

Conference Abstracts

The Neurobiology of ADHD: A Focus on the ADHD Brain – Dr. Kenny Handelman

While ADHD symptoms have been described in the medical literature as far back as 1798, in the 20th century, our understanding of ADHD grew exponentially. The history of ADHD shows us that in the early to mid-20th century, it was recognized that ADHD is a brain-based condition. As technology has improved our ability to research the genetics and brains of individuals with ADHD, the research is exploding with new insights into this condition. This presentation will take the participant through the history of ADHD and address our best understanding of what causes ADHD. It will then address the historical and newer research on the science of the ADHD brain – ie which parts of the brain are different in individuals with ADHD, including brain development across the lifespan. It'll then review the brain-based research on ADHD medication, and discuss the exciting leading edge of brain-based research in ADHD. Finally, newer brain-based (non-medication) treatments will be reviewed as possible future treatment options for ADHD.

Executive Functioning and ADHD: Keeping the Balls in the Air – Dr. Megan Smith

Executive functioning (EF) is a term that refers to a number of important, brain-based processes, which allow us to carry out necessary tasks and meet our goals. EF skills allow us to: regulate our actions and emotions; pay attention; avoid distractions; set and prioritize goals; make plans; organize our thoughts/materials; get started on tasks; monitor ourselves; stay motivated; and finish tasks. People with ADHD struggle with some, or many, of these EF skills, which can cause them, and their loved ones, many problems and a lot of frustration. In this workshop, you will learn more about these skills, why they are important, and what you can do to support children and adolescents (and even adults) with ADHD, who struggle with them.

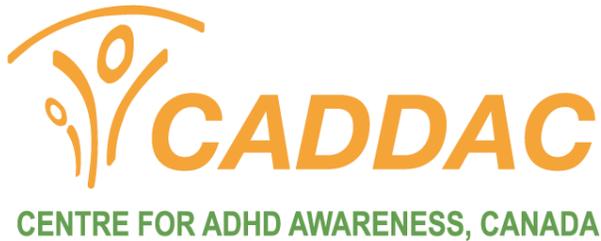


CENTRE FOR ADHD AWARENESS, CANADA

Self-Regulation and ADHD: From Chaos to Smoother Sailing – Dr. Megan Smith

Self-Regulation is critical to our well-being, and ADHD is essentially a disorder of self-regulation. Self-regulation allows us to control our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and achieve an overall state of well-being. Unfortunately, self-regulation difficulties are often mistaken for “behavior problems” (e.g. oppositionality, tantrums, etc.) or negative character traits (e.g. manipulative, controlling, disrespectful, etc.), leading people to respond in ways that very often contribute to further dysregulation. This seminar will provide important information about self-regulation, including the factors that influence it, and practical strategies to help those who struggle with it.

Focus, Motivation and Productivity – The Holy Grail of ADHD- Alina Kislenko Have you searched high and low for the holy grail of the ADHD world; reliable follow-through, an end to procrastination, and unstoppable motivation for you or your child? Alina Kislenko, Reg. Psychotherapist, Psychology Professor, and founder of The ADHD & ASD Centre will teach you the top two exercises that have helped 90% of their centre clients create lasting results; The S.T.R.E.S.S. Analysis & The 2-Part Break. These techniques changed Alina's life, who was herself diagnosed with ADHD & ASD in adulthood, and they took her from being a D student and almost failing out to graduating in the top of her class and loving school so much that it propelled her to become a Psych Prof at a top five Canadian university. Miracles do happen, and in this workshop, you will learn the ADHD miracle that has helped hundreds of students of all ages (from 4 to 84) totally turn their grades around.



The Ripple Effect of ADHD: Family and Peer Relationships – Dr. Judith Wiener Children and adolescents with ADHD have academic, behavioural and social challenges that have ripple effects – they impact their family and peer relationships. In this talk I describe these ripple effects and suggest some strategies to address them.

Both mothers and fathers of children and adolescents with ADHD experience higher levels of parenting stress than other parents and this parenting stress affects their wellbeing and their ability to engage in positive parenting. Parenting stress is also increased among mothers who themselves have high levels of ADHD symptoms and ADHD in mothers is associated with higher parenting stress in their children’s fathers. In addition, negative parenting in one parent exacerbates the parenting stress of the other parent. Children and adolescents with ADHD also have difficulties with peer relationships. Although they typically have friends, their friendships are less stable and of lower quality than those of other children and teens with ADHD report having difficulty with romantic relationships. Children and adolescents with ADHD are also more often perpetrators and victims of bullying than other children and teens.

What strategies are helpful for reducing the ripple effects of ADHD? Although behavioural parent training is effective for parents of young children with ADHD, it has not been shown to be effective with older children and adolescents. The common thread in the interventions that have been found to be effective with older children and teens is that parents and their children are all involved. I will describe a program for children and adolescents with ADHD and their parents that incorporates cognitive behavioural and mindfulness treatments called MyMind. This program has been shown to reduce parenting stress, child and adolescent inattention and oppositional behaviour, and challenges with peer relationships.

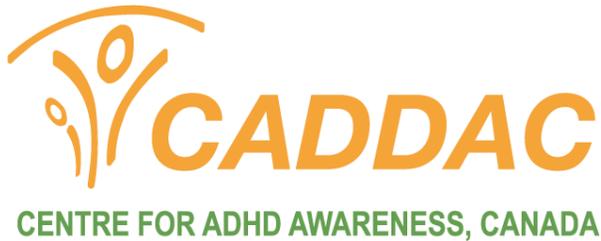
Adult ADHD and Executive Functioning – Jennifer Tiviluk,

This will be an interactive workshop where you will develop an understanding of your own Executive Function Profile. Goals of the workshop are to:

- Understand how ADHD and Executive Function deficits are related.
- Understand your own Executive Function profile, both strength and weaknesses.
- Understand the “accept, support or outsource” approach to EF scaffolding.
- Develop your own plan to work on an EF deficit.
- Share your EF strategies with other participants.

Psychiatric, Neuropsychological, and Developmental Perspectives on ADHD, Video Gaming and Screen Use– Dr. Doron Almagor

Screen use and gaming in children and teens is part of our new digital reality, and often become all-consuming in ADHD. Many parents and teachers are alarmed. Can video games worsen ADHD? Can social media use become addictive? Are current technologies causing ADHD? Parents often blame screen use for family conflict, declining school performance, lost sleep, and minimal exercise, and seek guidance from healthcare professionals. These concerns have received some research support. Gaming Disorder is now a diagnosis in the ICD-11. In the DSM-5 Internet Gaming Disorder is a Condition for Further Study. On the flipside, advocates of technology believe screens and gaming can help individuals with ADHD enhance peer connections and even reduce symptoms. This seminar will examine the link between ADHD and screen use in children and youth based on current research findings. Bidirectional effects of ADHD and screen use, and possible underlying factors contributing to their correlation will be discussed from a psychiatric perspective. The neurobiology of dopamine and reward systems in the context of gaming and screen use will be reviewed from a neuropsychological perspective. The impact of screen use on individual development and family dynamics will then be discussed from a clinical and developmental psychology perspective. Audience discussion will follow focusing on practical implications and strategies for intervention.



Inclusion in Our Schools? Dr. Sheila Bennett

While tipping the hat to inclusive practices, the reality of who is invited in and who stays out is less clear. Segregated classes and segregating practices continue to permeate the educational landscape in Canada. Here in Ontario the Ministry's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy purports that *"Publicly funded education is a cornerstone of our democratic society. Ontarians share a belief in the need to develop students as learners and prepare them for their role in society as engaged, productive, and responsible citizens"* p. 6. How to achieve this goal in special education across Canada remains an area of debate and discussion. What is not debated is that we can and need to do better. Parents, students and educators are either the victim of or the beneficiary to practices that shape the adult life of students currently in our schools. How we imagine the future for students with special education needs becomes a fundamental question to be addressed; a question that is answered every day in the decisions that we make as educators.

ADHD in Canada – what's changed, what's not, and the work that still needs to be done – Heidi Bernhardt

This presentation will look at how the focus of Canadian ADHD research has shifted, up-dates in the recognition and support of students with ADHD that you should know about, why the recognition of ADHD as a disability in the workplace still remains an issue, and current work in ADHD awareness and advocacy. We will conclude with a look at the work that still needs to be done and how you can help.