



Virtual Conference Abstracts

October 17, 2020

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON:

ADHD, Depression and How Thinking Like a Rocket Scientist Can Launch You Into Light

– Dr. Doron Almagor

When you find your way to the doctor’s office with complaints about forgetfulness, procrastination, distractibility, sadness, and a long history of not getting tasks done, the doctor will start asking questions. From your answers, your doctor might determine that you have ADHD. You thought you had it, the doctor confirmed it, and now you’ll treat it. End of story and start of a happy ending, right? Maybe not. Maybe you will feel more focused and organized after ADHD treatment begins, but what if you still feel unmotivated, ineffective and blue? Do you tell yourself, “This is just who I am, isn’t it? “And having ADHD is hard, so of course I feel sad, right?” Science would say your thinking is biased, and definitely not supported by objective data about ADHD, depression and just how often the two go together. So, how can you think and act more effectively to create a better future? Well, it is time to ditch biased assumptions, think like a Rocket Scientist, and launch your life! Did you know that having ADHD increases the risk of depression also being present? Did you know that the longer ADHD goes untreated, the higher the risk of developing depression becomes? Did you know that complex concepts like “diagnostic overshadowing” can explain how depression goes unnoticed, untreated and unchecked in ADHD, keeping you feeling blue and short-circuiting your hopes for something more? And did you know that depression leads to biased thinking that can misdirect your actions and hold you back? Biased thinking will limit the treatments you seek, slant the self-stories you tell, threaten the happiness you crave, stifle the success you want, thwart the actions you start, and downsize the dreams you chase. In this talk you will learn the facts about ADHD and depression, and the science and success of targeted treatments when ADHD and depression occur together. More importantly, you will learn how to think like a Rocket Scientist—how to avoid mind traps, increase objectivity, dream big, and launch bold possibilities.

ADHD in the Classroom

– Dr. Megan Smith

This presentation will explore the impact of ADHD on students in the school environment, and the strategies and supports that can be implemented to help them be successful. Topics will include understanding how ADHD symptoms can present in the classroom; understanding how it may feel to be a student with ADHD; creating ADHD-friendly classrooms; and identifying accommodations and interventions to address specific ADHD symptoms.

Executive Functioning in Adults with ADHD: Setting ourselves up for success

– Dr. Megan Smith

Executive functioning (EF) is a term that refers to a number of important, brain-based processes that allow us to carry out necessary tasks and meet our goals. EF skills allow us to: regulate our attention and emotions; set and prioritize goals; organize our thoughts/materials; get started on tasks; and monitor ourselves. So, what can we do when ADHD impairs our EF skills, making many routine tasks feel next to impossible? This is one of the major challenges for many adults with ADHD! This workshop will provide some concrete, practical strategies to help improve your EF functioning.

Helping Children with ADHD to Make and Keep Friends

– Dr. Amori Yee Mikami

Many children with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have difficulties with making or keeping friends. This presentation will cover what friendships tend to look like for children with ADHD, and why friendship problems are so common and so hard to treat. Dr. Mikami will talk about a behavioral intervention, Parental Friendship Coaching, which was created to help parents address friendship problems in their elementary school-age children with ADHD. Recently, a study involving 172 families of children with ADHD was completed to test the effects of Parental Friendship Coaching, and Dr. Mikami will summarize the initial results from this work. The presentation will conclude with tips and recommendations for parents, teachers, and clinicians who are hoping to bolster good friendships in children with ADHD.

October 18, 2020

Tips for Understanding the ADHD Mind and Navigating an Adult ADHD Relationship When You Don't have ADHD

– Heidi Bernhardt

Are you in a relationship with someone with ADHD and having difficulty understanding how and why the same issues keep arising? ADHD can be a significant factor in a variety of relationship problems. However when you understand how ADHD plays a role in the relationship, misinterpreted motives and hurt feelings can be mitigated. Our presenter, who has been married for 46 years to her husband with ADHD, will share her insights on what to do, what not to do and how to use your new understanding of ADHD to improve your relationship.

What You Need to Know When Advocating for Your Child in the School System

– Heidi Bernhardt

Understanding your Province's Special Education system and how ADHD is recognized within this system is paramount when advocating for your child. This presentation will cover the difference in Special Education systems across Canada, their benefits and drawbacks and tips for navigating your system. The fear of labelling, psychoeducational testing and understanding and contributing to an IEP will all be covered. The presentation will close with a look at your child's rights and a discussion on how you can become a more effective advocate for your child.

I Have Been told I am successful; How ADHD was Key to Entrepreneurial Success and How Undiagnosed ADHD Sabotaged Me and Success

– Andre Brisson

Andre will explain how ADHD was key to his success and how he was able to build a start-up engineering firm and build it to a self-managing company with a staff of eight. There were many struggles and challenges due to his undiagnosed ADHD. He will discuss how ADHD interfered with managing staff, relying on professionals for accounting, insurance, and banking. Challenges that cost a great deal of money, including bad hires, trusting the wrong people, impulsive large purchases and ultimately rushing into a partnership subconsciously he knew was bad because...he was bored with his current success. He will also outline how his entrepreneurial journey almost came to an end because of a Perfect Storm of his undiagnosed ADHD symptoms taking over him and decisions; emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, lack of focus and becoming depressed. As the title states, he will explain how ADHDer's perception of success are distorted and caused him to hyper-focus on work for almost 20 years.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Learning Disabilities (LDs)

– Michael Armstrong

ADHD and LDs are commonly cooccurring neurodevelopmental disorders that impact the learning and development of children and adolescents across Canada. What are the implications of having difficulties with both attention and learning at the same time? How do the different types of LDs and the varying expression of ADHD combine to produce unique challenges for the developing mind? This presentation will discuss the process of identifying, assessing and monitoring ADHD and LDs, including practical considerations for parents and teachers on how to best help young people overcome their limitations to achieve academic success. We will review recommendations for intervention that include environmental and behavioural strategies to help children succeed in the classroom and at home, with special considerations for managing during the COVID-19 pandemic.