

ADHD: What is it and How Can we Help?

A Presentation to the:
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1

A Word on the Presenter

- Clinical Neuropsychologist & Diplomate in School Psychology
- Specializations include:
 - Dyslexia / Learning Disability Testing
 - ADHD Testing
 - Testing for Autism spectrum disorders
 - Neuropsychological Evaluations
 - Evaluations of Behavioral and Emotional Problems
 - Workshops to parents, teachers, & students on academic and emotional growth
- Evaluations help answer questions such as:
 - What is the problem? What is causing it? What can be done to help?
- Facebook page: "Dr. Edward M. Petrosky"
- www.toolsforstudents.info

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Facebook Fan Page

- For handouts and information on a wide range of psychology and education topics become a "fan" of my Facebook page: "Dr. Edward M. Petrosky."

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3

Executive Functioning in the Classroom: What Every Teacher Should Know

- Full Day Workshop sponsored by Nassau BOCES
- Friday, November 4, 2011
- 8:30 – 3:30
- To register visit: www.nassauboces.org, type in executive functioning in the search box, click on first option or call 516-608-6603

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4

ADHD

The "Official" Diagnostic Criteria

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5

Inattention

Six or more for at least 6 months to a degree that is interferes with school, work, or relationships and is beyond what you'd expect for that age level:

- Fails to give attention to details; careless mistakes
- Difficulty keeping focus on 1 thing (sustaining attention)
- Doesn't seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Doesn't complete assignments or chores;
- Doesn't follow through

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Inattention

- Difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require concentration
- Loses important materials necessary for tasks or activities
- Easily distracted
- Forgetful

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Hyperactivity-Impulsivity

Six or more at least 6 months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level

Hyperactivity

- Often fidgets or squirms
- Often leaves seat in class or other situations where expected to sit still
- Runs, climbs excessively where inappropriate (in adolescents or adults may be just *feelings* of restlessness)

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Hyperactivity-Impulsivity

Hyperactivity

- Difficulty with quiet leisure activities
- Always on the go, as if driven by a motor
- Talks too much

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Hyperactivity-Impulsivity

Impulsivity

- Blurts out answers before questions have been completed
- Often has difficulty waiting for his or her turn
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g. games or conversations)

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Hyperactivity-Impulsivity

- Hyperactivity in childhood may turn into subjective feeling of restlessness by adolescence.

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**What does it mean
diagnostically if a child
has good attention for...**

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Video Games
Action Movies
Stuff s/he is really interested in

...it means
....nothing

People with and without attention problems can pay attention to things that are particularly engaging. The key is whether or not the child can *control* his or her attention enough to focus on what he or she *needs* to focus on as opposed to what he or she may *want* to focus on.

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ADHD is a problem with executive functioning.

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Executive Functioning
A Definition

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Executive Functioning

- ◆ A collection of skills used to organize and direct behavior towards purposeful goals.
- ◆ Helps us control and regulate our behavior.
- ◆ Self-monitor and guide our performance

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Executive Functioning =

- ◆ Plan
- ◆ Organize
- ◆ Control

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Disorders Characterized by Poor Executive Functioning

- ADHD
- Asperger's
- Autism
- Depression
- OCD
- Tourette's
- Others

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Strategies to Help

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Homework Compliance

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Self Assessment?

- What time does your child complete HW?
- Does your child have a work station? If so, what does it look like?
- What time does your child do what he or she enjoys (e.g. TV, video games, computer, etc.)?
- Is your child's HW copied correctly?
- How do you know?
- What happens if it isn't?

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Improving HW Compliance

(From: Kapalka, 2010)

- Establish a consistent time to begin homework, preferably no later than 1 hour after school
- Establish a work setting that allows the child to be monitored but is free from distractions
- Child is allowed to earn certain privileges (e.g. TV, computer, video games) only after all the HW is completed

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Improving HW Compliance

(From: Kapalka, 2010)

- Teacher initials HW pad to ensure HW is copied correctly
- If the student did not bring the HW pad home, or forgot any component needed to complete the day's assignments, the child lost privileges.
- One study: the above produced a significant reduction in problems of HW compliance (large effect size of .5).

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Promoting Classroom Rules

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25

Promoting Classroom Rules

- Make several short, high priority rules
 - E.g. "Raise your hand before speaking."
- Be repetitive. It's O.K. to sound like a broken record.
- Be proactive – remind students of the rules before beginning the task.
- Research: Positive correlation between following classroom rules and successful school performance.

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Structured Choices

- Present menu of academic tasks (e.g. spelling or vocabulary words)
- Research shows this leads to:
 - Increased on-task behavior
 - Reduction in disruptive behavior

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Be Consistent

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Consistency

- When do you decide that a behavior is not allowed?
- Decide in advance
- Don't say anything you are *unable* or *unwilling* to do

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Consistency

- When you can, use rewards instead of punishments.
- What are some behaviors that a child with ADHD might engage in in the classroom that you would want to change?
- So, how do you use reward if say, the problem is that Johnny keeps touching his neighbor? Or, Sally keeps calling out?
- Reward the opposite

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Consistency

- When going to someplace unstructured (e.g. store, down to lunch, an assembly, etc.) what rules do you give? How do you give them?
- Use a few simple rules in lieu of numerous and / or complex prohibitive instructions. (e.g. "We're going to the supermarket. No running and stay by my side").

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Consistency

- What's the optimal way to say a limit?
- Matter of fact tone.

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Consistency

- Do not turn "no" to "yes." (e.g. "Well since you were good on the ride home, we'll get ice cream after all"). The child learns that complaining is the way to get what you want.

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Consistency

- Check to make sure the child has completed what you asked them to. (e.g. If the child was told he or she could only go out and play after their homework was done, check the homework before you let them run outside.).

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Consistency

- This can certainly be a challenge but, parents should not undermine each other. Discuss disagreements privately

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Consistency

- What if you get a little carried away and decide that a punishment you gave is too harsh?
- Have the child earn a reduction in punishment. (e.g. "If you do the following chores, you will be grounded for 1 week instead of 3 months.").

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Consistency

- What are big deals? What are little deals?
- "Pick your battles."

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Giving Effective Feedback

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Giving Effective Feedback

- Immediately
- Directly to the child
- Brief
- Descriptive: Focused on what the child is actually doing or not doing (e.g. "Johnny you're not looking at me.") Not on presumed motivations (e.g. "Johnny you're losing interest again.")
- Actionable: Focused on behavior that can be changed
- Stated in a matter of fact, "I'm just letting you know" tone of voice
- Eye contact
- Privately
- Balanced with praise for instances in which child is doing the opposite of the behavior s/he is reprimanded for.

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Behavior Intervention Plans

- Involve many aspects, key features of which include (but are not limited to) the following:

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BIP's: Key Features

- Define problem behaviors specifically
- Define target behaviors by figuring out what would be the *opposite* of the problem behavior – this is the behavior you will be rewarding
- Decide what the reward will be and how it will be earned. Inform the child and all relevant players of the component of the plan.
- Be on the lookout for the target behavior so you can document its occurrence

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BIP's: Key Features

- Child receives points, tokens, etc. to exchange for rewards at home or school. (e.g. Privileges, such as extra access to the computer).
- Ideal to give the points at frequent regular intervals throughout the day so the child receives some form of reward soon after the target behavior occurs.
- Includes the "daily report cards," where the teacher indicates how many points the child earned who can then "purchase" rewards at home such as time on the computer, playing video games, etc.

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Self-Mediated Interventions: Self-Ratings

- Student rates his/her behavior
- If the rating matches the teacher's earns a point
- If the rating is more than "x" amount of off from the teacher's rating, the child loses a point

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Peer-Mediated Interventions

- Peer tutoring has been shown to increase on-task behavior

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Thank you very much!

Any questions?

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45