



The Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada

**The only Canadian charity focusing solely on ADHD,
providing leadership in education, awareness and
advocacy to improve the lives of families and individuals
with ADHD across Canada**



CADDAC Interactive ADHD Adolescent Parenting Course

Helping Your Adolescent Transition into Adulthood

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT

THE INFORMATION PROVIDED DURING THIS EDUCATIONAL COURSE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.

IT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT OR CARE.

NEVER DISREGARD PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE OR DELAY IN SEEKING IT BECAUSE OF SOMETHING YOU HAVE HEARD DURING THIS WORKSHOP.

BY ACCESSING OR ATTENDING THIS PRESENTATION, YOU ARE INDICATING YOUR ACCEPTANCE TO BE BOUND BY THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE [USER AGREEMENT](#) AS STATED IN FULL.



Helping Your Adolescent Transition into Adulthood

Increased Challenges

Preparing Your Adolescent for Adulthood

Medical Care Challenges

Moving Towards Post-secondary

Moving Towards the Workforce

INCREASED CHALLENGES

Increased Challenges

- Challenges increase with additional responsibilities, just as supports decrease
- More pressure to become independent
- Now responsible for choices, decisions, and actions – consequences larger
- Post-secondary and career path decisions
- Need to prepare to eventually move out of the family home and may need to cohabitate with strangers
- Life skills required – finances, food purchase and prep, care of living environment, clothes etc.
- Job search, applications, responsibilities increase at work
- Time management more essential – being somewhere on time
- Peer relationships, exposed to more and monitored less
- Intimate romantic relationships more serious



PREPARING YOUR ADOLESCENT FOR ADULTHOOD

Preparing Your Adolescent

- Educate your adolescent about ADHD in general but also how it impacts them specifically – their impairments
- Discover, discuss & encourage their strengths/talents – leads to increased self esteem and possible career path
- Develop habits – the load on executive functioning (EF) decreases when you don't need to think about it
- Teach, model and practice EF skills throughout adolescence
- Model problem solving, organization and time management as a family
- Expose them to career path options that fit their strengths
- Help organize healthy friendship groups and meeting opportunities to prevent being drawn to less desirable groups
- Model, teach and practice friendship and relationship skills





Life Skills

Teach and Practice Life Skills

- Involve them in food buying and meal preparation
- Have them prepare one meal a week
- Involve them in clothing purchase and care
- Start by having them assist you with clothes washing eventually having them take over the task
- Educate them about finances, budgets and credit cards
- Open a bank account if not already done
- Have them set a savings goal and work towards it
- When older, open a joint credit card with a limit and have them manage the transactions and payments

Healthy Life Choices

- As children move into adolescence it becomes more difficult to monitor and influence their life style choices – diet exercise, sleep
- Delayed sleep phase inherent to ADHD but can now become exacerbated by excessive screen time and poor sleep habits
- Lack of sleep during week, made up with excessive sleep during the weekend and then unable to sleep Sunday night
- Cardio exercise can be very beneficial for brain functioning
- Specialty diets are not beneficial, but balanced diet high in proteins good for brain functioning
- The more that you can promote healthy lifestyle choices and turn them into habits the better chance they will continue those choices when they leave home and become adults



MEDICAL CARE CHALLENGES

Increased Challenges in Medical Care

- Many professionals still think of ADHD as a childhood disorder
- Children who have been followed by pediatricians and child and adolescent psychiatrists lose their follow-up care
- Family physicians are not educated enough about ADHD
- Treatment away from home is challenging because:
 - While some post-secondary healthcare clinics able to treat resources are insufficient and transition not always smooth
 - New physicians and physicians in and in a post-secondary setting are reluctant to prescribe medication due to misuse and abuse at this age and in a post-secondary
 - They forget appointments and forget to renew medication
- Many multimodal ADHD treatments, CBT, coaching, mindfulness are difficult to access and not covered by provincial health care – results in two tier medical care



Treatments and Care for Adolescents

- Continuity of medical care is essential
- The introduction of multimodal treatments and new practitioners may help to build back relationships that were broken when leaving paediatrician etc. and assist with added expectations (coaching, CBT?)
- Past impairments that were not addressed such as EF skills in organization, time management, procrastination need to be addressed, practiced and improved
- Self awareness may start to become stronger at this age
- The good news is that older adolescents and even more so young adults have more insight into their impairments and increased motivation to work on these issues



Issues With Medication Treatment

- Adolescents are far less likely to continue taking medication
- This can be due to:
 - Wanting to exert independence – not wanting to feel that they are being made to conform
 - Side effects
 - Perceived changes in feelings – increased awareness or increased inhibition
 - Comments from peers
- Reduced use of medication can increase school failure
- As they age they often return to taking medication to complete education or other goals
- Psychoeducation on ADHD and what medication can and cannot do increases medication compliance



Tips on Improving Medical Care

Teach and practice medical self-care

- Involve them in their medical care before they leave home
- Start to include them in the responsibility of tracking their medical appointments – electronic reminders
- Include them in the practice of booking appointments, observe, role play, execute
- Increase their responsibility for keeping track of their medication pill count – When would they need to call for a renewal and pick-up? (They will require your back up for some time)
- Have them report on symptom control and side effects when seeing the doctor



More Tips on Improving Medical Care

- Make sure that medical follow-up care is set up for when they leave home
- Ensure that they can access their family physician in times of medical crisis
- Find out what services post-secondary health care provides and initiate contact so access during need will be easier
- At least a year prior to their turning 18 start looking for an adult psychiatrist or confirm that their family doctor will do long term follow-up prescribing and know of a psychiatrist to refer to if the need arises
- Look into multimodal treatments that are now accessible and may be needed – CBT works for adults but not children



MOVING TOWARDS POST-SECONDARY

Working Towards Post-Secondary

- Help your adolescent understand their learning profile
- Talk about their perceived strengths and needs and what you see. Seek professional help if needed.
- How do their ADHD and EF impairments affect their daily functioning?
- Discuss what type of career they see for themselves and what they need to do to get there
- Teach them the language needed to advocate for themselves
- Inform them that they have the right to accommodations, how to access them and why they need to
- Address what type of accommodations they may need
- Discuss self strategies they will need to succeed so they can practice them



MOVING TOWARDS THE WORKFORCE

ADHD in the Workplace

- Workers with ADHD are more likely to enter the workforce as unskilled or semiskilled (due to high school or post-secondary drop out)
- More periods of unemployment, more likely to be dismissed, change job frequently (impulsivity)
- Preventing this from occurring is essential
- Career or job needs to be stimulating and of individual interest for attentional issues to be minimized
- ADHD and EF impairments will continue to be an issue so strategies and accommodations will need to be put in place
- ADHD is recognized as a disability so employers are required to recognize impairments and put accommodations in place???
- Although disclosure is a personal decision if accommodations are requested disclosure and medical documentation will be required



Moving Towards the Workplace

Questions to discuss with your adolescent

- What sparks their interest and engages them?
- Best environment? – quiet, stimulating
- Is there a need to move?
- What are their strengths? Are they at their best when interacting with others, working with their hands, analyzing data?
- What are the skills that allowed success in the past?
- Are their specific skills that set them apart from others?
- What are their energy levels throughout the day?
- What parts of a current or past part-time job do they enjoy doing and what parts do they dread?



In Summary

- As children with ADHD turn into adolescents and adolescents turn into adults, impairments remain while challenges increase
- Their support system naturally decreases due to a natural move to independence, society's expectations, physical location, post-secondary and the eventual workplace
- Unless additional effort is put in place to prepare them as much as we can they will struggle
- We need to stay involved in their lives and continue to support them while encouraging their growth
- Expectations are necessary for growth, but “tough love” may result in harsh consequences



DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR RISK REDUCTION AND SKILL TRAINING

Strategies for Risk Reduction

1. First as parents and then as a family decide on family routines, structure and rules. Allow your teen to voice their opinion freely without judgement, but then come to an agreed upon short set of rules.
2. If consequences are needed around teen behaviour they should be well thought out and agreed to in advance.
3. Try the CPS approach. Both parents need to be on board. Start in the beginning of adolescence so the skills will develop as your teen ages.
4. If you have concerns about your teen's "ask" (going to party etc. driving), you may try having the teen acquire the information to alleviate your concerns or set up a list of limitations or rules before giving them permission.
5. Assess what the most serious concerns are, safety always comes first, and then work on the most important first. Don't try and tackle everything at once.



Working Towards Post-Secondary

6. As parents do a risk assessment and decide if you have any immediate concerns around, risky behaviors, friends, driving, substance use and abuse, sexual activity. If so, deal with them immediately.
7. If there are no immediate concerns discuss and decide how and when you will discuss all of these topics with your teen at a later date.
8. Assess whether your teen has the ability to consistently do the things that they are having difficulties with. If not, reduce expectations or try breaking them into more manageable chunks.
9. Review ADHD symptoms and EF and ER impairments which might be contributing to the unwanted behaviours or lack of behaviours that you want to see.



Working Towards Post-Secondary

10. Develop ways that these skills can be taught, modeled and practiced.
11. Review a list of accommodations and strategies which might be helpful in assisting your teen meet their expectations.
12. Which external reminders might be useful? Help them to develop these and implement in a staggered fashion.
13. Assess which adult skills you think your teen is ready to learn and practice: clothes maintenance, preparing some meals, involvement in medical care etc.?
14. Tackle one skill at a time until the teen becomes comfortable. Begin the process having them work alongside of you, taking on more and more of the responsibility until they eventually take on the task themselves.
15. Revisit to assess success and alter your strategies if required.



Home Organizational Strategies

Meet as a team of parents and then a family to discuss Issues that frequently occur.

First question to ask.

Are there certain times of day or events that always cause stress?

You may need to break these issues into even smaller pieces.

- Getting out of the house on time, in the morning or for appointments?
- Getting ready for bed?
- Getting off computer or online gaming?
- Dinner time?
- Home work time?



Home Organizational Strategies

Pick one issue at a time and ask:

What seems to be contributing to this issue?

- Family members having difficulty getting started?
- Are family members avoiding doing what needs to be done? Why?
- Is a parent, child or teen unsure of what needs to be done and in what order?
- Are family members getting distracted from the task, why?
- Is there not enough time to get everything done?
- Is the load too heavily weighted on one person?
- Are belonging not easy to find? Have they been misplaced?
- Are the materials not available or handy?



Home Organizational Strategies

Prioritize the issues and pick the most important one to start on.

- Decide on the contributing factors.
- Make a list and discuss strategies that might help.

Some questions to ask:

- Do you need more tools like a family planner, better alarm clocks, visual reminders to assist in your organization?
- Do schedules need to be changed? Does everyone need to get up 15 minutes earlier?
- Do you need a better organization system? One place for each item?



Home Organizational Strategies

More questions to ask:

- Are there family habits that you can start promoting?
- Can the load be divided?
- How can other family members assist the ones who are struggling?
- Can some of the work be done ahead of time?
- Can you bring someone else in to help you set up an organizational system?



DEVELOPING YOUR TEEN'S PROFILE PART 2

Developing Organization and Risk Reduction and Skill Training Strategies

Home Organization Issues and Strategies to Think About

- <https://caddac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Home-Organization-Issues-and-Strategies.pdf>

Developing Strategies for Risk Reduction and Skill Training

- <https://caddac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Developing-Strategies-for-Risk-Reduction-and-Skill-Training.pdf>





Discussion

Discussion Questions

- Were any of the areas of increased risk for your teen's surprising for you? Did you learn anything new?
- Are there any risk reduction strategies that you think you might put in place soon?
- Do you think that your teen has any awareness that they are at greater risk?
- What life skills might you begin to start practicing with your teen?
- Are there any life skill strategies that you have put in place already that have worked that you can share with the group?