

# Attention- Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Parent Talk

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# Agenda



- What is ADHD?
- What is ADHD's impact?
- What can we do about it?
- Questions, Comments, & Feedback

# DSM-5 Definition

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder

This means it is brain based and it changes over time.

# Inattention Symptoms

Difficulty organizing tasks and activities

Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly

Loses things necessary for tasks or activities

Difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities

Forgetful in daily activities

Difficulty paying attention to detail and/or makes careless

Avoids or dislikes engaging in tasks that require a lot of focus and mental effort

Difficulty following through on instructions and fails to finish tasks

Is often easily distracted by other things around them



# Hyperactivity & Impulsivity Symptoms

Interrupts or intrudes on others

Difficulty waiting his or her turn

Blurts out an answer before a question has been completed

Often talks excessively

Is often “on the go,” acting as if “driven by a motor”

Difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly

Runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate

Leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected

Fidgets with or taps hands or feet or squirms in seat

# DSM-5 Definition

Three subtypes of ADHD:

- Predominantly Inattentive
- Predominantly Hyperactive & Impulsive
- Combined Type

# Associated Features of ADHD

- Executive function delays/deficits
  - Planning
  - Organizing
  - Self-monitoring
  - Self-regulation
  - Inhibition
  - Time perception, estimation, monitoring
  - Cognitive flexibility
  - Working memory
  - Social cognition
- Prospective memory difficulties



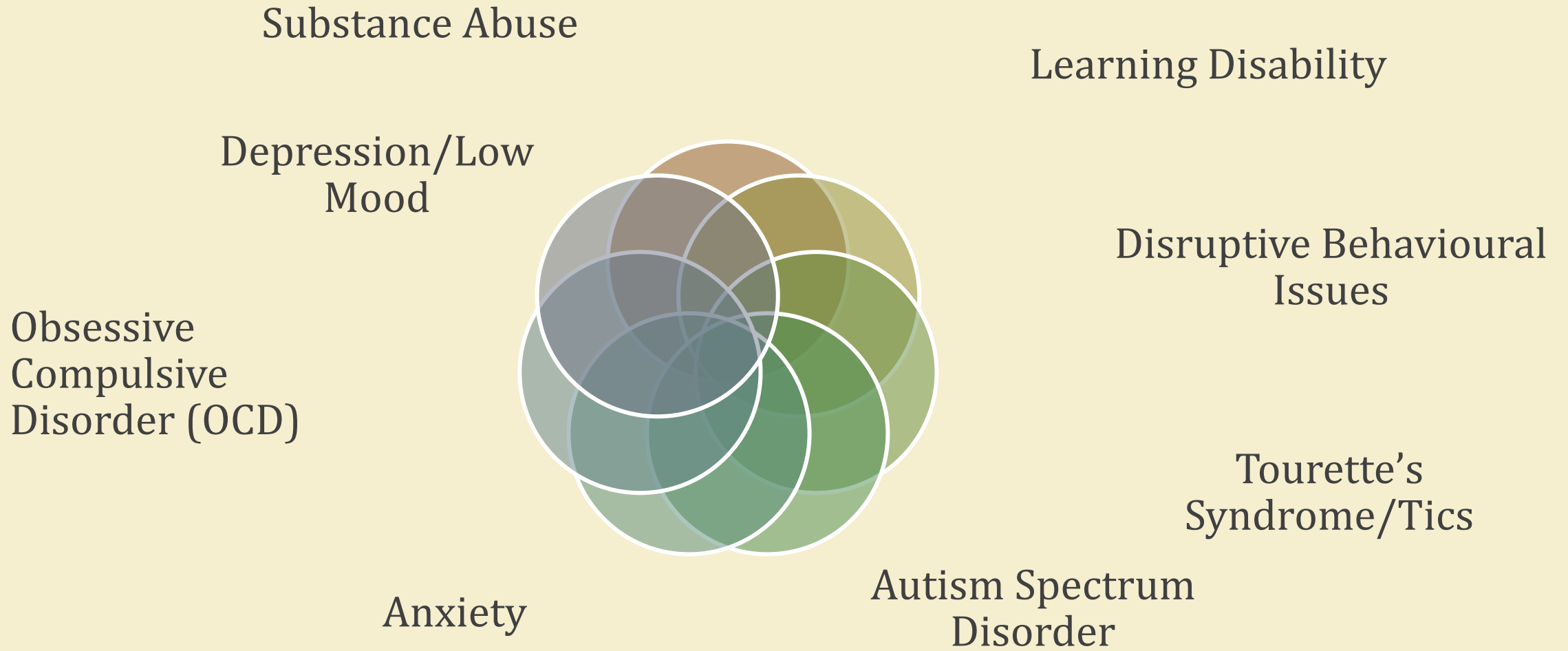
# What causes ADHD?



No single factor causes ADHD



# Common Co-existing Conditions



# Diagnosing ADHD

- Made by qualified licensed health care professionals (e.g., psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians)
- Considers many sources of information from multiple informants in the context of a comprehensive assessment
  - In-depth clinical interviewing and history taking
  - Parent- , teacher-, and self-report information
  - Behavioural observations
  - Standardized testing



# A Process of *Understanding*

- The process of diagnosing a child is to help with understanding the behaviour and the needs the child may have to function optimally
- Some families and children feel relieved that their difficulties can be understood within the context of a disorder
- Some families feel upset and experience loss that their child has a condition that they must live and adjust to. Most families feel a mixture of both.
- Worries about being “labeled”...
- With accurate understanding a shift can occur that these symptoms are not purposeful and acknowledge that treatment is required like any other disorder (e.g., Diabetes).

# Risks of not treating ADHD

- Secondary anxiety in some settings
- Low mood, self-esteem issues
- Social difficulties and isolation
- Compounded learning concerns/low achievement
- Increased family stress/conflict
- Increased risk-taking behaviours



# ADHD Myths vs. Facts



# Myth or Fact

- The brain of someone with ADHD is overactive and needs medication to calm down. **MYTH**
- **FACT**- Underactivity of the brain's management network is typical of a child with ADHD.

# Myth or Fact

- ADHD is a simple problem of being hyperactive or not listening.
- **FACT-** ADHD is a complex disorder with impairments in focus, organization, motivation, emotional regulation, and other brain management systems.

# Myth or Fact

- Boys are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than girls.
- That doesn't mean girls don't have ADHD. They're just more likely to be overlooked and remain undiagnosed. Girls tend to be less disruptive in class and may appear more distracted.

FACT



# Myth or Fact

- Children who take ADHD medication are more likely to abuse drugs when they become teenagers.
- **MYTH**
- **FACT**- Actually, it's just the opposite. Having untreated ADHD increases the risk that an individual will abuse drugs or alcohol later in life. Appropriate treatment reduces this risk.

# Myth or Fact

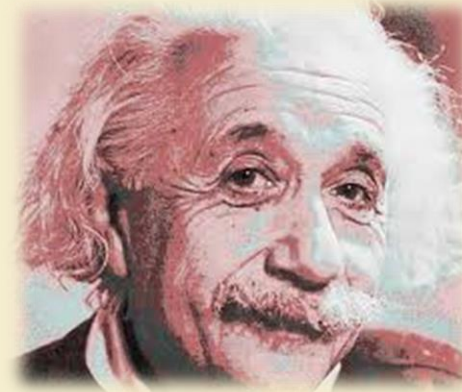
- ADHD is a real medical diagnosis. **FACT**
- ADHD has been recognized as a legitimate diagnosis by major medical, psychological, and educational organizations.

# Myth or Fact

- Children with ADHD eventually outgrow their condition. **MYTH**
- **FACT-** ADHD is a lifelong condition. The symptoms may change as your child gets older and learns ways to manage them, but that's not the same as outgrowing them.

# So what does this mean for their future?

- Most children with ADHD become employed as adults
- Some even achieve higher ranking positions (e.g., doctors, lawyers, CEOs, entrepreneurs)
- Some children with ADHD do not exhibit social or behaviour problems into their mid 20's





# Strengths/Positive

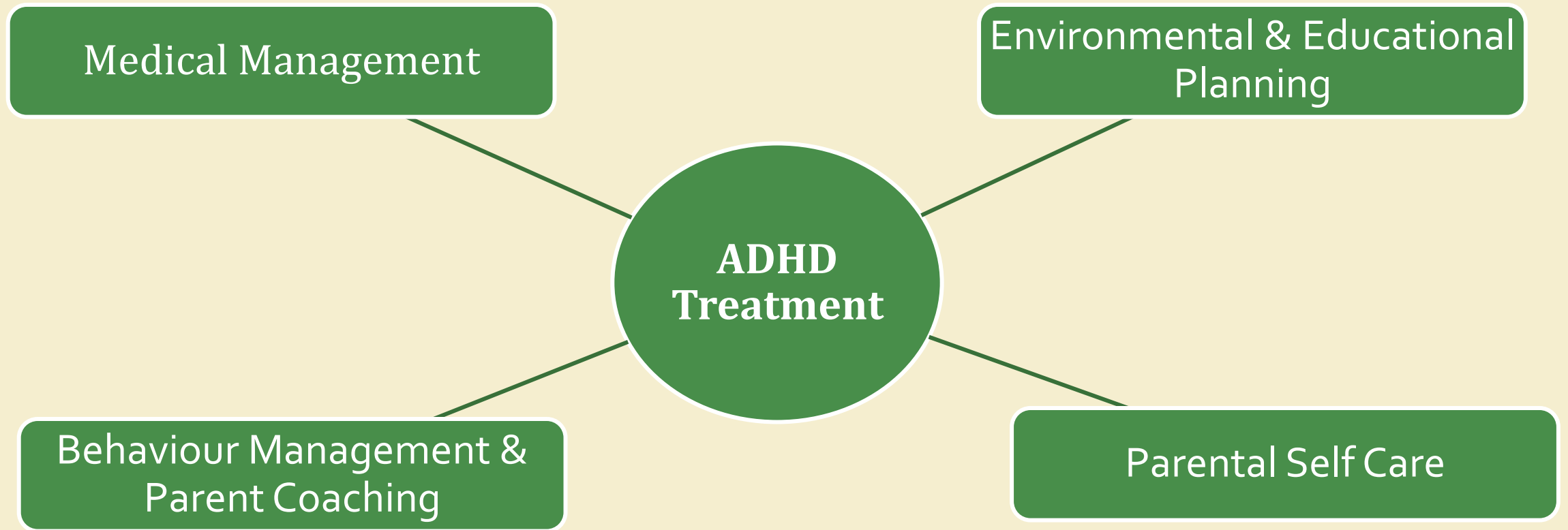
- Passionate & Enthusiastic
- Curious & adventurous
- Highly invested in areas of interest (sports, hobbies, projects, games)
- Competitive and want to do well
- Energetic
- Funny! Never a dull moment...
- Have lots of ideas – creative thinkers





So what do we  
do about  
ADHD?

# Treatment Strategies



# Helping a Child with ADHD

- **“Help me focus”**
  - Please teach me through my sense of touch. I need hands-on and body movement.
- **“I need to know what comes next”**
  - Please give me a structured environment. Give me warnings if there will be changes.”
- **“Wait for me, I am still thinking”**
  - Please allow me to go at my own pace. If I am rushed, I get confused and upset.
- **“I am stuck, I can’t do it.”**
  - Please offer me options for problem-solving. I need to know the detours if the road is blocked.



- **“Is it right? I need to know now.”**
  - Please give me rich and immediate feedback on how I am doing. I didn't forget. I didn't hear it in the first place. Please give me directions, one step at a time and ask me to say back what I think you said.
- **“I didn't know I was not in my seat.”**
  - Please remind me to stop, think, and act.
- **“Am I almost done now?”**
  - Please give me short work periods with short term goals.
- **“I know it is all wrong, isn't it?”**
  - Please give me praise for partial success. Reward me for self-improvement not just for perfection.
- **“But why do I always get yelled at?”**
  - Please catch me doing something right and praise me for my specific positive behaviour. Remind me and yourself about my good points when I am having a bad day.

## Use Larger and More Powerful Incentives

- More powerful incentives may be needed. These can include affection, activities, extra time/privileges, special snacks, tokens, points, material rewards, even money.

## Use Incentives Before Punishment.

- Positives before Negatives. Avoid the drift to using punishment. Remember the 5:1 rule. When replacing an undesirable behaviour, first decide what positive behaviour you want to replace it.



## Strive for Consistency

- Be consistent over time. Don't give up, be consistent. Respond in the same fashion even when the setting changes.

## Plan Ahead for Problem Situations

- Anticipate problem situations, plan for how to deal, share plan with your child beforehand, and follow through.

Risk factors	Triggers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of sleep</li><li>• Lack of food</li><li>• Lack of exercise</li><li>• Not feeling well</li><li>• Change of routine</li><li>• Tension in the home</li><li>• New people/situations</li><li>• Stress from friends/school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limits/being told 'No'</li><li>• Separation</li><li>• Adjusting to change in routine</li><li>• Losing a game</li><li>• Making a mistake</li></ul>

## Keep a Compassionate Perspective

*Children do well when they can.* You are this child's teacher and coach.

## Look for the meaning behind the behaviour

- All behaviour has meaning
- Take a step back to see what they might be communicating
- Practice empathy
- Try to respond rather than react



## Don't Personalize Your Child's Difficulties or Disorder

- Don't conclude that you are a bad parent when a situation goes wrong or does not turn out as you wanted.

## Practice Forgiveness

- Practice the following 3 steps each day:
  - Review the day and forgive your child for transgressions. Let go of destructive emotions.
  - Forgive others
  - Forgive yourself



# Parental Self-Care

- Parenting is challenging. Parenting a child with ADHD is even more challenging! ...but it gets easier.
- Schedule time to take a break
- Modify expectations
- Focus on your child's strengths



# Questions?

Comments? Concerns?

