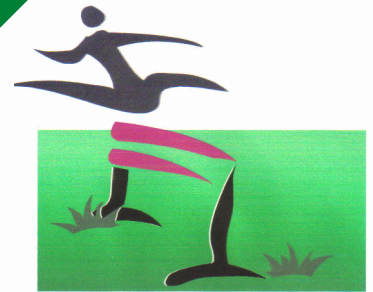


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YOU ARE WORTHY OF SELF-COMPASSION: HOW TO BREAK THE HABIT OF INTERNALIZED CRITICISM

“Self-compassion allows you to be good enough as you are, with your warts, with your foibles, sometimes off-balanced, sometimes more reactive than you’d like, sometimes disorganized, but fundamentally perfectly imperfect as a human being, just like everyone else.”

As you move through life with ADHD, criticism – from others and yourself – accumulates and is internalized into beliefs about your self-worth. Many adolescents and adults end up feeling less-than or unworthy compared to neurotypical peers who look like they don't struggle or make as many mistakes. It can be the recipe for a real mental-health crisis.

The secret to eradicating negative thought patterns and harsh self-judgments is simple but not easy: it's self-compassion. Start by asking: What do you wish for yourself? What facet or result of self-acceptance or forgiveness would you most like to see for yourself? Maybe it's forgiving those moments where you forgot an appointment or learning how to laugh at the times you said the 'wrong' thing in social situations. Being human means making mistakes – regardless of your neurodivergence.

What is Self-Compassion?

Dr. Kristin Neff says that self-compassion is treating yourself with care and understanding instead of harsh judgment. Compassion considers a common humanity; you are part of a larger whole. All suffering is not the same, but all humans experience pain and suffering in some way that's worthy of empathy.

Neff explains that compassion requires mindfulness – that is, the ability to sit with things as they are and not deny or minimize them. Self-compassion means asking yourself, "What can I do to help?" instead of, "What's wrong with me?" It allows you to stop fighting with yourself and start embracing yourself instead.

How to Practice Self-Compassion with ADHD

If you're unsure how to pivot from negative thought patterns to compassionate ones, follow these steps.

Self-Compassion Step #1: Normalize

Self-compassion begins by normalizing your experiences and recognizing that you're not alone. Maybe you're part of a community of people who have ADHD, or a religious or professional community. Everyone is wired uniquely. What does 'normal' even mean? We all struggle with demons, judgments, and doubts.

Remember that people are supposed to get things wrong, to learn, to pivot, and keep growing. This is what a growth mindset is all about: you focus on the lessons not just the outcome.

Self-Compassion Step #2: Understand the What and How

Ask yourself what has happened in your life that's led you to this place of negative thinking or low self-worth. What are your strong feelings communicating to you? When you react to a situation with anxiety or anger, consider the insecurities and fears that might actually be the source of those emotions. Pause and ask yourself what you could do differently. Could you ask for support from someone else?

Observe what's happening and be curious about it rather than condemning. Say, "Okay, this is what's going on," instead of, "Ugh, why am I like this?"



Self-Compassion Step #3: Identify “Stinking Thinking”

You are not your negative thoughts, but you are the one who can choose to believe them. When you experience “stinking thinking,” try to picture yourself at age 10. What do you look like? What would you most like to say to your 10-year-old self? Let’s say that your 10-year-old falls and skins their knee. How would you comfort that 10-year-old inside of you?

When you’re mean to yourself, you’re actually punishing that 10-year-old with a skinned knee. You’re not offering a Band-Aid, not offering a hug, nor some soap and water to clean it up. You’re pouring vinegar on that wound. Is that what you want to do for yourself?

Looking sideways at what other people are doing — giving in to “compare and despair” — will neither bring you contentment nor self-esteem. It will, however, take you nowhere worthwhile. Focus instead on where you’ve come from, what you do that works and where you want to go.



Self-Compassion Step #4: Give Shame a Name

“Stinking thinking” and “compare and despair” often lead to excessive self-criticism and unrealistic expectations. When you make a mistake or disappointment, you may find yourself sliding down a shame spiral to a waste dump of self-loathing. You blame and criticize yourself in ways that you’ve internalized since childhood — repeating the criticisms you received from a parent, from a teacher, from peers. Could you take your shame and give it a name? Imagine what it looks like — is it a cartoon character? Or the face of someone from your past who was cruel? Or maybe it’s just a color. When you name your shame and learn how to talk back to negative thinking, it will be easier to accept yourself.

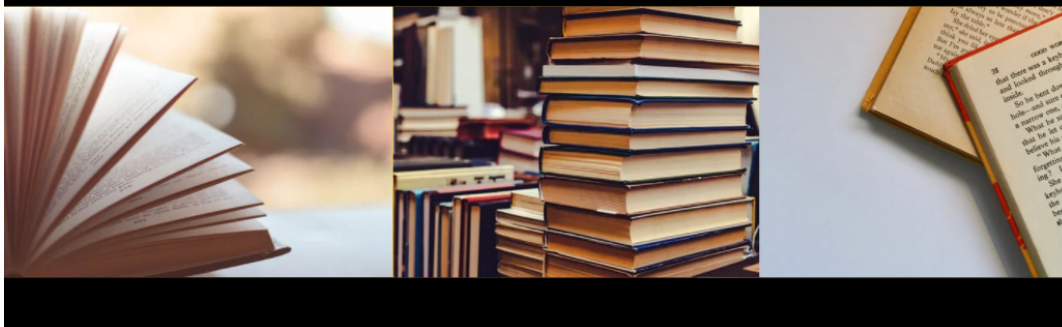
Combatting shame is tough, especially after a lifetime of hearing or feeling that you’re not good enough or what you do is wrong, thoughtless or lazy. But when you blame and criticize yourself, you worsen the shame. What we want to do is to externalize the shame — make it something that has its own name and that you can talk back to. “I don’t deserve good things,” is a thought that plagues the ADHD brain, especially for women. It’s a manifestation of the belief that you’re not good enough: perhaps you look tired, you don’t have much energy, you have a grating voice.

These negative statements are not who you are; they’re beliefs and old coping mechanisms that developed in response to how you have been treated. When shame and doubt rise to the surface, tell yourself, “That’s unhelpful language I used to listen to in order to adapt to whatever problematic, challenging or dysfunctional situation I was in.”

We do have another voice, another part of ourselves that’s stronger and louder than shame. It comes from the parts of ourselves we really like. What are you proud of? Maybe you’re a loyal friend, or a talented artist, or dedicated parent. Write down several of the qualities you admire about yourself and leave them on Post-It notes around the house. We want to increase the volume of this voice while turning down the more critical, negative one.

Self-compassion allows you to be good enough as you are — with your warts and your foibles. Sometimes you may be off-balanced, sometimes more reactive than you’d like, sometimes disorganized, but, fundamentally, you are perfectly imperfect as a human being, just like everyone else.

BMC Book Corner



NeuroDiversity

- Neurotribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity by Steve Silberman
- Divergent Mind: Thriving in a World That Wasn't Designed for You by Jenara Nerenberg

NeuroDivergent Fiction

- The Rosie Project: A Novel by Graeme Simsion
- The Kiss Quotient by Helen Hoang
- The Nowhere Girls by Amy Reed
- Moojag and the Auticode Secret Paperback by N.E. McMORRA

Autism & Autistic Experience

- I Think I Might Be Autistic: A Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis and Self-Discovery for Adults by Cynthia Kim
- Back From the Brink: Stories of Resilience, Reconciliation and Reconnection by Chan Tim & Chan Sarah
- The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism by Naoki Higashida
- Fall Down 7 Times Get Up 8: A Young Man's Voice from the Silence of Autism by Naoki Higashida
- All the Weight of Our Dreams: On Living Racialized Autism by Brown (Author), Autism Women's Network, Inc. (Author), E. Ashkenazy (Editor), Morénike Giwa Onaiwu (Editor)
- Communication Alternatives in Autism: Perspectives on Typing and Spelling Approaches for the Nonspeaking by Edlyn Vallejo Peña
- Typed Words Loud Voices – Amy Sequenzia (Editor), Elizabeth Grace (Editor)
- The Journal of Best Practices: A Memoir of Marriage, Asperger Syndrome, and One Man's Quest to Be a Better Husband by David Finch
- Funny, You Don't Look Autistic: A Comedian's Guide to Life on the Spectrum by Michael McCreary
- Leaders Around Me: Autobiographies of Autistics who Type, Point, and Spell to Communicate by Edlyn Vallejo Peña
- Autism: An Inside-Out Approach: An Innovative Look at the 'Mechanics' of 'Autism' and its Developmental 'Cousins' by Donna Williams
- Loud Hands: Autistic People, Speaking by Julia Bascom
- Ido in Autismland: Climbing Out of Autism's Silent Prison by Ido Kedar

My Kids Have ADHD and I Don't—And I Had to Learn How to Best Support Them



"I NEEDED TO GIVE
THEM GRACE."

Motherhood—and mothers' voices—should be celebrated every day. But that also means having honest, judgement-free conversations about the complexities of parenting. In our series Millennial Moms, we reveal the beautiful—and daunting—responsibilities of motherhood through the lens of different women's experiences, from balancing side hustles in order to provide for our kids to dealing with dating apps as young single moms.

No one was particularly surprised when my daughter was diagnosed with ADHD at age four. She is a brilliant little thing, exceptionally gifted verbally, who cannot for the life of her, focus on her body and how it moves through space. As a baby, she took her first steps in the empty, recently drained bathtub and frequently climbed far too high in trees and on play structures. She lost her two front teeth in preschool because she got distracted while running through the park and slammed into a park bench. While she was previously diagnosed with a sensory processing disorder, I knew, because of my background in education and my own research, that the ADHD diagnosis was coming.

My son, at first, seemed so different from my daughter. He wasn't as active in his gross motor skills; he had fantastic object permanence. Once, when he was barely verbal, his shoe fell off in the grocery store and, when I noticed, he told me exactly where to find it. He was super emotionally tuned-in and snuggly and, just like his sister, was diagnosed with sensory processing disorder at age two.

He was a little bowling ball, throwing himself headfirst into us during playtime. He couldn't settle his body at naptime, causing chaos at daycare and in his bedroom at home. He got into things all the time and loved to climb the drawer handles to reach things on the shelves, causing me to babyproof more than I had to with my daughter. At four, he, too, got the ADHD diagnosis.

The thing is, I don't have ADHD. I certainly had my hyperactive moments as a child and am a highly sensitive person, but my brain works differently when it comes to focusing, prioritizing, triaging problems, and solving them. I do not procrastinate; I was too cautious and sedentary as a child (and adult), preferring to write in my journal or chat with friends than run around or play sports, and I frequently read novels in one sitting.

I hate to admit it, but I resent them sometimes, for not being able to do the things I can and could do. I want them to settle, to find stillness, peace, and their coloring book that's right there on their desk in front of their face. I want them to be successful at school, to hit their fine motor milestones, to control their impulses enough to keep them safe. But, they can't do that all the time.

As he screamed his way through the terrible twos into his third birthday, I began to see the ADHD symptoms show through.



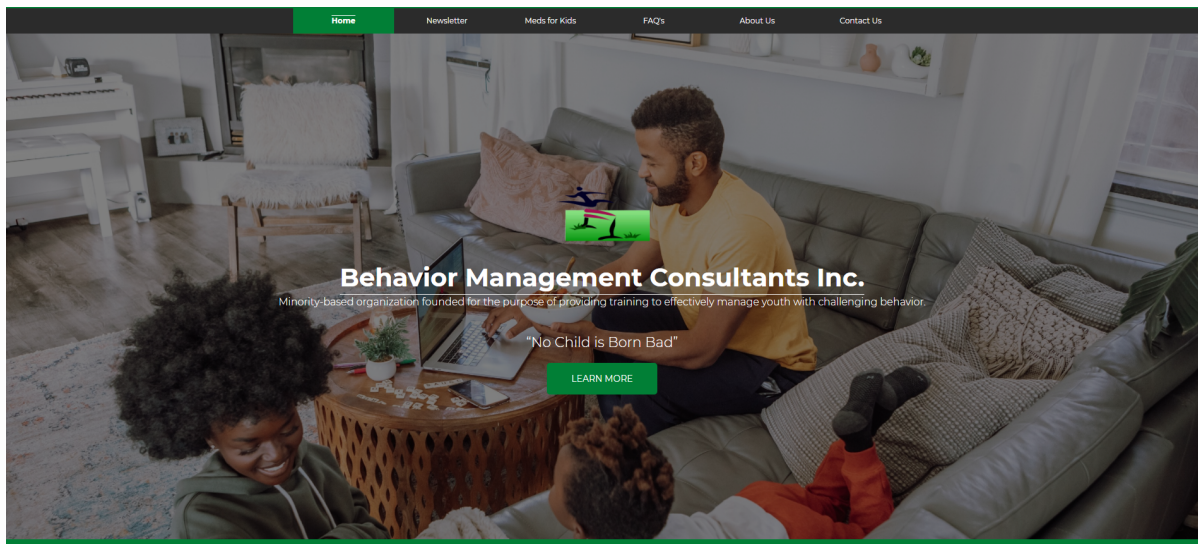
They come from me, and they have a lot of me in them. Both my kids look just like me when they're mad or confused. Both my kids have my sensitive skin and sensitive feelings. I needed to give them grace.

So I began to find resources for my kids to help them. I realized they thrived in occupational therapy. They had Early Intervention services through the school district. We got a family therapist who also has ADHD. She told me that the biggest danger to kids with ADHD is not that they'll hurt themselves doing something impulsive, but it's the shame of always wanting to do the right thing and constantly disappointing the people around them—which would create life-long mental blocks for them. They might never feel good enough. They could feel ashamed of their behavior. They can act out and do things in secret so as not to be caught disappointing me and their other loved ones.

So with the help of our family therapist, I started looking for opportunities to praise my kids. I told them how much I loved their strengths, like when my daughter cries for the dogs in TikTok videos. I told my son what a sweet, loving heart he has when he snuggles me when I'm having a hard day. When my daughter reads a difficult word or my son remembers all the lyrics to a song he heard once, I'm impressed and I tell them as much. You can see the pride on their little faces when I give them compliments and their behavior is more regulated after these moments.

I'm looking forward to finding all the creative, unexpected, quirky parts of my kids' personalities. I forgive them for forgetting their coats at places or needing to sing to themselves incessantly as we walk the dog. I forgive myself, too, for sometimes having a hard time parenting kids whose brains work so differently than mine. I do treat their ADHD and they do benefit from support, but what makes my kids' brains work the way they do is also something that contributes to how exceptional they are. The thing is, I wasn't a perfect child and I'm not a perfect parent, but when my kids are feeling good about themselves, it makes me feel like a more successful parent.

NEW WEBSITE: [HTTPS://BMCOFNYC.ORG](https://bmcofnyc.org)



Misophonia, Noise Sensitivity, and ADHD: What's the Connection?



Do certain sounds irritate you, sometimes to the point of rage?

- A friend takes out a nail file, and you shudder and dash to another room or immediately put your hands over your ears.
- Every time your co-worker stirs their coffee with a metal spoon, you have to bite your lip to keep from roaring “Stop!” at the clinking.
- You eat your dinner standing in the kitchen, with the oven fan running to block out the sound of your partner’s chewing.

If these scenarios sound a little familiar, it’s quite possible you have misophonia, a condition where certain sounds provoke an extreme emotional reaction. You might think of it as an extreme sensitivity to specific sounds – sounds that people without misophonia can generally ignore.

If you have (or suspect you have) attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a neurodevelopmental condition that often involves hypersensitivity to stimuli, you might wonder about the possible links between these conditions.

Existing research^{Trusted Source} on misophonia does suggest a possible link between misophonia and ADHD. Still, research on misophonia remains in the early stages, and experts haven't come to any conclusions about the connection between the two.

Read on for an in-depth exploration, plus a few alternate explanations to consider.

Misophonia, explained

While misophonia literally means “hatred of sound,” people living with the condition might experience a range of emotions when hearing trigger sounds.

Anger tends to be the most common, but others include:

- anxiety
- irritation
- aggravation
- disgust
- impatience

You might also feel trapped or stuck. In fact, it's not unusual for misophonia triggers to prompt a fight, flight, or freeze response.

Common triggers vary widely from person to person, and most sounds could become a trigger.

Many people say mouth sounds, like the sounds made when eating, serve as their biggest triggers. Other common triggers include:

- whistling
- sniffing
- pets licking, scratching, or grooming themselves
- clicking or tapping
- fabric rubbing
- metallic sounds
- breathing or sighing

Experts have yet to decide whether misophonia is best described as a distinct psychiatric condition or a feature of other conditions. That said, most now recognize it as a condition that can cause serious distress. In a small 2017 study, researchers noticed that the brain's emotional processing centers produced an extreme response when people with misophonia heard trigger sounds. They also noted unusual links between the anterior insular cortex and the default mode network, which helps you retrieve memories. This connection suggests unpleasant memories could also play a part in misophonia.

Research from 2021^{Trusted Source} also found support for irregular brain connections, plus evidence to suggest people with misophonia may have larger amygdala volume. Study authors believe the larger amygdala could help explain the exaggerated response to sound.

Future research may offer more insight on whether these brain differences contribute to misophonia or show up as a result of the condition.

Is misophonia more common in people with ADHD?

To date, not much research has specifically examined possible connections between ADHD and misophonia.

In a 2017 large-scale study of people living with misophonia, researchers found that half of the 301 participants also had another diagnosed condition. Among these 150 participants, 12 percent (18 people) had ADHD.

Research from 2020^{Trusted Source} considered a larger sample: 575 people with misophonia. In this study, 5 percent of participants (31 people) also had ADHD.

These findings don't offer conclusive proof of a link, but they do suggest a potential connection.

Plus, it's worth noting that experts haven't actually studied misophonia all that long. The condition itself was only named and defined in 2001^{Trusted Source} — very recently, in the context of scientific research.

The link between ADHD and hypersensitivity

Evidence supporting a link between misophonia and ADHD may be limited, but plenty of evidence connects ADHD with a heightened sensitivity to sensory stimuli, including sounds. To put it simply, people with ADHD often have trouble filtering out and processing unnecessary sensory input, or information from the surrounding environment.

Say you're sitting in a class lecture with a small group of classmates. Like everyone else, you're listening to your professor speak. But you have ADHD, and your brain also absorbs all the other sensory information in the room at the same time:

- shifting light patterns filtering through the curtains
- leaves waving in the trees outside
- clicking as the classroom heater switches on
- scribbling pens and pencils
- the tightness of your sock cuffs
- chairs squeaking
- smells of coffee and body lotion
- classmates fidgeting and swinging their legs

These details overload your brain, overwhelming you and making it hard to concentrate on the information you need most: your professor's lecture.

As with misophonia, this sensory overwhelm can lead to feelings of stress, anxiety, and anger. These emotions might prove even more challenging to tolerate and manage if you also have a hard time with emotional regulation, another common concern for people living with ADHD.

In other words, sensory processing issues could resemble misophonia, to the point where it becomes difficult to tell them apart. As an added complication, certain visual triggers also trigger a response for some people with misophonia.

Other possible links to consider

Misophonia might also be linked to a number of other conditions, including:

- depression
- anxiety
- obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Tourette syndrome
- tinnitus
- post-traumatic stress disorder

Experts have yet to discover why misophonia seems to show up more often in people living with these conditions. But it's also worth considering other significant connections and overlap between ADHD and depression, anxiety, or OCD:

Anxiety

Many people have both ADHD and anxiety. But it's also possible to confuse one for the other, since some anxiety and ADHD symptoms can resemble each other:

- restlessness and fidgeting
- difficulty relaxing or feeling calm
- difficulty managing emotions, stress, and your response to fear
- trouble with memory, concentration, and focus

Experts have found plenty of support for a link between anxiety and misophonia. In fact, older research also suggests it might develop as a symptom of generalized anxiety, as well as OCD or schizotypal personality disorder.

So, while your misophonia could certainly be linked to ADHD, it could also relate to anxiety.

OCD

As mentioned above, misophonia might occur as a symptom of OCD rather than an independent concern, and this is where things get a little complicated. Some evidence [Trusted Source](#) suggests many children diagnosed with ADHD could actually have OCD instead.

Like misophonia and ADHD, OCD often appears in childhood. And while it's certainly not impossible to experience misophonia in addition to both OCD and ADHD, 2015 research [Trusted Source](#) suggests this might be pretty uncommon.

Authors of a 2018 study note that misophonia seems closely connected to OCD obsessions. So, if you live with misophonia and also notice obsessive thoughts, or any other OCD symptoms, you might have OCD – not ADHD.

Depression

Experts may not often misdiagnose depression as ADHD, but there's another important link to consider: Many people living with ADHD also have depression.

You can say the same, though, for people living with misophonia. As a matter of fact, depression is one of the mental health conditions most commonly linked to misophonia.

The misophonia-as-a-symptom theory could help explain this link, sure. But it's also true that severe misophonia symptoms could lead you to avoid any situations where you might hear triggering sounds.

Depending on your triggers, this could mean:

- avoiding parties and other social events
- keeping your distance from loved ones
- turning down invitations to restaurants or anywhere else people eat
- struggling to manage emotional responses to sound at school, work, or home
- choosing not to have a pet, even though you really want one

In short, misophonia could lead to lifestyle changes that have a negative affect on your mood and relationships and factor into symptoms of depression.

Plus, since it seems both misophonia and ADHD can play a part in depression for some people, having misophonia as well as ADHD could raise depression risk.

When to reach out

It never hurts to connect with a therapist when you notice any symptoms that cause lingering mental or emotional distress.

Trained mental health professionals can help you identify possible causes of those symptoms, plus provide support and information about therapy and other helpful treatments for ADHD symptoms, including hypersensitivity. If misophonia does relate to ADHD, the right treatment could make a difference.

They can also offer guidance on coping tips and potential treatment options for misophonia. Even though misophonia has no known cure, a number of strategies appear to have a positive impact on symptoms:

- tinnitus retraining therapy
- counterconditioning
- cognitive behavioral therapy
- stress inoculation training
- exposure therapy

In therapy, you can also begin exploring possible changes that might help you avoid or better tolerate sound triggers in your daily life. These might include things like:

- using white noise or wearing headphones at work
- using grounding techniques to manage your response to triggers
- setting up quiet zones at home
- self-care strategies to improve overall well-being

Help from a therapist becomes even more essential if you notice feelings of anxiety or depression, or find yourself avoiding important people and parts of your life.

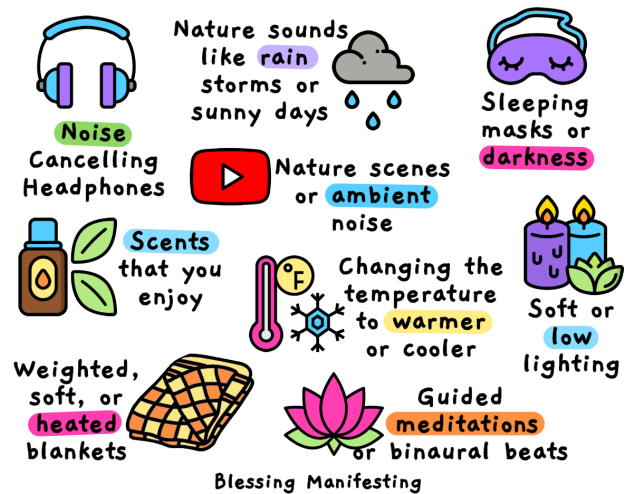
The bottom line

Experts haven't found much evidence to explain the possible link between ADHD and misophonia, but as research goes, it's early days. Future studies may offer more insight about the connection between the two.

At the end of the day, what really matters is getting support for any symptoms that disrupt your life and cause distress, whether those symptoms seem related to ADHD, misophonia, or anything else.

Since mental health professionals increasingly recognize misophonia as a real concern — especially for people who also have ADHD or certain mental health conditions — reaching out to a therapist could offer a key to improvement.

SELF-CARE FOR SENSORY OVERLOAD



IMPORTANT
NUMBERS



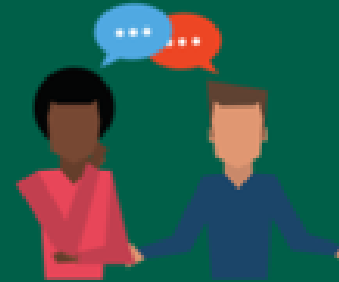
IF YOU NEED
HELP, PLEASE
MAKE THE CALL



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
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Helpline: 1-866-
331-9474

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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

"Strive for that greatness of spirit that measures life not by its disappointments but by its possibilities."
– *W. E. B. Du Bois*



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