

# GUIDE TO ADHD PSYCHOEDUCATION

## What is ADHD?

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** is a neurodevelopmental condition with symptoms existing along a continuum from mild to severe. It occurs across the life span.

## How is ADHD Treated?

Treatment should be **multimodal**. Incorporating different interventions, such as education, medication, and behavioral modifications/motivational interviewing/psychotherapy, produces a better outcome.

**Treatment must be collaborative among the physician, the patient, and the family. It should be targeted to each individual's needs and goals, which may change over time.**

## Two important components of a multimodal approach:

### PSYCHOEDUCATION

**Psychoeducation should be the first intervention.** Educating the family/patient about ADHD (symptoms, functional impairment, possible comorbidities and treatment) will ensure a more successful outcome.

### PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS

Psychosocial interventions can reduce impairments associated with ADHD symptoms and improve overall quality of life. Interventions can be **cognitive** or **behavioral**.

## PSYCHOEDUCATION

### Discover

- ◆ What does the individual/family know about ADHD?

### Demystify

- ◆ Myths about ADHD
- ◆ Diagnosis and assessment processes

### Instill Hope

- ◆ Evidence-based treatments and interventions **do** exist and **will** promote a positive outcome

### Educate

- ◆ Importance of combining pharmacological and psychosocial interventions
- ◆ Risks and benefits

### Empathize

- ◆ Acknowledge feelings of discouragement, grief, and frustration.

### Encourage

- ◆ A strength-based approach
- ◆ Make more positive than negative comments
- ◆ Discourage criticisms

### Recognize

- ◆ Appropriate behavior, whether observed or reported
- ◆ Goals achieved

### Be Sensitive

- ◆ Ethnic, cultural and gender issues may shape the perception and beliefs about ADHD and its treatment

### Motivate

- ◆ Nurture strengths and talents
- ◆ Encourage skills

### Promote

- ◆ Regular exercise
- ◆ Consistent sleep hygiene
- ◆ Healthy nutrition routine

### Humour



Humour can defuse awkward, tense situations and avoid or reduce conflict

### Give Resources

- ◆ Websites
- ◆ Local community resources
- ◆ Book lists

# GUIDE TO ADHD PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS

## At Home

### Instructional

- ◆ Make eye and/or gentle physical contact before giving one or two clear instructions. Have instructions repeated back, or confirm they were understood, before proceeding

### Behavioral

- ◆ Use a positive approach and calm tone of voice. Teach calming techniques to de-escalate conflict
- ◆ Use praise, catch them being good (playing nicely)
- ◆ Set clear attainable goals and limits (homework and bedtime routines, chores) and connect them to earning privileges, special outings etc.
- ◆ Use positive incentives and natural consequences: *When you..., then you may...*
- ◆ Empathy statements can be useful, such as *I understand*
- ◆ Adults should model emotional self-regulation and a balanced lifestyle (good eating and sleep habits, exercise and hobbies)
- ◆ Choices should be limited to two or three options

### Environmental

- ◆ Structure and routine are essential. Parents/partners must be united, consistent, firm, fair and follow through
- ◆ Encourage prioritizing instead of procrastination
- ◆ Post visual reminders (rules, lists, sticky notes, calendars) in prominent locations
- ◆ Use timers/apps for reminders (homework, chores, limiting electronics, paying bills)
- ◆ Keep labeled, different coloured folders or containers in prominent locations for items (keys, electronics).
- ◆ Find the work area best suited to the individual (dining table, quiet area)
- ◆ Break down tasks
- ◆ Allow movement breaks
- ◆ Allow white noise (fan, background music) during homework or at bedtime

### Other referrals may be needed:

- ◆ Psychologist
- ◆ Tutor, Family Therapist
- ◆ Parenting Programs
- ◆ Social Skills Program
- ◆ Organizational Skill Course
- ◆ Occupational Therapist
- ◆ Speech and Language
- ◆ Audiologist
- ◆ Learning Strategist
- ◆ ADHD Coach
- ◆ Vocational Coach

## At School

### Instructional

- ◆ Keep directions clear and precise
- ◆ Get student's attention before giving instructions
- ◆ Check understanding and provide clarification as needed
- ◆ Actively engage the student by providing work at the appropriate academic level

### Behavioral

- ◆ Provide immediate and frequent feedback
- ◆ Use direct requests – *when...then*
- ◆ Visual cues for transitions
- ◆ Allow for acceptable opportunities for movement – “walking passes”

### Environmental

- ◆ Preferential seating
- ◆ Quiet place for calming down

### Accommodations

- ◆ Chunk and break down steps to initiate tasks
- ◆ Provide visual supports to instruction
- ◆ Reduce the amount of work required to show knowledge
- ◆ Allow extended time on tests and exams
- ◆ Provide note taker or access to assistive technology
- ◆ Supports can include the CADDRA psychoeducational and accommodations template
- ◆ Request school support services

## At Work

### Accommodations

- ◆ Identify accommodation needs
- ◆ Provide CADDRA workplace accommodations template

### Counsel

- ◆ Suggest regular and frequent meetings with manager and support collaborative approach
- ◆ Set goals, learn to prioritize, review progress regularly
- ◆ Identify time management techniques that work for the client, e.g. using a planner, apps
- ◆ Declutter and create a work-friendly environment

### Tools

- ◆ Organizational apps and/or productivity websites [caddra.ca/medical-resources/psychosocial-information](http://caddra.ca/medical-resources/psychosocial-information)

## Relationships

- ◆ Understand the impact ADHD can have on relationships with partners, family, friends, teachers, peers and co-workers.
- ◆ Recognize and accept ADHD can cause unintended friction and frustration between parent and child as well as between partners (e.g. difficulties with self-regulation, time management difficulties)
- ◆ Learn how to listen and communicate effectively
- ◆ Organize frequent time to communicate (don't just talk) to discuss goals and plans (what works, what doesn't) within home, educational and work environments
- ◆ Schedule regular fun with family, partner, friends
- ◆ Practice relaxation and mindfulness techniques [caddra.ca/medical-resources/psychosocial-information](http://caddra.ca/medical-resources/psychosocial-information)
- ◆ Stay calm, be positive, recognize/validate and celebrate strengths!

