

The ADHD Toolkit

Fun, Practical, and Evidenced
Based Interventions for
Children and Teens

Jennifer Lowery MEd, LCPC
&
Ashley Rooney LCPC, NCC

Learning Objectives

1. Understand and Define Symptoms of ADHD
2. Navigate the ADHD Diagnostic Process
3. Develop Strategies for Managing Impulsivity
4. Facilitate Emotional Regulation Skills
5. Recognize and Address Risky Behaviors in Adolescents with ADHD
6. Support Families through Education and Resources

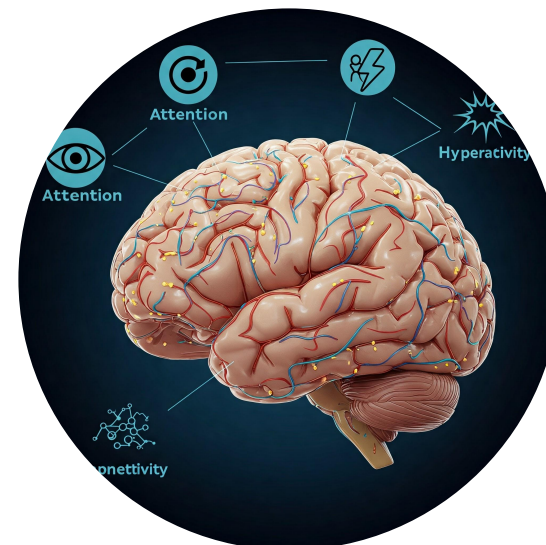
Therapist Introductions

Jennifer Lowery MEd, LCPC

- Years of experience
- Leadership at ITS, Clinical Director
- Coordinator of Internship Program
- Client Centered Strengths Based Approach
- Trauma Informed Care
- Utilization of Play therapy
- Evidence Based Practices; CBT, Family
- Bachelors in Social work
- Master's in School Counseling

Ashley Rooney LCPC, NCC

- Refreshed perspective
- Leadership at ITS, Lead Clinician
- Evidence Based Practices: DBT, CBT, TF-CBT
- Main Goal: Empower youth to understand themselves
- Bachelors in Developmental Psychology
- Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling



Defining ADHD

- A neurodevelopmental disorder
- Affects both children and adults
- Characterized by difficulty paying attention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness
- Symptoms can vary depending on the individual
- Diagnosis requires a comprehensive evaluation by a healthcare professional

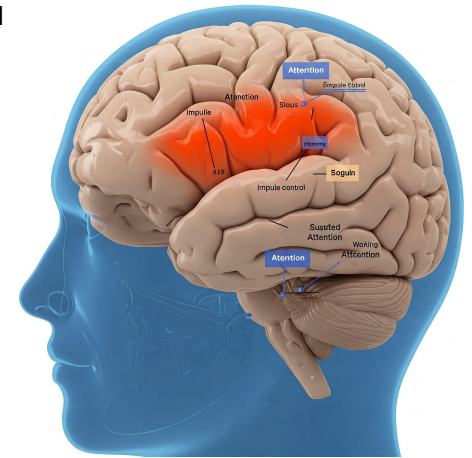
ADHD: DSM-5 Symptoms

- Inattention: Wandering off task, lacking persistence, difficulty sustaining focus.
- Hyperactivity: Excessive motor activity, restlessness, fidgeting, tapping, or talkativeness.
- Impulsivity: Hasty actions, blurting out answers, interrupting others, difficulty waiting one's turn.
- Several symptoms present prior to age 12.
- Symptoms present in 2 or more settings (home, school, work).
- Clear evidence that symptoms interfere with social, academic, or occupational functioning.



ADHD: A Neurodevelopmental Disorder

- Affects brain development and functioning.
- Impacts attention, behavior, and learning.
- Symptoms can appear in early childhood and continue into adulthood.
- Can cause difficulties in school, work, and relationships.



ADHD Symptoms Across Settings

- Symptoms must be present in two or more settings.
- Home: Difficulty following through on chores, easily distracted during activities.
- School: Difficulty staying seated, completing assignments, following instructions.
- Social Settings: Difficulty waiting turn, interrupting others, engaging in quiet activities.



ADHD Across Age Groups

- Young children: Hyperactive, impulsive, and inattentive.
- Young children: Temper tantrums, emotional outbursts.
- Teens: Inattention, restlessness, impulsivity, risk taking, earlier and typically unsafe sex practice
- Teens: Disorganization, poor time management, academic struggles, financial struggles, gambling
- Teens: Low self-esteem, social difficulties, unhealthy eating

Risk Taking and Teens: What can we do?

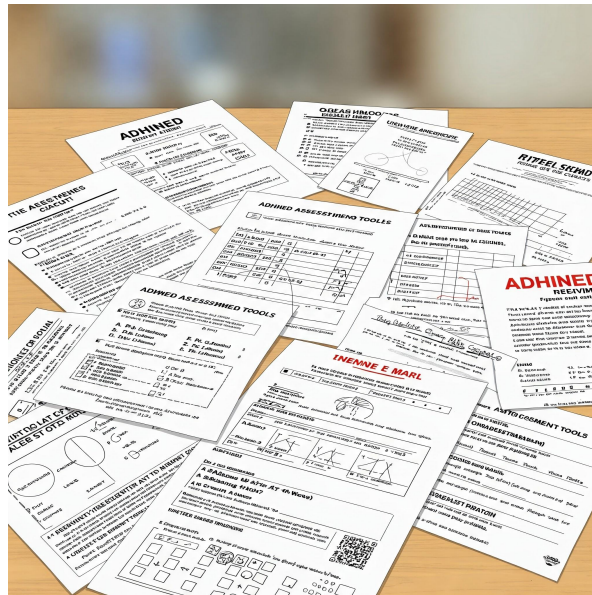


ADHD Testing and Diagnosis

- No single test to diagnose ADHD
- Requires a comprehensive evaluation by a licensed clinician
- Includes:
 - Medical history
 - Behavioral observations
 - Rating scales (e.g., Vanderbilt, Conners)
 - Psychological testing (if needed)

ADHD Assessment Tools

- Vanderbilt Assessment Scales
- Conners Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scales
- Child Behavior Checklist
- Behavior Assessment System for Children
- ADHD Rating Scale-IV
- Brown Attention-Deficit Disorder Scale

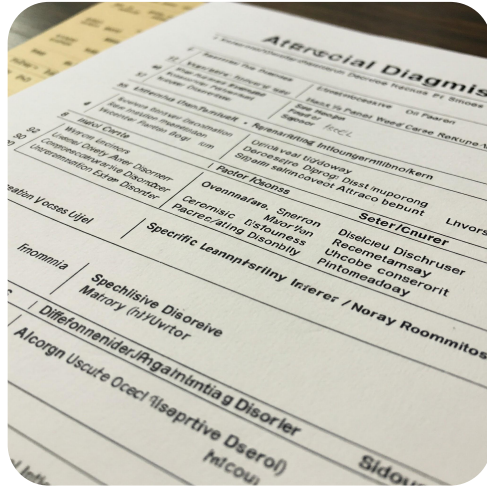


The Role of Cognitive Assessment

- Cognitive testing assesses executive functions, memory, processing speed, etc.
 - Provides insight into a child's strengths and weaknesses.
 - Informs decisions about accommodations and interventions.
 - Identifies comorbid learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia).
 - Helps differentiate ADHD from other conditions.
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Differential Diagnosis

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Anxiety Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Learning Disabilities
- Sleep Disorders
- Substance Use Disorders



Conditions Mimicking ADHD

- Medical conditions can mimic ADHD symptoms.
- Thyroid problems can cause similar symptoms.
- Sleep disorders can also cause similar symptoms.
- Seizure disorders can also cause similar symptoms.



ADHD Treatment Options

- Medication
- Psychotherapy
- Behavior Therapy
- Parent Training and Education
- Social Skills Training
- Accommodations and Support at School
- Alternative Therapies

ADHD Diagnosis and Treatment



- 01 Accurate diagnosis is key for effective treatment planning.
- 02 Prevents potentially ineffective or harmful treatments.
- 03 Ensures individuals receive tailored interventions.
- 04 These may include therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes.

Family Engagement: A Cornerstone of ADHD Support

- Creates consistency between home and school
- Promotes positive family relationships
- Increases treatment success
- Creates better outcomes for children and teens

Parent Training Programs

- **Behavioral Parent Training (BPT):**
Focuses on teaching parents evidence-based techniques for managing challenging behaviors, such as setting clear expectations, using positive reinforcement, and establishing consistent routines.
- **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT):**
A play-based therapy that helps parents improve their interactions with their child and develop effective discipline strategies.
- **Triple P (Positive Parenting Program):**
A comprehensive program that covers a wide range of parenting topics, including ADHD, and provides tools for building positive family relationships.



Educational Advocacy

- **504 Plan:** legal document outlining accommodations for students.
- **Eligibility:** ADHD diagnosis impacting major life activities.
- **Accommodations:** preferential seating, extended time, assistive technology, etc.
- **Process:** Contact school, provide documentation, collaborate on plan development.
- **Advocacy:** Partner with school, stay informed, monitor progress.



Self-Care for Parents

- Make time for yourself
- Practice self-compassion
- Find a support system
- Take care of your physical health
- Seek professional help if needed



Additional Resources For Families

- CHADD: Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- ADDitude Magazine
- National Resource Center on ADHD
- Understood.org
- Local support groups

Children vs Teen Approach

Multimodal treatment approach

- Medication
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Parental Training/Support (Family Therapy, strategies to manage)
- School Based Intervention
- Social Skills Training

Psychoeducation

Understand the Challenges of

- Brain Differences
- Emotional Dysregulation
- Impact on Well-being

Why use play therapy techniques with ADHD children?

- Children play to learn
- According to Piaget's Model of Development Children are unable to engage in abstract thinking until age 11 or 12



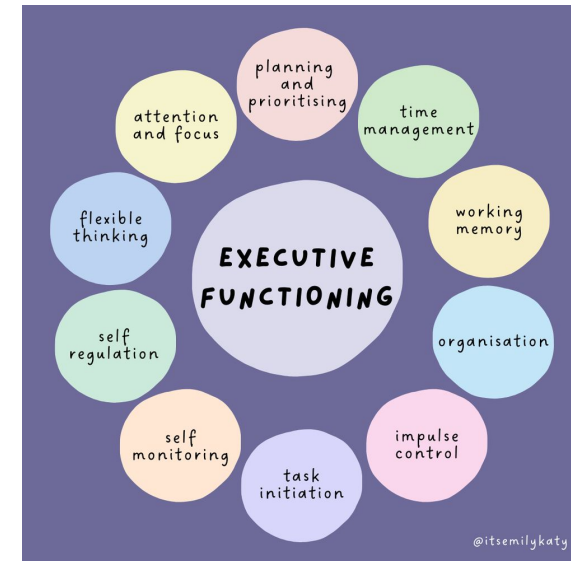
ADHD Treatment: Play Therapy

- Play Therapy is an evidence-based treatment for ADHD in children.
- Play Therapy is effective in reducing ADHD symptoms like hyperactivity and impulsivity.
- Play Therapy helps children improve their attention and focus.
- Play Therapy can be used in combination with other treatments like medication and parent training.



ADHD and Executive Function

- **Organization:** External supports like planners and color-coding systems.
- **Time Management:** Breaking down tasks, visual schedules, timers.
- **Working Memory:** Chunking information, visual aids, repetition.
- **Planning/Prioritization:** Goal setting, clear steps, checklists.
- **Task Initiation:** External cues, routines, and positive reinforcement.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Mindfulness strategies and coping skills.



Working Memory Activities

- Memory Match
- Simon Says
- Story Recall
- Shopping List Memory
- Number Sequences



Self Control Activities

- Freeze Dance
- Red Light, Green Light
- Simon Says
- Musical Chairs
- Hot Potato
- Duck, Duck, Goose
- Yoga
- Jenga



Cognitive Flexibility Activities

- **Opposite Day:** Children act in opposite ways, fostering adaptability.
- **Mixed-Up Stories:** Retelling stories with mixed-up elements encourages flexible thinking.
- **Multiple Uses Game:** Finding new uses for everyday objects sparks creativity.
- **Puzzles**



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- **Feelings Chart:** Identify and express emotions using a visual chart.
- **Deep Breathing:** to manage anger and frustration.
- **Emotion Journal:** to improve self-awareness and coping skills.
- **Mindfulness Activities**
- **Role Play:** Practice to learn appropriate responses to emotional triggers.

Time Management for Activities



- Visual Timers: Use visual timers to show concept of passing time.
- Countdown Timers: Give a sense of urgency for task completion.
- Daily Schedules: Visual schedules help kids know what to expect and when.
- Break Planning: Schedule breaks to avoid burnout and improve focus.
- Task Breakdown: Help kids by breaking down tasks into smaller, manageable chunks.

Interventions for Impulse control



Impulse Control & Delay Gratification

- Token Systems: Provide rewards for desired behaviors.
- Structured Games: Games with rules and turns promote self-control.
- "Stop and Think" Technique: Teach children to pause before acting.
- Delayed Gratification Exercises: Practice waiting for rewards.
- Role-Playing: Act out scenarios to practice appropriate responses.



Recognizing and Managing Impulsivity Strategies



- Self-Monitoring: Notice impulsive thoughts and behaviors
- Impulse Delay: Pause before reacting, count to 10
- Cognitive Restructuring: Challenge and reframe impulsive thoughts
- Problem-Solving Skills: Think through consequences and alternatives
- Mindfulness Practices: Increase awareness of present thoughts and feelings

ADHD and Mindfulness

- Deep Breathing
- Guided Imagery
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Mindfulness Exercises
- Yoga and Tai Chi



Activity Practice Time

Let's try some Mindfulness, a very useful activity tool to help ADHD brains concentrate and calm down.



Building Social Skills

Necessary for teens AND children

- ADHD children and teens often lack social skills
 - Group settings can be beneficial
 - Interpersonal skills (active listening, empathy, teamwork, conflict resolution)
 - Self-awareness and emotional regulation key skills
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Empathy Skills

- Promotes friendship and positive relationships
- Helps understand kindness
- Practices fair play
- Promotes sharing
- Adults are the model for empathetic behavior

Emotional Regulation vs. Dysregulation

Signs of Emotion Dysregulation in ADHD

Emotional sensitivity  Heightened reactivity to both positive and negative stimuli, leading to intense emotional experiences	Difficulty self-regulating primary emotional responses  Struggles with managing initial, impulsive emotional reactions, often resulting in outbursts	Difficulties self-soothing  Challenges in calming down after experiencing intense emotions, prolonging emotional distress
Difficulty regulating secondary emotions  Struggles with prioritizing and expressing appropriate emotional responses following the initial reaction	Problems refocusing attention away from strong emotions  Difficulty shifting focus from intense emotions to other tasks, leading to emotional perseveration	Emotional detachment  Withdrawing emotionally as a coping mechanism to minimize exposure to triggering situations

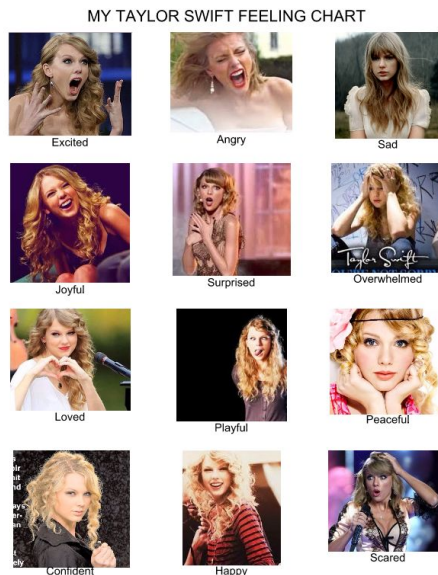
Simply Psychology

Emotional Awareness for Kids



Emotional Awareness for Teens

- Teach and help identify feelings
- Relatability can help: Books, Music, Art, Tv shows
- Teens may not always “know” how they feel but they can express relating to something they understand



Strategies for expressing emotions appropriately

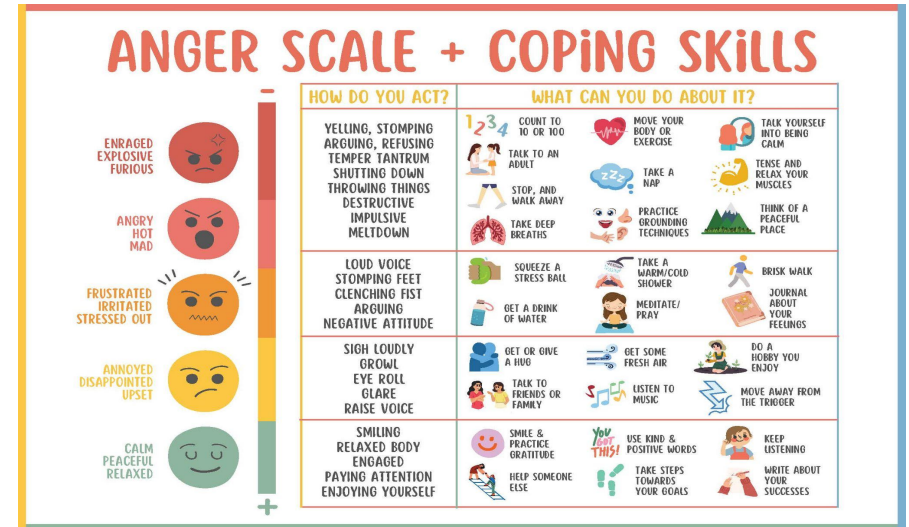
- Encourage open communication
- Validate Feelings
- Read Books About Emotions
- Use Art, Dance, Music
- Praise and encouragement

Activities for Identifying and Labeling Emotions

- "Feelings" Thermometer
- "My Feelings" Collage
- "How Do I Feel?" Matching Game
- "Emotion Charades"
- "The Feeling Wheel"

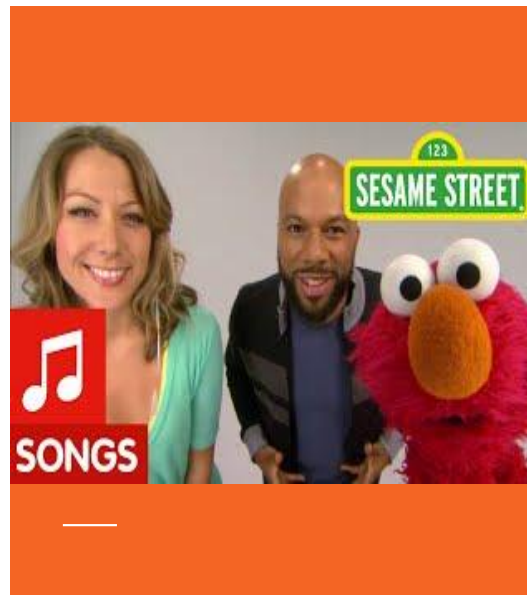
Communication Skills Activities

- Back-to-Back drawing activity
- 20 questions game
- "Guess Who" Board Game
- "Headbandz" Game



Managing Anger

- Deep Breathing, Count to 10, take a break, meditation
- Take a walk, do jumping jacks, hop on one foot, draw, paint, play music
- Talk to trusted adult or friend
- STOP Skill (DBT)- STOP, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed Mindfully



Managing Anger in Teens- Evidence Based Techniques

- Self Soothing (mindfulness, music, alone time)
- Self-Awareness (Process of reflection)
- Rethinking the Situation (Image alternate possibilities)
- Healthy Self-Expression (Creativity)
- Building Resilience (self Care, sleep, friendship)



ADHD and Technology



- Children with ADHD can have a difficult time regulating screen time
- Technology can overstimulate and exacerbate ADHD symptoms
- Limits and Rules around use
- Encourage other activities and hobbies

Technology and ADHD

A study showed that 58% of children and adolescents with internet addiction also reported ADHD symptoms.



Ha, J. H., Yoo, H., Cho, I. H., Chin, B., Shin, D., & Kim, J. H. (2006). Psychiatric comorbidity assessed in Korean children and adolescents who screen positive for Internet addiction. *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 67(5), 821–826

Technology's Impact on ADHD



Technology can overstimulate and exacerbate ADHD symptoms.

Increased screen time can lead to

- Sleep problems
- Social isolation
- Decreased attention span
- Increased impulsivity

Family Media Agreement

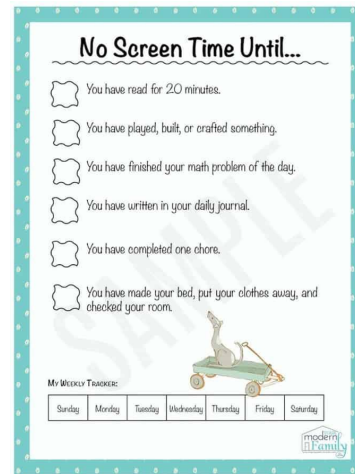
- Family media plan - create, implement, and adjust as needed.
- Tech-free zones and times - e.g. dinner table, bedrooms, before bed
- Time limits - for entertainment screen time by age and development
- Balance screen time with other activities - e.g. family, hobbies, outdoor play
- Monitor content - and co-view media with younger children
- Open communication - about online safety and appropriate content

Media Agreement



Strategies for promoting healthy screen time limits

- Provide Fun Alternatives: games, puzzles, outdoor activities, reading challenges,
- Have tech free areas: bedrooms, dining table, car rides less than an hour.
- Create no screen time until guidelines
- Use screen time as a reward
- Encourage Physical Activity
- No screens before bed
- Be a good role model



Let's wrap it up

Summary & Conclusion

- ADHD symptoms
- How to diagnosis?
- Family support
- Evidence based practices/therapies
- Social Skills
- ADHD and Technology



Thank you for your time!

Comments?

Questions?

Concerns?