



Keeping up with ADD

September 2004

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Counselling hours:
Wednesdays and Fridays
08h00 to 13h00
ADHD National Office
Delta Park School, Blairgowrie
Phone: (011) 888-7655

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**Greetings from the
Attention Deficit &
Hyperactivity
Support Group of
Southern Africa
ADHASA**

IT'S NO JOKE !

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My hyperactive child goes out of his way to misinterpret anything we say! Even jokes make him angry and irritable! Is this just naughtiness or could it be part of his ADHD?

We cannot blame every problem on hyperactivity however it is always wise to find out if there could be a link. Understanding why a child behaves in a certain manner makes it easier to deal with the situation.



NOT GOOD COMMUNICATORS
ADD/ADHD children are often very verbal, but this does not mean they are good communicators. Good communication entails being able to hear and understand what is being said, as well as the ability to clearly express oneself. Understanding what people say depends not only on the words that are spoken, but also on the things that are not said. Many ADD/ADHD children have difficulties either with expressing themselves,

or they could have difficulty with accurately interpreting incoming information. Many have difficulty with both!



EMOTIONAL CONTENT
Reading between the lines, understanding body language, and interpreting emotional content are all important tools used for effective communication. ADD/ADHD children do not necessarily understand the emotional content of language and often cannot tell the difference between a simple request such as "Climb down from that branch" (possibly for some cookies) and an order like "Climb down from that branch!!" growled through clenched teeth. The words are the same in both, and that is all they hear ... just the words! They do not pick up the emotions that accompany these words, nor do they read the body language. They carry on, blissfully unaware of the speaker's emotional state and his increasing anger - and then wonder why they are smacked.

It could also explain why they are often excluded from social groups at school.

TAKES THINGS LITERALLY

Sometimes there are misunderstandings when children take things very literally: *A twelve year old child was rushed to hospital for treatment where the doctor asked if she had passed any water. She promptly started telling him that she had walked alongside a stream but not crossed it!!*

ADD/ADHD children may be very hurt or frightened by an angry or careless remark: *"I'll kill you when we get home tonight!"*

The ADD / ADHD child believes that this is really going to happen!



INNUENDO

In the same way using innuendo is often lost on them - consider the following situation:



15 years
Service
to the
community

ADHASA Meeting

Date: 16th October 2004
Time: 1:30 pm for 2:00 pm
Venue: Delta Park School
Blairgowrie, Randburg

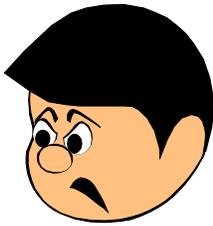
Main Speaker:
Terry Wilke

Why wait?
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(011) 793-2079

The child's fiddling about has delayed his mother to such an extent that she is both late and furious. (He is too young to be left at home by himself and has to go with her) She has already told him that they are about to leave and walks into his room, expecting him to be ready.

Instead he is sitting on floor playing with his toys. Losing her temper she barks "Are you coming!?"

The child doesn't hear his mother's anger or read her body language. He doesn't pick up the innuendo either. All that he hears is the simple question "Are you coming?"



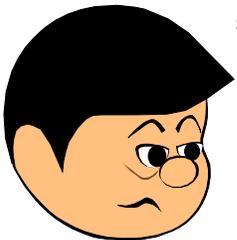
He reckons that he has an option and answers "No!"

Mother loses her temper and clouts him. She is upset that her child is so rude and cheeky while he cannot understand why he should be smacked for answering a simple question.

JOKES AREN'T MUCH FUN

Because they do not understand innuendo, nor the play on words, it is very difficult for them to follow a joke. Many ADD/ADHD children

react very angrily when siblings tell jokes simply because, once again, they feel left out. When they themselves try to tell a joke it often falls flat.



EFFECT ON SCHOOLWORK

• Ability to communicate effectively is an extremely important component of learning.

• Speech/language difficulties can and do affect a child's school work.

• He cannot score good marks for subjects like history or geography if he is unable to adequately express himself.

• Comprehension, for example, usually requires understanding a passage at different levels but the ADD/ADHD often cannot do so, and therefore they seldom score well in this area.

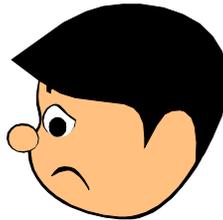
• But this does not apply to every child affected by ADD/ADHD – there are exceptions to the rule.

DIFFICULT FOR PARENTS

Situations like the above are not easy to deal with and can be very challenging for both the parents and the child. It is understandable that parents expect all their children to basically perform at the same levels – especially if they do not understand the difficulties that their children face. It can be an uphill journey for parents.

At one stage it was thought that equal rewards should be given for equal results but, as we learn more about the condition of ADD/ADHD, we realise that rewards should also be based on effort rather than just the final result.

It is unfair to expect the child to act and react in the same way as other children, or achieve at the same levels as them, especially when he cannot interpret and communicate information in the same way that they can. This makes it so much harder for the ADD/ADHD child to compete with others - they usually have to put in far more effort. Without that extra effort (and sometimes despite it) they earn far more criticism than their peers and far fewer rewards!



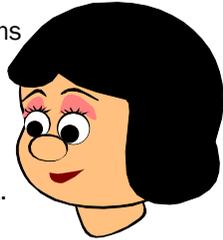
If rewards recognise effort, it gives the struggling child a chance to succeed and realise that he too can achieve. It also helps build their failing self confidence which is of utmost importance if they are to cope once they leave school.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

We live in a world where we are bombarded by information from all quarters and it is difficult to know

what is relevant to our families and ourselves.

➤ If your child seems to struggle with any of the above difficulties, speak to a speech-language therapist.



OR

➤ You suspect that, compared to other children of the same age, your child has difficulty pronouncing words, or stringing words together, don't wait for the difficulties to go away!

Contact the speech-language therapist to have him assessed and deal with any detected problems so they can be eliminated before they interfere with his progress.



➤ You could also ask about reading material, or find out if there are any talks on the subject being given in your area. It is important that the family understand his challenges, so that they can give the struggling child the best possible assistance.

IN ADDITION

If you want your child to do something in particular, don't give him another option. When, for example, the mother asks her child, "Are you coming?", she is giving him the choice of not coming. She should rather tell him what is going to happen:

"I am ready to leave. Hurry up and come along."

Avoid using sarcasm and don't expect the child to read hidden messages.



Teach your child to recognise emotions in others by discussing facial expressions of cartoon characters, photographs etc. Encourage the child to draw faces showing different expressions such as happy, angry, frightened etc. Pull faces for him to identify your emotions.



In the same way teach him to recognise body language. Play games of charades in which the player is showing a particular emotion using both expressions and body language. Extra marks go to the team who finds different ways of expressing a particular emotion.

Jokes are fun for most and should be encouraged but avoid long joke sessions that the ADD/ADHD child cannot understand. If possible be aware of any type of joke that he enjoys and build up a joking relationship based on that kind of joke. Progress to the next type of joke when he is ready to do so.

Above all, listen to your child. Watch his reactions and become aware of messages that work when you are speaking to him.



What was the difference between them? How did you communicate the information? Use these pointers to develop a communication strategy that is meaningful to you both.

At first this approach demands more effort from the parents, however it could be well worth the effort. The improved and more trouble-free communication with the child would benefit the entire family. Equally important, recognising ways of communicating more effectively with the child will help him as he navigates the many challenges of ADD/ADHD and enable him to grow up as a more confident and self-assured person.

HEATHER PICTON

This month's "Keeping up with ADD" is a revisited and revised copy of an article I wrote for our Newsletter in 1998, shortly before National Office's five year stay in Pretoria.

The information is just as relevant today as it was back in 1998. (See original article in Newsletter No 35, 2nd Quarter 1998) H.P.

SUPPORT GROUP HAPPENINGS

After many requests for effective help for adults with ADD/ADHD, we have arranged the perfect afternoon!!!

We start off with a short talk by a highly qualified coach, Lorí Lea, as she explains Coaching and how valuable it can be for ADD/ADHD adults.

At 14h30 Terry Wilke, Psychologist, pulls the jigsaw puzzle pieces into place as he explains how symptoms of ADD/ADHD could be affecting and undermining everything you do.

But it's not all bad – there are many positives that can be used to great advantage! Come and find out more about them.

The Adult **ADDvance Club** will be set up after Terry's address! This is being started in response to your needs – and so we need your input! Make sure that you are with us as we establish the foundation for your Club!

Date: **16 October 2004**; Time: **13h30 for 14h00**
Venue: **Delta Park School**, Standard Drive, **Blairgowrie**. Randburg.
RSVP **Sandy 011-793-2079**
Entrance R20

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Can you help us?

No experience needed—we offer full training.

One morning a week of your time enables us to provide a better service to the ADD/ADHD community.

As you help others, you inevitably gain greater skills for helping your own family. Can you afford not to come?

Please contact Sandy at (011) 793-2079

This edition of "Keeping up with ADD" kindly put together for us by **Lorí Lea**, APMC (ADD/ADHD Coach) of



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**ATTENTION DEFICIT AND HYPERACTIVITY
SUPPORT GROUP OF
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- NATIONAL OFFICE -**

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Delta Park School
Blairgowrie Tel: (011) 888-7655

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**MEMBERSHIP
APPLICATION FORM - Annual Subscription R85-00
PLEASE PRINT**

NAME:

POSTAL ADDRESS:

.....CODE:.....

TEL: (h) (.....)(w) (.....).....CELL.....

FAX NO: (.....).....E-MAIL.....

NAME OF CHILD/MEMBER:.....

DATE OF BIRTH:/...../.....

SCHOOL:

SIBLINGS: (Names & Ages)

1 2

3 4

OCCUPATION: Mother

Father

SIGNATURE: DATE:/...../.....

For confirmation of application kindly deposit into ABSA Sinoville Branch, Saving Account No. 907-161-3544.

- Please make all cheques payable to: ADHD Support Group – National Office (Jhb)
- Cash payments can also be made into this account
- Please complete the deposit reference blocks below your signature with your printed full name
- Please fax your application form together with the bank deposit slip to (011) 793 4790 or 793 2079.
- Alternatively, post this form, together with your remittance to PO Box 3704 Randburg 2125.