

# ADHD Parent Readiness Education Program (PREP)

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# Social and Emotional Difficulties Commonly Seen in ADHD

- ▷ Emotional Difficulties
- ▷ Social Impairments

# EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES



## Emotional Difficulties that come with ADHD

- ▷ Emotional difficulties are part of ADHD
- ▷ Not usually due to an additional disorder, but could be
- ▷ Poor emotional control – they react to a greater degree and in unacceptable ways
- ▷ More irritable, moody and impulsive
- ▷ More easily frustrated and less able to cope
- ▷ Comorbid anxiety and depression common
- ▷ More suicidal ideation and attempts
- ▷ Have difficulty sustaining friendships – why?
- ▷ Drawn to undesirable peer groups – why?



# Emotional Adjustment in Children with ADHD

## Emotional adjustment impacted by:

- ▷ Degree of regulation difficulties -impairment
- ▷ Repeated failures at school, home, activities and with relationships
- ▷ Isolation / lack of friendships
- ▷ Additional mood disorders – dysthymia
- ▷ Family stress and /or inconsistent parenting
- ▷ Traumatic events
- ▷ Deviant peer group

# SOCIAL IMPAIRMENTS



**50 to 70% of children with ADHD  
are rejected by peers**

Which ADHD symptoms do you think are  
most often the cause?



# Social Impairments

- ▶ Because they are intelligent it does not mean that a child with ADHD will pick up skills naturally – especially social skills
- ▶ Social impairments are due to poor social skills, caused by Executive Functioning (EF) impairment and emotional dysregulation (ER) leading to self regulation difficulties
- ▶ Poor language and engagement skills of inattentive kids also leads to poor social skills
- ▶ Aggressive interaction, lack of insight and social problem solving lead to social rejection by peers
- ▶ These children are easily frustrated by others, but fail to recognize how and why they frustrate others
- ▶ Quiet inattentive children can be bullied and ostracized





## Presentation of Poor Social Skills

- ▷ Impulsive acts and speech (blurting out things)
- ▷ Difficulty taking turns
- ▷ Difficulty initiating and using language
- ▷ Interrupting and disturbing others
- ▷ Aggressive play
- ▷ Misunderstanding rules and instructions
- ▷ Concrete thinking and inflexibility around rules
- ▷ Not knowing how to initiate play with others
- ▷ Emotions displayed in socially unacceptable ways



# Social Skills Intervention

Social skill training programs have very limited success if they do not occur in the actual home and school environment

## Successful Strategies

- ▷ Teach and model specific social skills daily – actively teach and model the behaviour you want to see
- ▷ Immediate high levels of positive feedback
- ▷ Be aware of children and students who are at risk
- ▷ Put protection in place to prevent bullying and exclusion
- ▷ Monitor your own behaviour to prevent setting up a child for bullying
- ▷ Being part of a positive environment helps the child feel connected and increases their desire to interact better socially



# Parent Friendship Coaching

**Research has shown evidence of success with this technique**

**Steps:**

- ▷ Build positive parent child relationship – alone time 1 on 1.
- ▷ Pick your battles – focus only on one or two crucial issues at a time.
- ▷ Positive to negative feedback should be 4:1 – don't end with criticism.
- ▷ Praise when there is a 25% improvement, 100% is too long to wait.
- ▷ If the child is upset, empathize for 10 minutes before giving feedback.
- ▷ Provide feedback on what child could do better the next time.
- ▷ Be specific about the behaviour you want to address – do not comment on the child's character.
- ▷ Stay in the present, do not discuss the child's past behavior.
- ▷ Keep feedback brief and simple and stay positive.
- ▷ Parents should excuse themselves or apologize if they become angry.

**Research Amori Mikami associate professor in the Department of Psychology at UBC**



# Steps to Arranging Play Dates

- ▷ Identify good potential friends with common interests
- ▷ Network with other parents, ask teacher for suggestions
- ▷ Discuss potential children with the child
- ▷ Put away toys child has difficulty sharing
- ▷ Limit time of play date
- ▷ Talk about potential issues and strategies in advance
- ▷ Reminders about behaviour issues away from playmate
- ▷ Reward positive sessions and take things one step at a time
- ▷ Parents with ADHD can be an asset when building skills

For more info access:

- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2903643/>
- <http://adhdanswers.blogspot.ca/2011/02/how-you-can-be-friendship-coach-for.html>



# References

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# Self Regulation

- ▷ Difficulties with Self Regulation
- ▷ Assisting the Child with Self Regulation

# DIFFICULTIES WITH SELF REGULATION



# Impairment in Self Regulation

- ▷ ADHD is considered a developmental disorder in self regulation – generally a 2 -3 year delay, but when completed at 30 they remain behind
- ▷ Delays may improve somewhat as the child matures, but impairment is likely to always be an issue
- ▷ Executive functions are all forms of self direction leading to self regulation
- ▷ We know that EF are impaired in children with ADHD
- ▷ These children appear less mature because they regulate their behaviour at the level of a younger child





## Some Typical Difficulties

- ▷ Not **understanding** procedures or rules
- ▷ Unable to disregard distractions
- ▷ Forgetting routines
- ▷ Difficulty in processing commands quickly
- ▷ Overwhelmed by large tasks with multiple steps
- ▷ Unaware of time passing
- ▷ Forgetting steps in tasks and having to redo things
- ▷ Irritable, tired and frustrated



## Some of the Required Skills

Knowing which skills may be impaired is very helpful in deciding on interventions

- ▷ Slow processing speed
- ▷ Working memory
- ▷ Sequencing of tasks
- ▷ Time management
- ▷ Self talk
- ▷ Cognitive shifting
- ▷ Impaired problem solving
- ▷ Flexibility
- ▷ Emotional regulation difficulties



## Group Discussion

- ▶ Let's look at a typical scenario that occurs in the home environment that causes difficulty – The inability to get ready to leave the house on time?
- ▶ What things does the child need to accomplish to be able to be successful at this task?
- ▶ What are the skills that might be impaired in the child that leads to the inability to accomplishing these steps?
- ▶ Can we further break down these skills into specific EF impairments that interfere with a child accomplishing these tasks?

Take a few minutes to think about a home scenario your child routinely struggles with and list some the EF impairments that may be involved.

# ASSISTING THE CHILD WITH SELF REGULATION



## How to Assist with Self Regulation

- ▷ We need to assist children to overcome delays in acquiring these skills or help compensate for their impairments
- ▷ If internal self-direction is impaired, more needs to be done to externalize directions
- ▷ Internal motivation is also a very common difficulty due to EF impairments – therefore external motivation may need to be increased
- ▷ Our environments have an abundance of external distractors so these need to be decreased
- ▷ ADHD is a problem with “doing what one knows” rather than not knowing what to do” (R. Barkley)
- ▷ Therefore, nagging about what the child needs to do will not help the child do what they already know

# Steps to Assist With Self Regulation



- ▷ Focus on one issue that is causing concern – review the expectations - how are they not being met?
- ▷ Are there possible antecedents (triggers)
- ▷ Does the child have the skills to accomplish what is expected or do expectations need to be decreased?
- ▷ Ensure that the instructions and rules are understood – have the child state them
- ▷ Decide what impairments might be preventing the child from accomplishing the expectation
- ▷ Teach EF skills through description, modeling and role playing if possible – very difficult and time consuming
- ▷ Externalize rules and reminders, limit external distractors
- ▷ Externalize and increase the child’s motivation



# Decreasing Expectations

If expectations have been deemed unreasonable decrease

Examples:

- ▷ Allow for additional processing time
- ▷ Reduce external distractions
- ▷ Recognize that child cannot accomplish tasks without externalized prompts
- ▷ Decrease number of commands given at one time
- ▷ Reduce the number of expected tasks
- ▷ Take on some of the child's organizational tasks
- ▷ Increase time allotted for tasks to be accomplished



# How to Teach Required EF Skills

- ▷ Review routine and rules just prior to task and have the not just repeat, but explain why
- ▷ Develop a consistent routine
- ▷ Develop a plan for transitions
- ▷ Model the routine, plan and tasks and have siblings and peers model as well
- ▷ Model and practice problem solving skills
- ▷ Role play – or practice tasks one at a time until acquired
- ▷ Many more repetitions may be required than expected for other children - may never be totally successful
- ▷ Turning a task or skill into a habit decreases the load on EF skills





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