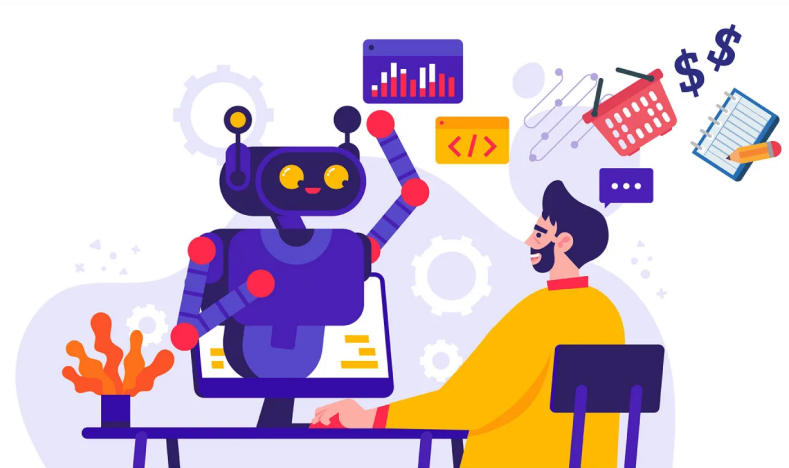
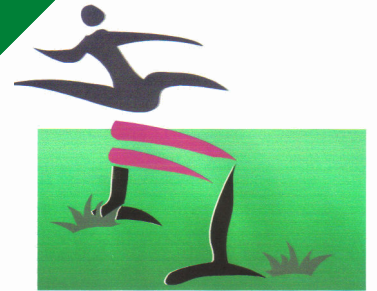


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# BMC JOURNAL

The monthly newsletter of  
Behavior Management Consultants



## AI for ADHD: How to Make ChatGPT Work for You

Does ChatGPT stand up to all the hype? Find out how people with ADHD are using artificial intelligence to manage their day-to-day tasks.

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ADHD social circles are buzzing about the virtual wonders of ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence-driven tool that promises to assist with organization, prioritization, time management, and other tasks made more challenging by weak executive function. Many say the chatbot has been a game-changer in their day-to-day lives.

A few caveats: the widely available version of ChatGPT does not search the Internet to answer a question. It generates a response based on pre-programmed information with a knowledge cutoff of September 2021, meaning it is not always accurate or up to date. Checking critical information with other sources is a must.

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Here are ways that some people with ADHD are using the technology.

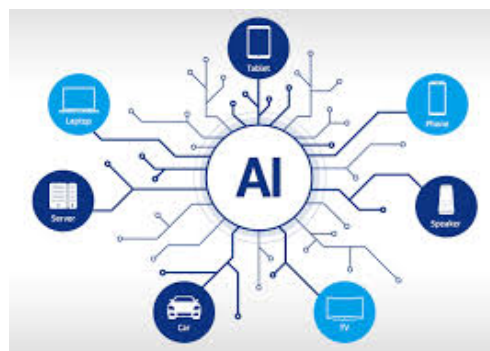
## How to Use ChatGPT

**As a task manager:** Ask ChatGPT to organize and prioritize your to-do list, break tasks into smaller steps, and give you a time estimate for each step. ChatGPT can also suggest approaches to improve productivity and manage your time.

**As a memory aid:** ChatGPT automatically logs and labels past conversations so you can refer back to them. In effect, these become your notes.

**For a job search:** Prompt ChatGPT with a job description and it can create a cover letter and help make your résumé stand out.

**At work:** Ask ChatGPT to create a meeting agenda or a template for an agenda. It can also help you make short work of email backlogs; copy and paste an email you received, specify the purpose of your response, and it can generate a professional reply. It can also stand in as an editor; enter a paragraph from a document you've written and ask the chatbot to improve it.



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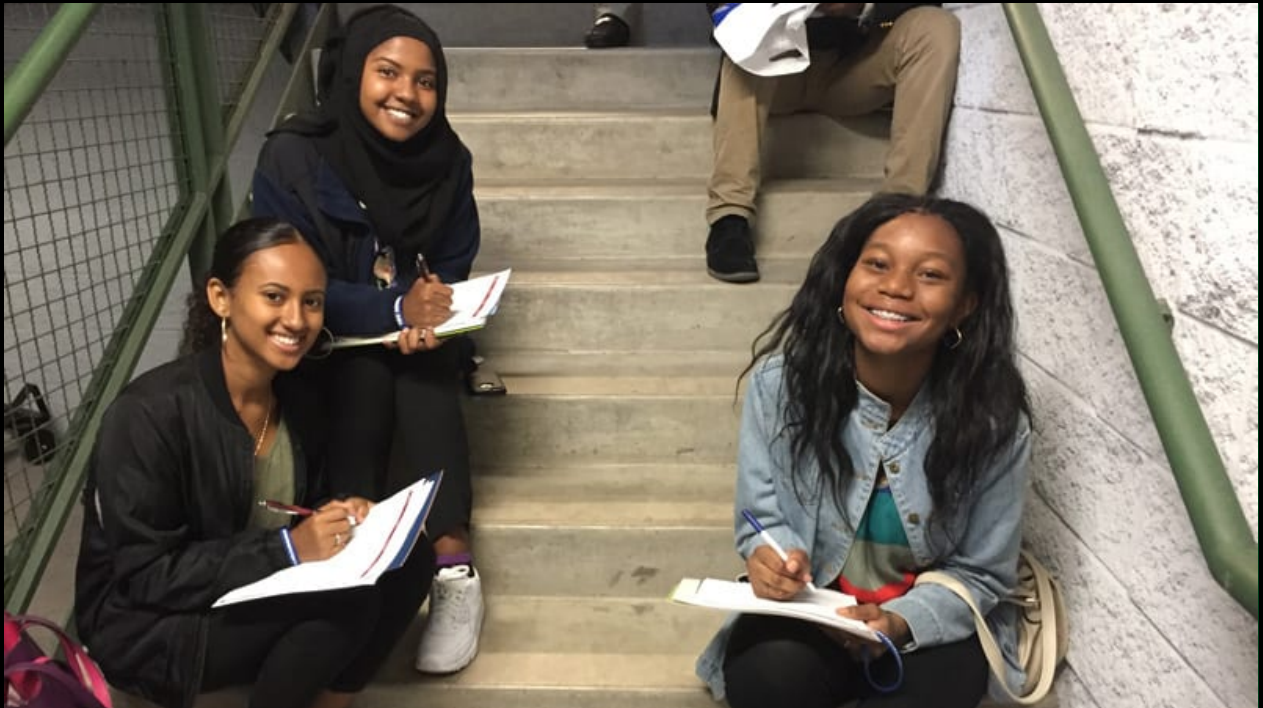
At school: Some college students said the chatbot improved their understanding of a subject because it simplified concepts or summarized information. One person said they now study with two screens: one with textbook information and the other with ChatGPT translations. They copy and paste homework or textbook information into the chatbot and ask: “What does my professor want me to do or learn? What concepts am I being asked to apply? Explain the question/concept to me.”

In finance: Plug in your monthly expenses, your income, and your financial goals, and the chatbot will create a budget that you can regularly review and adjust. If you believe you overspend in one category, for example, it can suggest ways to modify your spending patterns. A budget can be as detailed as you like, taking into account short- and long-term goals like paying off debt, saving for a house down payment, and so on.

In the kitchen: Tell ChatGPT you have certain ingredients on hand and ask it to suggest recipes for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Vegan? Gluten-free? No problem. It will respond with recipe ideas and instructions. Have trouble with the planning part of meals? Tell ChatGPT how many mouths you need to feed for how many days, and it can generate a meal plan complete with a shopping list. Bon appétit!



# U OF ADHD: 14 COLLEGE HACKS FOR NEURODIVERGENT STUDENTS



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Delayed and developing executive functions sometimes prevent students with ADHD from getting to class consistently, studying reliably, and planning effectively. These strategies will help.

The transition to college is really exciting — and really anxiety-provoking. Academic expectations and demands on executive functions both spike as teens begin to independently steer all sorts of new responsibilities — from laundry to shopping for shampoo. Without a parental safety net, life can feel overwhelming.

After helping countless college students with ADHD compensate for weak executive functioning, I've discovered a host of hacks that reliably help neurodivergent undergrads navigate new challenges, both big and small. Here are some of my favorites.

### **Attending Class with ADHD**

- Schedule your classes back-to-back so there is no time or excuse to pop by your dorm room or apartment, where you might get off track by napping, texting, or visiting with friends.
- Request a meeting with every teacher at the beginning of the semester. Whether they're teaching a 400-person lecture or a 10-person lab, most professors are happy to put a face to a name.
- Remember: If you want to pass, go to class. It's simple but true.

### **Studying with ADHD**

- Schedule time for homework and studying. If you're taking 16 credit hours, plan on 16 homework hours.
- Use colored fonts to break up and sort study guides. If you prefer print, use colored index cards.
- Keep yourself accountable. Body double with your best friend over Face Time so you can both type up your term papers and resist distractions together. Schedule a meeting with your professor that serves as a deadline. Experiment to see what works best for you.
- Stock up on erasable gel pens in different colors, which help commit information to memory. The smooth gel provides satisfying sensory feedback and if you make a mistake, no worries.

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## Planning with ADHD

- Shower at night. Mornings are usually too rushed.
- Fill up your gas tank when it dips to a quarter full.
- Get automatic toiletry “subscriptions” for soap, shampoo, shaving cream, anything you use regularly.
- Dedicate a clean space for work, even if the rest of your room is a huge mess.
- In your car’s glove box, lock an extra medication dose – stimulant, allergy pill, whatever you take regularly.

## Sleeping with ADHD

- Use a white, green, or brown noise machine to get a good night’s sleep (and block out dorm noise).
- If you’re having trouble waking up, try a sunrise clock, which activates your neurohormones before your eyes open by gradually brightening the room.



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**'People have considered  
me stupid. I'm not':  
Tens of thousands of  
over-50s could have  
undiagnosed ADHD**



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Tens of thousands of Britons over the age of 50 could be living with undiagnosed ADHD making their lives much harder than it needs to be.

Scientists are investigating a gulf in diagnosis rates between older and younger adults that can only be partially explained by symptoms waning with age.

Just 0.024 per cent of men and women over the age of 50 in the UK have a diagnosis for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, according to a new study, published in the journal *BJPsych Open*. That's one in 4,000 people in that age group, with men and women diagnosed at almost the same rate.

By contrast, about one in 70 men and one in 370 women aged 18 to 29 have a diagnosis. Childhood diagnosis is even more common, according to the research, by University College London (UCL).

Much of the disparity is due to ADHD declining with age, the researchers say. They point to separate research suggesting that, in nearly two thirds of cases, people "grow out" of ADHD between the ages of 18 and 54.

But a large proportion still remains unexplained.

"The question we're asking is 'why are ADHD diagnoses much less common in over-50s?'," Doug McKechnie, one of the UCL researchers, told i.

"ADHD symptoms do improve with age but studies suggest the proportion of adults who 'grow out' of ADHD with age is not big enough to explain this drop."

The academic says it's quite possible that there are thousands, and potentially even tens of thousands, of people over 50 in the UK with undiagnosed ADHD. But he cautions that precise figures are very difficult to conclude because it requires using data from other studies, involving different groups of people, from his research.

'I really, really wish I had been diagnosed earlier'



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“I have a lifelong experience of being considered to be stupid and I’m not,” says Chdel Cooke.

The 57 year-old counsellor living in Carmarthenshire in south west Wales, was not diagnosed with ADHD until she was 55.

“I really, really wish I had been diagnosed earlier. But it wasn’t something that was on people’s radars when I was at school,” she says.

“I was considered to be awkward and difficult or demanding and noisy. So I was labelled as being loud, full of myself and attention seeking – whereas what I was actually doing was just being exuberant and full of excitement about the ideas that were going through my head and wanting to share them with people, but not really knowing how to do it because I was a kid that didn’t yet have the skills to be able to mask enough to fit in with society.

“I had to learn a lot of masking skills to be able to fit in. But the cost to your energy levels and your sense of self of masking, of constantly having to be not you but a version that’s acceptable to somebody else, that’s really hard, it’s a very eroding thing. That sense that who you are is not good enough, is not right, doesn’t fit. That’s a very lonely place to grow up.

“In my experience medication has been very effective – but it has to be got right. The meds help me to be clear and have focus. There are all sorts of techniques I use in support of myself as well – but the ADHD meds really do help.

“I use grounding skills to keep myself steady. I also have to look after myself to make sure I have a good routine. It can’t be too structured, it has to be a routine that has flexibility, otherwise I start to rebel against my own structure.

“And I need to make sure that I rest appropriately and that I look after myself with good hydration and good nutrition, so that my body and my brain are as resourced as possible so that I’m then in a position where I’m responding and reacting to things. “Having had the medication I’m not having to expend anything like the energy levels that I would have done previously, I don’t have to withdraw nearly as much as I used to and I’m much more able to control my thinking and to be able to choose more effectively which idea I want to go with at any one time.”

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Symptoms of ADHD include impulsiveness, disorganisation, poor time management skills, difficulty focusing and restlessness. The UCL study also identified a significant rise in diagnoses of ADHD in the past two decades. It found, for example, that 1.4 per cent of boys aged 10 to 16 had a diagnosis in 2000 – more than doubling to 3.5 per cent in 2018.

This could be that more people have ADHD symptoms now than they did 20 years ago due to changes in lifestyles. But at least part of the increase is likely to be due to much greater awareness of the condition – lending further weight to the argument that older adults are more likely to be undiagnosed than younger ones, researchers suggested.

“Many of those undiagnosed over-50s might have been diagnosed with ADHD in childhood if they had grown up today,” said Dr McKechnie, who is also a GP. Dr Tony Lloyd, the 61-year old chief executive of the ADHD Foundation said: “The UCL study’s great – we need more like this.

“ADHD Diagnoses have jumped up in past five or ten years, because of better education and because there is more balanced information out there – and so less of a stigma attached to it than there used to be.”

Philip Asherton, Emeritus Professor of Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry of King’s College London, who was not involved in the research, described it as “the most up-to-date and informative data in the UK on this topic”.

He says a lack of NHS capacity is part of the “big problem” of underdiagnosis.

“Waiting lists are long and services not sufficient for referral rates,” he said. “Many people are being forced to go privately because they are not able to get the help they need.”

The current average waiting time for an ADHD assessments is around six to nine months, according to ADHD UK – but it can be much longer.

Freedom of Information data obtained by ADHD UK, and shared with i in May, found that in 2022 the longest a patient had been waiting to be seen was four years in Northern Ireland, three-and-a-half years in Wales, more than two years in England and more than a year in Scotland.

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Dr McKechnie said: “If there are people that are suffering with untreated ADHD, who could improve with treatment, that’s a problem. Simply having an explanation for one’s difficulties throughout life can be helpful for many people; understanding that they’re not stupid or forgetful, for example, but have difficulties resulting from ADHD.

“And ADHD treatment – behavioural therapies, structural and organisational tools, and medication – can help if ADHD symptoms are interfering with peoples’ daily lives.

“NHS waiting list for ADHD assessments is extremely long. More resources need to be allocated to alleviate the severe pressure that specialist adult ADHD services are under.”

An NHS England spokesperson said: “NHS staff across the country are working hard to ensure all patients requiring assessments and further support from these services are seen as promptly as possible – and we’d encourage anyone who is concerned they may have ADHD to come forward and speak to their GP.

“Decisions around commissioning ADHD services are made at a local NHS level based on the needs of their population, consistent with relevant NICE guidelines.”

A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson said: “We know how vital it is to have timely diagnoses for ADHD, and we are committed to reducing diagnosis delays and improving access to support.

“The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has clear guidelines on ADHD diagnosis and treatment, and we are also increasing investment into mental health services by at least £2.3bn a year by 2024.”

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# Detroit woman works to build city's first autism-inclusive gym



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According to the CDC, one in 36 people in the U.S. are on the autism spectrum, and although awareness and resources have increased over the years, many families feel more needs to be done.

One local mom is determined to find a safe place for her son to play, and she's in the process of building Detroit's first autism-inclusive gym.

Tiera Turner's son was diagnosed with autism in 2019, just before his third birthday.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the autism walks were canceled in 2020, and she was determined to celebrate her son's new journey.

She created her own walk, starting with just her family and growing to more than 100 people in just three years. Turner took a similar approach of creating something you want with the gym.

"We need a space where we do not have to apologize for your child," Turner said.

She's in the process of securing grants and crowdfunding to establish "We Rock the Spectrum."

"We have offerings for sensory rooms, which means different rooms so they can calm down. We are going to have a water room, a sand room. I can't wait to see these visions come to life," Turner said.

The plan is still surreal for Joanna Lofton, who remembers her struggles 30 years ago when she was left with little resources and little hope for her son, who is on the spectrum.

"No one said okay he is going to be great one day. What you got was, 'you may consider wanting to have another child and putting this one away,'" Lofton said.

Now, Lofton works alongside Heather Eckner with the Autism Alliance of Michigan, making sure families get the resources she couldn't.

"We serve as a resource kind of hub or a landing place that individuals and families can turn to, to say, 'help me,'" Eckner said.

One of the non-profit's pillars is finding employment. Lofton's son has worked at a design center for eight years.

"Parents need to know, don't give up, there is hope," Lofton said.

Another positive change for families is that public schools will now have additional funding specifically geared toward helping families who have children with special needs.

# Is my child neurodivergent? What experts say parents need to know

What does it mean to have a neurodivergent child, and how can parents provide the best support? Experts answer these questions and more.



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It feels like the term “neurodivergence” is everywhere these days, but it’s rare we get a helpful breakdown of what it is and what it means for our children. Research suggests 15 to 20% of the population is neurodivergent. While there’s no singular experience for neurodivergent children, Laura Petix, a pediatric occupational therapist, mom to a neurodivergent daughter and the author of “A Kids Book About Neurodiversity,” says parents may see evidence in behavior.

“If you notice your child learns differently than their peers, communicates in a certain way (or lacks communication abilities), maybe has extreme emotions or extreme or different ways of displaying emotions, those may be some big clues that they have a differently wired brain,” she says.

Many parents wonder if they have a neurodivergent child and want to support them affirmingly. If you’re wondering how to identify neurodivergent kids and ensure they have the resources they need to thrive, read on to learn what neurodivergence is and how experts say you can best support your neurodivergent child.

### **What does neurodivergent mean?**

“Neurodivergent” is an umbrella term that applies to many conditions. Maria Davis-Pierre, a licensed mental health counselor and the founder and CEO of Autism in Black Inc., says people often confuse the term “neurodiversity,” which includes everybody and how we all think differently, with “neurodivergence,” which describes those who have a diagnosis that makes their brains work differently.

The manifestation of neurodivergent brain differences varies, but often it involves differences in executive functioning, the control panel of the brain, which helps us focus and sustain attention, plan, organize and regulate emotions. The term “neurodivergent” can include diagnoses like Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and autism, as well as:

- Anxiety.
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).
- Synesthesia.
- Tourette’s Syndrome.
- Learning differences, like dyslexia and dyscalculia.
- Bipolar disorder.
- Down syndrome.

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“[Neurodivergence] comes with a variety of traits, signs, strengths and challenges,” says Petix. “At the heart of it, a child being neurodivergent means that their brain processes information, communicates, learns and plays differently than the majority of kids their age. Not necessarily worse than, but just different.”

### **Are gifted kids neurodivergent?**

Does being gifted mean your child is neurodivergent? Not necessarily. Gifted children may have neurological differences that shape how they process and interact with the world, but giftedness or “genius” labels are based on IQ and non-traditional thinking, rather than specific behaviors associated with neurodivergence.

A gifted child may also be neurodivergent, and those who are neurodivergent but are still doing well in school can be vulnerable to sliding under the radar and missing needed individualized support. Pay close attention to your child, experts advise, and regularly ask them what things feel good about school and what things feel challenging. Parent the child you have, and offer them support based on their unique circumstances.

### **How can you tell if your child is neurodivergent?**

Anything that differs from “typical” or “normative” behavior and brings differences in how your brain processes information can be neurodivergent, says Dr. Ayesha Cheema-Hasan, a developmental pediatrician, mom of four and the founder of Coral Health. No two neurodivergent people are the same, and parents are best prepared to know if their child needs support.

“If your gut tells you there’s a concern about your child’s development, reach out to your pediatrician. It’s not going to hurt your child if you get an answer to your question.”

— *Dr. Ayesha Cheema-Hasan, developmental pediatrician*



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“Every child develops differently,” Cheema-Hasan adds. For example, whether a talkative child is exhibiting normal behavior or not depends on many components. If you have a concern about your child, she recommends asking yourself, “Is this affecting my child’s ability to function and inhibiting their progress socially, emotionally or academically?”

If it is, talk with your child’s doctor. A developmental behavioral pediatrician, psychologist or neurologist can also be a valuable resource. While there’s no single or definitive list of neurodivergent symptoms, neurodivergent kids may demonstrate that they need support with the following behaviors:

- Starting tasks or ending procrastination.
- Keeping up with classwork.
- Making friends.
- Coping with hyperactivity.
- Maintaining focus and attention.
- Following instructions.
- Managing stress and anxiety.
- Managing emotions, outbursts and frustration.

Cheema-Hasan discourages blanketly labeling behaviors as problematic, and instead recommends advocating for individualized support for each child. “If your gut tells you there’s a concern about your child’s development, reach out to your pediatrician,” she explains. “It’s not going to hurt your child if you get an answer to your question.” Either you’ll be notified of differences and get support so they can reach their potential, or you’ll be told that the child is following a normative curve, she adds.

It’s important to note that even though the representation of neurodivergent people is expanding, race and gender-based discrimination maintain structural barriers to accurate diagnosis and support, especially for Black and brown youth. Further, Black children, especially Black boys, are disproportionately labeled with conditions like emotional disturbance and are more likely to be removed from school or restrained by police.

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It's unfair that families of color have to deal with discrimination and discomfort while seeking care, but experts say there are a few options. Parents can:

- Use virtual support networks to find compassionate providers.
- Check reviews for providers before seeking care.
- Invite a trusted medical support person to attend meetings to ensure your concerns are met.
- Report discriminatory providers.

"It's OK to say, 'I'm going to not talk to this provider anymore,'" Davis-Pierre says. "[Instead], I'm going to go over here and make an appointment with this person and then have all my stuff faxed over."

## **How can parents support neurodivergent kids?**

Some neurodivergent youth will need targeted support with social-emotional learning and school accommodations. Others might manage their differences with minimal intervention and a team of loved ones that helps them with the needed social, emotional and academic shifts. Families can work with educators and mental health professionals to determine the best level of support for each child. Here are some other ways experts say you can help neurodivergent kids thrive:

### **1. Adopt a neuro-affirming care model**

Petix says neurodivergent kids will benefit from a neuro-affirming caregiving model. This includes:

- Accepting all kinds of brain-wiring.
- Meeting children where they are.
- Adapting your expectations based on your child's skills.
- Using kids' hyper-focused interests as tools to develop new skills.

"[Being neuro-affirming] means being open to accommodating the child's needs rather than forcing them to accommodate a neurotypical world and experience," Petix explains. An example would be, instead of wondering how to get a hyperactive 5-year-old to sit still at story time, we could think, "What sensory supports can I offer my 5-year-old so they can participate in library circle time?"

### **2. Stay up-to-date on resources and support**

The most important research is talking to your child and asking them how they experience the world and what they need, experts say. Beyond this, parents have more resources than ever to embrace neurodiversity and neuro-affirming models. Some suggestions from the experts include:

- Familiarizing yourself with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or 504 plans for in-school support.
- Learning from disabled-led resources, like Too Autistic for Black and Latinx perspectives.
- Committing to fighting neurodivergent stigma with initiatives like the "Be the Reason" campaign.
- Researching affirming and effective accommodations from sources like ADDitude Magazine.

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### **3. Consider occupational therapy**

There will be times when families need additional support to make sure neurodivergent children are getting what they need. In addition to working with pediatricians, therapists and other experts, Petix notes that occupational therapy can also aid families. Occupational therapists help identify and customize sensory regulation strategies and develop sensory diets – personalized plans of activities that help children meet their sensory needs – to find something that works for individual families.

“A pediatric occupational therapist trained in sensory integration approaches can help families with neurodivergent children understand their nervous system and dysregulated behaviors,” Petix says. “They can help decode behaviors into meaningful patterns of information so that we can support children more effectively and from a ‘bottom-up’ approach, which means supporting their body and brain (specifically, the nervous system) instead of just trying to address the outward behavior.”

### **4. Find and cultivate community**

Davis-Pierre notes that families are better prepared to support their children and themselves when they have community. This is especially important for neurodivergent families of color. The following avenues can help parents cultivate community:

- Social media groups, like The Childhood Collective and Shawna Hughes ADHD Nutrition.
- Annual conferences, such as Autism and Black or Moments of Joy Fest.
- Local and online parent support groups.

It’s also an option to hire an advocate or medical support person to accompany you to meetings and appointments to ensure your child gets the right kind of support.

### **5. Avoid a deficit-based treatment approach**

Historically, many health providers have employed deficit-based approaches when working with neurodivergent kids, Davis-Pierre says. These approaches treated neurodivergence as a problem to be solved, rather than offering positive and affirming support.

Davis-Pierre and Cheema-Hasan are clear that there is as much diversity between two neurodivergent individuals as there is between a neurodivergent and a neurotypical individual. Every child is different. The best approach to supporting your neurodivergent child is getting to know and accept them as an individual and affirming their unique identities and interests. “I want parents to understand that there is no need to ‘fix’ your children,” Davis-Pierre says.

IMPORTANT  
NUMBERS



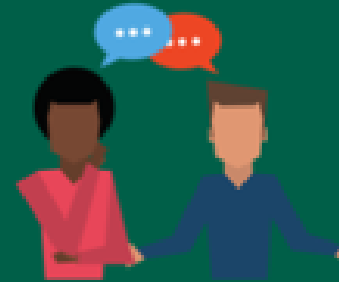
IF YOU NEED  
HELP, PLEASE  
MAKE THE CALL



GET THE SUPPORT  
YOU NEED



YOU ARE NOT  
ALONE



National Suicide  
Prevention Hotline:  
1-800-273-8255

National Domestic  
Violence Hotline:  
1-800-799-7233

Runaway and  
Homeless Teen  
Hotline Help:  
1-800-246-4646



Coalition for the  
Homeless:  
212-776-2000

Drug and Alcohol  
Hotline:  
800-622-2255

Food and Hunger  
Hotline:  
866-888-8777

Homeless Services  
Hotline:  
212-533-5151

Rape Crisis Hotline:  
212-227-3000

National Child  
Abuse Hotline:  
1-800-422-4453

National Teen  
Dating Abuse  
Helpline: 1-866-  
331-9474

Crisis Lifeline for  
LGBTQ Youth:  
1-866-488-7386

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Hotline:  
800-448-3000

American  
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866-942-6466

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Behavior Management Consultants believes that, “No Child is Born Bad”. Our mission is to educate, mentor, and assist parents, caregivers, and professionals to cope with, socialize, and identify values important to today’s youth.

The goal is to serve public and private social service organizations including, but not limited to:

- Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs)
- Juvenile Detention Centers
- Residential Treatment Centers (RTCs)
- Public Schools
- Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

We are confident that we will meet our goals thereby ensuring that our clients are being kept abreast in the ever-changing landscape of Human/Social Services.

## Quote of the Month

"That is the promise to glade,  
the hill we climb if only we  
dare it, because .being  
American is more than a  
pride we inherit—It's the past  
we step into, and how we  
repair it."

-Amanda Gorman



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