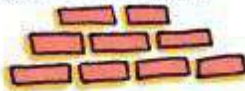
~ROSS GREENE

WON'T



CAN'T

• JUDGMENTAL



- WILLFUL
- DEFIANT



• CURIOUS



- TOO MANY STRESSORS
- SKILLS DEFICITS



ADULT'S MINDSET

VIEW OF CHILD

THOUGHTS

RESPONSE

CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

HE'S LAZY
SHE JUST WANTS
ATTENTION
...RUDE!



- REWARDS & PUNISHMENTS

WHAT'S GETTING IN
THEIR WAY?
HOW CAN I HELP?

- FIND & REMOVE BARRIERS



- FRUSTRATION
- GUILT / SHAME



- SUPPORTED
- STRENGTHENED



"SEE A CHILD DIFFERENTLY, YOU SEE A DIFFERENT CHILD"

~Dr. Stuart Shanker

When kids exhibit challenging behaviour we can be "STRESS DETECTIVES"...finding and removing barriers.

- FIND STRESSORS → REDUCE THEM
- FIND UNMET NEEDS → MEET THEM
- FIND SKILLS DEFICITS → TEACH THEM

@kwiens62



.....THE HAND BRAIN MODEL.....

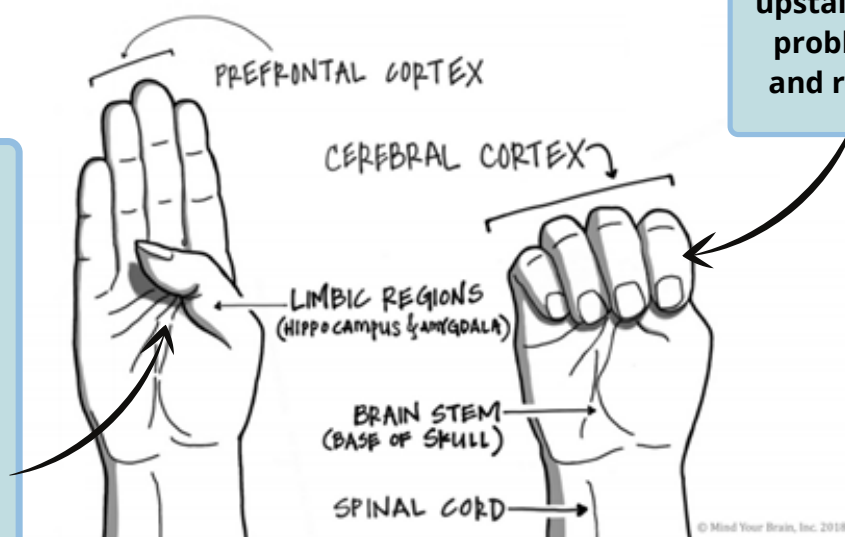
(DAN SIEGAL)

When we become very upset, anxious, or angry it can be very difficult to process what someone is saying to us, understand our emotions, and think clearly. When this happens we have 'flipped our lid'!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE 'FLIP OUR LID'?

A simple way of explaining what happens when we 'flip our lid' is through the Hand Brain Model by Dan Siegal. We are going to demonstrate Dan Siegal's hand brain model to help you recognise what is happening to your child's brain (and yours too) when they are dysregulated (i.e. very upset, angry, or anxious). You can use this model to help your child understand what is going on in their brain during these moments.

Hand Model of the Brain



Here, your thumb represents the limbic regions which has also been called our **'downstairs brain'**. This part of our brain is the emotional part and is in charge of our **big feelings**. It really cares about **protecting us and keeping us safe**.

The fingers covering our thumb represents the cerebral cortex, or our **'upstairs brain'**, where our **problem solving, logic and reasoning occurs**.

Here are some YouTube clips that may be useful for you to watch about this model.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CpRY9-MIHA&t=72s>

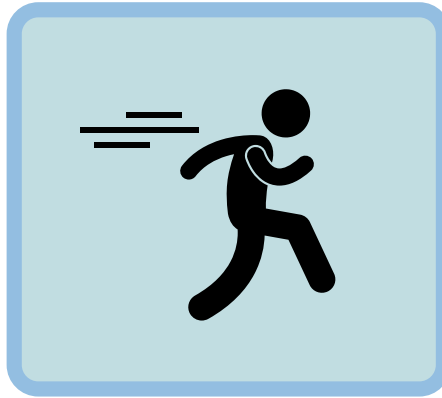
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTnCMxEnnv8>

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

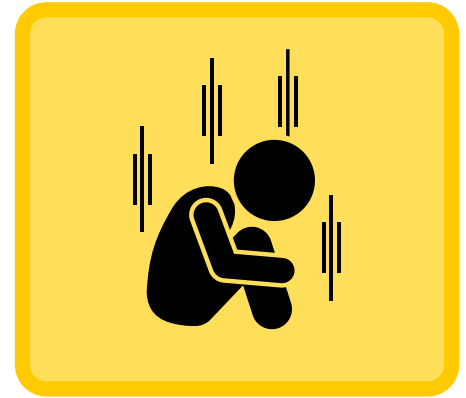
When these two parts work together, we can think and act logically and calmly. However, when we become dysregulated and our 'lid flips' (fingers uncover the thumb), the 'downstairs brain' regions are working alone and acting on pure emotions to protect and keep us safe. Without the 'upstairs brain' helping to make good decisions or problem solve, the 'downstairs brain' moves quickly into the protective fight, flight or freeze modes.



Throw something or lash out (**fight**)



Run away (**flight**)



Become unresponsive to questions or demands (**freeze**)

Some children 'flip their lid' multiple times throughout the day, and some may be able to hold on during day (e.g. in school) but then 'flip their lid' when they get home. The triggers for your child 'flipping their lid' may be obvious e.g. new situations, loud noises, or they could be something that isn't so obvious e.g. smell, a memory etc.

WHAT TO DO IN THE MOMENT?

- 1.The first step is to reflect on how you are feeling. It can be easy in these moments to become dysregulated (upset) ourselves. We are all human and 'flipped lid' behaviours can be very challenging.
- 2.Take a moment to regulate and calm yourself. Look at the regulation strategies for tips on how to do this and ensure your 'lid is on' so that you can respond calmly.
- 3.You might need to take some time for yourself, and that is ok. If you are unable to walk away from the situation, due to your child needing you to keep them safe, you can verbalise your feelings e.g. 'I am feeling very overwhelmed, so I am going to take some deep breaths to help me calm down.' You can ask them to do this with you.
- 4.By responding calmly in these situations you will be modelling the behaviour to your child. During this time the tone of your voice is very important. Children can become more dysregulated when adults use aggressive or loud tones. A calm, sing-song voice that matches their intensity will help you to slowly bring them down to your calmness level.
- 5.Use PACE (go to PACE resource for examples).

A Dopamine Menu Template for ADHD Brains



Use this dopamenu template to create your own list of pleasurable, healthy activities to stimulate your ADHD brain when its battery has run out. Visit additu.de/dopamenu for more ideas.

Appetizers

Quick activities (one minute of jumping jacks, working on a crossword puzzle, listening to a favorite song...)

Entrées

Time-consuming activities (playing guitar, walking the dog, cooking or baking...)

Sides

Activities to do alongside boring tasks (using a fidget, listening to an audiobook, enlisting a body double...)

Desserts

Time-sucking, unproductive 'treats' (scrolling social media, ruminating, texting...)

Specials

Occasional activities that require planning or money (taking a vacation, attending a concert, getting a massage...)

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Explaining ADHD to Teachers

Share this infographic, created by Chris A. Zeigler Dendy and Alex Zeigler, with your teacher (artwork adapted by ADDitude magazine).

The Tip of the Iceberg:

The Obvious ADHD Behaviors

Hyperactivity

- > Can't sit still
- > Fidgets
- > Talks a lot
- > Runs or climbs a lot
- > Always on the go

Impulsivity

- > Lacks self control
- > Difficulty awaiting turn
- > Blurts out
- > Interrupts
- > Intrudes

- > Talks back
- > Loses temper

Inattention

- > Disorganized
- > Doesn't follow through

- > Doesn't pay attention
- > Is forgetful
- > Doesn't seem to listen
- > Loses things
- > Late homework

THE ADHD ICEBERG

Only 1/8 of an iceberg is visible. Most of it is hidden beneath the surface.

Hidden Beneath the Surface:

The Not-So-Obvious Behaviors (2/3 have at least one other condition)

Neurotransmitter Deficits Impact Behavior

- > Insufficient levels of neurotransmitters, dopamine and norepinephrine, results in reduced brain activity.

Weak Executive Functioning

- > Working memory and recall
- > Getting started, effort
- > Internalizing language
- > Controlling emotions
- > Problem solving

Impaired Sense of Time

- > Doesn't judge passage of time accurately
- > Loses track of time
- > Often late
- > Forgets long-term

- projects or is late
- > Difficulty planning for future
- > Impatient
- > Hates waiting
- > Time creeps
- > Avoids doing homework

Sleep Disturbance (56%)

- > Impacts memory
- > Doesn't get restful sleep
- > Can't fall asleep
- > Can't wake up
- > Late for school
- > Irritable
- > Morning battles

3-Year Delayed Brain Maturation

- > Less mature
- > Less responsible
- > 18-year-old acts like 15

Not Learning Easily from Rewards and Punishment

- > Repeats misbehavior
- > May be difficult to discipline

- > Less likely to follow rules
- > Difficulty managing his own behavior
- > Doesn't study past behavior
- > Acts without sense of hindsight
- > Must have immediate rewards
- > Long-term rewards don't work
- > Doesn't examine his own behavior
- > Difficulty changing his behavior

Co-Existing Conditions

- > Anxiety (34%)
- > Depression (29%)

- > Bipolar (12%)
- > Tourette Syndrome (11%)
- > Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (4%)
- > Oppositional Defiant Disorder (54-67%)

Serious Learning Problems

- > Specific Learning Disability (25-50%)
- > Poor working memory
- > Can't memorize easily
- > Forgets teacher and parent requests
- > Slow math calculation
- > Spelling problems
- > Poor written expression
- > Difficulty writing essays
- > Slow retrieval of information

- > Poor listening and reading comprehension
- > Difficulty describing the world in words
- > Disorganization
- > Slow cognitive processing speed
- > Poor handwriting
- > Inattention
- > Impulsive learning style

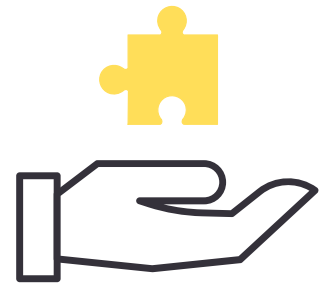
Low Frustration Tolerance

- > Difficulty controlling emotions
- > Short fuse
- > Emotionally reactive
- > Loses temper easily
- > May give up more easily
- > Doesn't stick with things
- > Speaks or acts before thinking
- > Difficulty seeing others' perspective
- > May be self-centered

ADHD is often more complex than most people realize! Like icebergs, many problems related to ADHD are not visible. ADHD may be mild, moderate, or severe, is likely to coexist with other conditions, and may be a disability for some students.

You can order the original color ADHD Iceberg poster at chrisdendy.com.

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING FOR PARENTS/CARERS



A problem behaviour can put a strain on your relationship with your child. Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) is an alternative to reward and punishment and can help you both understand each other better. Challenging behaviours are a form of communication, and indicate your child is struggling with something, it may be a way of avoiding something they don't think they can do or makes them feel anxious. It maybe they haven't learnt the necessary skill such as moving from one activity to another or something they don't understand. Shouting, using rewards and punishments, or telling your child what they should be doing may not work if there is an obstacle in the way - although there may be a place for using natural or logical consequences.

CPS is a way of talking and listening that helps a child/young person build problem solving skills and aids cognitive and social-emotional development. The focus is working together rather than prescribing or imposing solutions. It can take a few conversations to solve the problem together but that will feel much better than shouting and pleading. It can be hard, these conversations are not easy, but with practice they start becoming more natural and more creative. Safety always comes first though.

Try not to think you know what the solution is and you're trying to get your child to just to do what you want.

Have an open mind to finding a solution together. If you are genuinely committed to finding a solution together then your child will be to.

THE THREE STAGES OF CPS

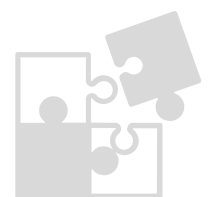
THE EMPATHY STAGE



THE PROBLEM STAGE



THE INVITATION STAGE



THE EMPATHY STAGE



When there has been a behaviour that has been challenging, don't deal with the situation there and then especially if feelings are high. Do what must be done to make the situation safe then wait until you are both calm before you start problem solving.

"You didn't come home at the time we agreed. What happened?" Then listen especially for feelings, ask questions to explore what was happening for your child, why the problem may happen in some situations and not others. Don't assume you know what is going on - use PACE and take your time so you are sure you understand your child's reasons.

THE PROBLEM STAGE



Here you introduce your perspective on the behaviour and why it is a problem either for your child or for others including yourself.

"The thing is, I was very worried where you were. And I was also concerned that if you don't get enough sleep it's going to make school harder the next day." There is no need to lecture, judge or insist what your child does just to state clearly why the problem is the problem.

THE INVITATION STAGE



Now you ask your child if you can work together to find a solution to stop this happening next time. There is no need or benefit in arguing about the past, the focus is on the future.

"I wonder if we could find a way that works for both of us. So that you could get to spend time with your friends but we know when you will be home." Then both of you start to generate ideas together. Give space for your child to give ideas and if they do, don't close them down, instead write or draw them down, along with your ideas until you have some possibilities to consider.

Go through ideas, thinking them through, with both of you estimating the probability of each idea working. Ideally, you can agree a plan – it may be something neither of you would have thought of by yourselves. Give a reasonable idea a chance. You can keep repeating the process until you find a workable solution.

It can take many conversations to find a solution that works for both of you but you will have saved both of you a lot of anger and frustration and possibly helped your child learn some valuable skills as well.

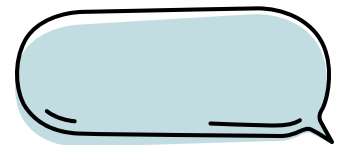
SOME USEFUL QUESTIONS AND SENTENCE STARTERS

- I've noticed that What's up? (Raise the issue when you are both calm)
- That sounds so hard/That must have been scary (acknowledge and validate feelings)
- That's not an easy thing to deal with
- I really want to hear what was happening for you...
- It would be so much easier if you didn't have to... ...(Give wishes in fantasy)
- I think you are saying.....is there anything else?
- I get that but how come you were able to then....?(explore why problem might occur under some conditions and not others)
- Can we think together about what we could do if it happens again? (invitation to problem-solve together)
- I'm not saying 'No' (but not saying 'yes' either)
- If you/I/they did that, what would happen? (thinking through consequences)

Remember it will be rare to sort out a complex problem the first time you talk about it. Your child may find it hard to give ideas and be unsure you genuinely want to work together. Complex problems are going to take a lot of thinking by both of you to find genuine solutions.



You can find out a lot more about this approach on these websites
www.thinkkids.org www.livesinthebalance.org



This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Resources

Websites:

www.adhd.org.nz

www.additudemag.com

<https://www.divergentfutures.com/>

<https://www.beehyve.health/>

<https://www.listeningtofamilies.co.nz/>

<https://livesinthebalance.org/parents-and-families-tour/>

<https://robyngobbel.com/>

<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/>

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/>

You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@HowtoADHD>

<https://www.youtube.com/@russellbarkleyphd2023>

<https://www.youtube.com/@ADHDDude>

https://www.youtube.com/@ADHD_love

<https://www.youtube.com/c/Chlo%C3%A9Haydens>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@connordewolfe?lang=en>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ADHDNZ> - NZ support group for parents of ADHDers

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/567526133383690> - Christchurch based ADHD and neurodiversity support group, includes details of coffee hang outs and education nights

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087870753308> – Neurowild, great neuroaffirming infographics.

Books

Chloe Hayden [Different, Not Less: A neurodivergent's guide to embracing your true self and finding your happily ever after](#)

Sarah Hayden – Parenting Different

Russell Barkley – 12 principles to raising a child with ADHD

Daniel Siegal and Tina Bryson – The Whole Brain Child
Driven to Distraction by Edward Hallowell and John Ratey

Robyn Gobbel – Big, Baffling Behaviours

Sandhya Menon – The Brain Forest and The Rainbow Brain

Dr Ross Green – The Explosive child

Mona Delahooke – Beyond Behaviours