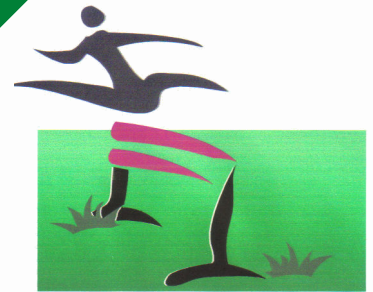


BMC JOURNAL

The monthly newsletter of
Behavior Management Consultants



3 WAYS TO SOLVE YOUR COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS WHEN YOUR PARTNER HAS ADHD

You have an ADHD partner and are excited to make plans. You enjoy spending time together and talking for hours. But, sometimes, things irk you in your relationship. You know your partner wants to see you, but you don't understand why your partner is always running late.

You know your partner cares, but you don't understand why they forget your birthday.

You know your partner wants to discuss things that bother you, but you don't understand why you are having so many communication problems with your ADHD partner.

ADHD and communication difficulties with an ADHD partner

A partner with ADHD may have a tendency to interrupt, impulsively answer, and not wait for their turn to respond. They may have difficulty following the thread of the conversation, especially in a crowded room or with distractions, such as cell phones.

You may notice that their thoughts are expressed in a disorganized fashion. They may jump from one topic to another and you may have difficulty understanding what they are trying to say.

3 ADHD communication difficulties you may be having with your ADHD partner and how to solve them:

1. The criticize, blame, and shame problem.

ADHD partners are very sensitive to criticism for forgetting things, losing their keys, being late for appointments, and not picking up items at the store.

Non-ADHD partners may blame their partner for many of the issues in the relationships, such as losing a job due to issues of procrastination, not following through or meeting deadlines, not carrying their weight in the relationship, or the relationship not being fair and balanced.

These are common complaints by the other partner.

The ADHD partner frequently holds a lot of shame around their mistakes and challenges in their life and relationship. This problem may leave the ADHD partner feeling and viewing themselves as defective, less than, or not good enough.

The ADHD partner needs to learn ways to accommodate these challenges. As a couples therapist that counsels couples with ADHD, I highly recommend ADHD coaching or therapy to learn coping strategies to improve daily and executive functioning.

The non-ADHD partner needs to learn about the ADHD experience to better understand their partner's struggles too.

2. The forgetful, interruption, and jumping topic-to-topic problem.

When ADHD partners can't remember what they were going to say, impulsively interrupt, jump from topic to topic, the non-ADHD partner can feel frustrated and irritated by these behaviors.

The ADHD partner is not trying to disrupt the conversation or upset their partner, but they need to learn ways to slow down (which is not an easy task) and listen to their partner.

Before this communication problem occurs again, ask your partner if you can handle this situation by doing the following: one partner will speak (called the speaker) and the other partner is going to listen (called the listener). The listener will take notes on what the speaker is saying. When the speaker is finished sharing their thoughts, then the listener can summarize what they heard the speaker say. Then you switch roles. The speaker should share their thoughts for no longer than five minutes (set a timer if you need to) because it may be difficult for the listener to focus for more than five minutes.

You can always switch back and forth a few times. Try to keep your ideas succinct though. Taking notes on what your partner is saying and this time limit can help the listener focus on the conversation.



3. The distraction problem.

If you are trying to talk and a partner with ADHD keeps looking away or has difficulty following the conversation, sometimes the non-ADHD partner will feel rejected, abandoned, or unloved by these behaviors.

You need to put away the cell phones and turn off the television or music or any other distractions.

If you're thinking that you can't turn off your kids, then if you have children who are interrupting your conversation, you may need to ask them to wait, go into another room, or have the conversation when the kids are not around.

Sometimes sitting close to your partner and having direct eye contact (this is not a staring contest) may help with the distractions too.

ADHD does not have to negatively impact your relationship, but you will need to understand the challenges and issues to be able to address them.

All couples have communication problems, but when you have a partner with ADHD, you need to learn more effective methods of solving your communication problems.

ADHD and communication difficulties in adults.

Dr. Hallowell and Dr. Ratey define ADHD as a "neurological syndrome whose classic defining triad of symptoms include impulsivity, distractibility, and hyperactivity or excess energy."

Usually, partners with ADHD are described as friendly, very busy doing many things at one time, and sometimes appear moody. Sometimes, they self-medicate using drugs or alcohol.

Partners with ADHD can hyperfocus on their partners. At the beginning of your relationship, hyperfocusing keeps partners engaged and motivated to see each other. You might like the attention that your partner provides and the ability to make you feel special.

As the relationship progresses, since the ADHD partner has difficulty regulating their attention and is drawn to novel and new experiences, their attention on the relationship might wane.

Taking advantage of these solutions for ADHD communication difficulties in relationships, however, can improve the experience for both partners over time.



Understanding ADHD in Children



About 6.1 million children live with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in the United States. Children with ADHD struggle with everyday skills like organization, following directions, and impulse control.

While these behaviors can seem like a child is being defiant or misbehaving, that's not the case. It's much harder for children with ADHD to do these things than it is for children without ADHD. It's important for children with ADHD to get the treatment they need to manage their condition.

What is ADHD in children?

ADHD is a developmental condition. The condition causes children with ADHD to have difficulties with executive function skills.

This includes many skills needed in everyday life such as organization, time management, patience, self-control, staying on task, and managing emotions. Children with ADHD who are struggling with executive function often need extra support at school and at home.

What are the symptoms of ADHD in children?

The symptoms of ADHD can look different depending on the child. Some children will struggle more with certain areas than others. In general, children with ADHD have symptoms that fall into three different categories:

- inattention
- hyperactivity
- impulsivity

Kids with ADHD might have trouble in just one of these categories or might show symptoms in two or three categories.

Inattention symptoms include:

- becoming distracted easily
- difficulty concentrating or focusing
- difficulty completing tasks
- difficulty following directions
- losing things often
- missing details of instructions
- forgetting directions or tasks
- taking excessive amounts of time to complete simple tasks
- daydreaming or seeming lost in thought often

Hyperactivity symptoms include:

- being restless or fidgety
- being easily bored
- having trouble staying quiet
- having trouble staying still
- making careless mistakes
- disrupting class or family time
- hyper-focusing on some tasks while ignoring others

Impulsivity symptoms include:

- interrupting others
- thinking without acting
- having trouble waiting their turn
- having intense emotional reactions that don't fit the situation
- engaging in risky or dangerous behavior

All kids occasionally do some of these things. It's expected for children to sometimes become bored during class or have trouble waiting their turn. In children with ADHD, these behaviors aren't occasional.

They happen very frequently, and they make it hard for the child to succeed at school or at home. A child with ADHD might have trouble completing homework, keeping their room clean, making friends, and listening to adults. This can lead to a lot of frustration for the child with ADHD and make symptoms worse.

Symptoms can look different in older children. Children don't outgrow ADHD, but their symptoms might change as they age and mature.

For example, a 6-year-old with ADHD might frequently get up in the middle of class without permission and have trouble following directions. A 14-year-old with ADHD might have trouble turning in assignments on time or staying organized.

How is ADHD diagnosed in children?

ADHD is often noticed by parents or teachers. Sometimes, a school might make a referral to a specialist who can assess the child and make a diagnosis. Parents can also bring their concerns to a pediatrician or other primary care provider.

Only a professional can diagnose ADHD. To make a diagnosis, they'll need input from the adults in the child's life. Often, the doctor or therapist might ask you or your child's teacher to fill out a few forms about the behaviors you've observed. They'll also talk with you and your child about the behaviors and the impacts they have on your child's everyday life.



To be diagnosed with ADHD, the behaviors will need to meet a few criteria. This generally includes behaviors that:

- have been present since the child was very young
- are not appropriate or expected for their age
- are negatively affecting the child at school and at home
- are not being caused by any other health or learning concern

In some cases, your child might have a few tests to rule out any other possible causes of their behavior. This can include cognitive tests to look for other developmental or intellectual conditions, and screenings of their eyesight and hearing to look for any physical impairments.

Some children have other conditions alongside ADHD, such as learning disabilities or mood disorders. The doctor can treat those conditions alongside the child's ADHD.

What causes ADHD in children?

Doctors aren't sure what causes ADHD in children. There is no proven cause. ADHD isn't linked to parenting styles, diets, habits, or any other environmental factors. However, the condition is likely inherited. Most children with ADHD have a close relative who also has it.

Can you prevent ADHD in children?

ADHD can't be prevented. Since ADHD is thought to be genetic, children with it were likely born with the condition. Plus, since there's no known cause, there's also no known way to prevent the condition.

What are common risk factors for developing ADHD in children?

Researchers have looked into several possible risk factors for ADHD, but very few links have been found. Studies have been done to see if factors such as exposure to chemicals or drinking alcohol during pregnancy increase the risk of ADHD, but found that these things didn't seem to increase the risk.

While it's often said that ADHD is more likely to occur in boys than in girls, this isn't fully proven or understood either.

The symptoms of ADHD can present differently in boys than in girls. Some researchers and advocates think that this leads to ADHD being very underdiagnosed in girls. Currently, there are only two known risk factors for ADHD in children:

- having a parent or other close relative with ADHD
- being born prematurely

How is ADHD treated in children?

When a child is diagnosed with ADHD, the doctor or therapist will work with their parents to come up with a treatment plan. The plan will depend on the child, but might include:

- Behavior therapy. Counseling using behavioral therapy techniques can help kids with ADHD manage their condition and develop the skills they need to succeed at school and at home. This type of therapy may also involve the entire family.
- Medication. ADHD medication can help children focus, pay attention, and control impulses.
- Parent/caregiver coaching. Parents or caregivers will learn effective ways to help the child and respond to behaviors.
- School support. Kids with ADHD often need extra support in school. This can include extra reminders to stay on task, help to remove distractions, and more. It could also include the need for an IEP or 504 plan, more formal supports available through child's school to ensure they receive appropriate accommodations and supports to access the curriculum.

Treatments can change some as your child gets older. This might include trying new types of therapy, changing medications, or adding different in-school supports. It's important to adjust any treatment for each specific child and the things they struggle with the most.

Treating ADHD is a team effort that takes work from parents, teachers, doctors, therapists, and the child with ADHD. It's important for kids with ADHD to have the support they need at school and at home. Without treatment and support, children with ADHD can struggle. This can lead to low self-esteem, depression, conflict at home, risk taking, failure at school, and more.

What's the outlook for children with ADHD?

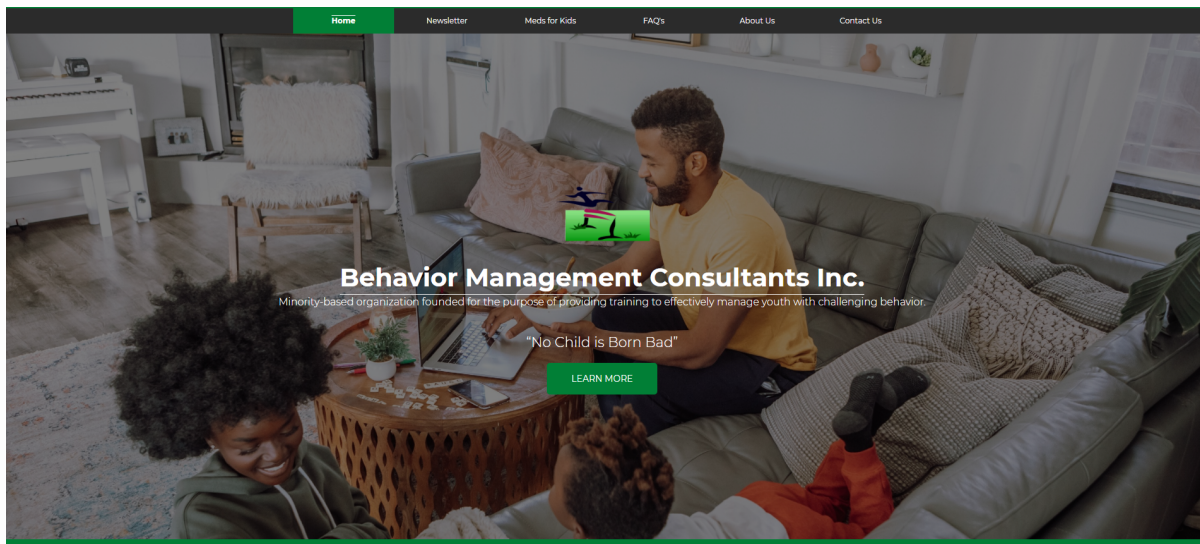
ADHD can't be cured. A child with ADHD will have ADHD for the rest of their life. However, with treatment, children with ADHD can have very successful lives. Many people with ADHD are able to do very well in school, earn advanced degrees, and pursue fulfilling careers.

The bottom line

While most kids can sometimes have trouble listening to directions or sitting still, children with ADHD struggle to do these things and other executive function skills on a daily basis.

Their struggles can make it difficult for them to succeed at home and at school. However, with treatment and support children with ADHD can manage their condition and improve their daily lives.

NEW WEBSITE: [HTTPS://BMC OF NYC.ORG](https://bmcofnyc.org)



“Should We Drop the ODD Label?”



“Should We Drop the ODD Label?”

Should we stop using the oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) label to describe children with ADHD who are extremely argumentative and inflexible? Are these behaviors just a part of the ADHD puzzle for some? Can they be addressed without pathologizing kids?

How We Pathologize ADHD Behaviors

The mental health field does a lot of pathologizing of kids with ADHD with various labels, including oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). I want to move ADHD away from being so pathologized in the mental health field, and part of that is changing the language around it. We need to keep using ADHD, of course, because it is a neurodevelopmental challenge, but I think we need to drop the ODD label and here is why.

Why We Should Stop Using ODD to Describe Children

ODD is a description of behaviors; it is not a standalone diagnosis and it is not a neurodevelopmental challenge like ADHD. Those behaviors associated with ODD are rooted in inflexibility, which is an aspect of executive function; or they are rooted in anxiety; or they are rooted in a need for control, which is common among kids with adverse childhood experiences.

When you say your child has ADHD and ODD, it's just pathologizing them because it's adding another label to describe an aspect of his ADHD profile that has no biological basis that we know of.

What to Say Instead

Instead of saying, "My child has ADHD and ODD," say "My child has ADHD and he has a propensity to be inflexible." Or "My child has ADHD and he's argumentative a lot." What that is doing is looking at ADHD more holistically and using terms that describe the behaviors as part of ADHD, which is what I think they are.



<https://youtu.be/UD-Ku2vTchg>

How My ADHD Affects Me in Running My Business



A decade ago, I achieved a huge life goal: I opened an independent, community-focused bookstore at age 31. Before starting my own business, I'd never had what most people in the U.S. would consider a typical, full-time job: clocking in for 40 hours/week at a company that hired me after I filled out an application and interviewed well. Since my early 20s, I'd worked a wide variety of jobs, but I hadn't stumbled across any career paths that felt like a good fit for the long term.

The Avid Bookshop planning process felt different. The challenges I faced were invigorating, and I loved how much I was learning. When I recount my business's origin story, I highlight the fact that I've always had a variety of interests and that Avid was the perfect way for me to explore all of them without having to commit to just one.

Now that I have an ADHD diagnosis, it seems obvious in hindsight that my brain chemistry has played a role in my career decisions since day one. My therapist told me early on that a significant percentage of entrepreneurs have ADHD. I've since read this in many books and articles about the disorder.

My brain craves novel challenges and tires easily of mundane, unexciting tasks. Like many of you reading this, I feel most fulfilled and accomplished at work when I'm using my creativity and quick thinking to solve problems. When my neurodivergent brain comes up with an answer to a longstanding issue, I feel confident and capable, thankful to be in a career where my ability to think outside the box is not only welcome but required for success. In these instances, I'm sure that I'm just the right person to be my business's founder and owner.

However, I spend a lot of time feeling down on myself. I'm worried people are two steps away from discovering that I'm a lazy imposter playing the role of a well-respected business owner. For many years, I've wanted to roll my eyes self-deprecatingly when anyone tells me, "You did your best."

Only I know I didn't actually do my best. I worry that, if people were aware of my unmet potential, they would not be so quick to compliment me on my accolades. No one can see all the ideas I have that I don't have the wherewithal or discipline to follow through on. On particularly tough days, I'm saddled with the anxiety that accompanies the hours I spend each day knowing what I should do but being totally unable to do it.

While there are several ADHD-related factors that bring stress to my work life, my #1 hurdle is my lifelong habit of procrastination.

Normally, I am reticent to acknowledge how much I procrastinate. Sure, I'll mention it in a self-deprecating way now and again, but that mostly happens after I've finished an assignment just under the wire and can speak from a place of relief. It wasn't until I was diagnosed with ADHD in spring 2021 that I learned that my procrastination is related to executive functioning issues in my neurodivergent brain.



Work, for me, is immensely fulfilling as well as continually stressful. During the years in which I prepared to open my own business, I felt sure that I would be more organized, happier, and less prone to procrastination once I was 100% working for myself. My hunch was that my procrastinating -- and the spikes and dips of stress that come along with it -- was related to the fact that my assignments and duties were from others (bosses, teachers, supervisors, etc.).

Surely I would stop delaying and putting off important tasks once I was my own boss. Right?

Wrong.

Along with many stellar co-workers past and present, I've been able to create systems, checks, and balances to make sure that important things don't fall through the cracks. Before getting diagnosed with ADHD, I had spent significant time creating and implementing reminders and fail-safes that minimize the fallout from my tendency to procrastinate.

Overall, I'm proud of how I have taught myself to be more focused and organized at work. During smooth periods, my work stress is fairly low and my bad ADHD patterns -- including procrastination -- seem to be pretty calm. But, in tougher times (including this season), my ADHD symptoms get out of control. That leads to more anxiety, which feeds into my wish to avoid work and procrastinate, which in turn makes me more anxious overall.

During periods like this one, I try to remind myself that no feeling is forever. 2021-me has more insight and knowledge than any previous versions of myself, and that shows me how much one person can grow. I can opt to close my laptop at the end of the workday even if I haven't tackled even half of my to-dos. I can treat myself with compassion and vow to carry today's lessons into the future. I can choose to express my gratitude for this busy, ever-challenging career that is full of meaning and joy, even on the toughest ADHD days.



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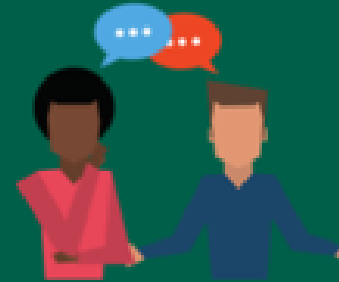
IF YOU NEED
HELP, PLEASE
MAKE THE CALL



GET THE SUPPORT
YOU NEED



YOU ARE NOT
ALONE



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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

Boys Town National
Hotline:
800-448-3000

American
Pregnancy Helpline:
866-942-6466

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

“ Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”
-Harriet Tubman



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