



Take Action:

Strategies for Supporting & Advocating for our Daughters with ADHD

Catherine Adams, ADHD Educational Consultant

C.Adams Consulting LLC & ADHD Resource Group of Northern Virginia

(www.adamsadhdconsult.org) (www.adhdnova.org)

Kelly Henderson, Ph.D., Executive Director

Formed Families Forward (www.formedfamiliesforward.org)

Who we are...

The ADHD Resource Group of Northern Virginia's **mission** is dedicated to assisting people whose lives are affected by ADHD, ADD and Executive Function deficits in the Northern Virginia region.

ADHD Resource Group's Purpose:

Assist people whose lives are **affected by ADHD, ADD and Executive Function deficits** in the Northern Virginia region, allowing them to live full, successful and independent lives by:

- ❖ Providing individualized, specific resources;
- ❖ Providing education and resources to individuals, their families, and professionals;
- ❖ Correcting misinformation and overcoming the stigma of challenges of ADHD and ADD;
- ❖ Referring those individuals adversely affected to qualified support organizations or service providers

Who we are...

- ▶ Formed Families Forward's **mission** is to improve developmental, educational, social, emotional and post-secondary outcomes for **children and youth with disabilities and other special needs** through provision of information, training and support to adoptive and foster parents, and kinship caregivers. We provide:
 - ❖ In-person trainings (we sponsor and we come to you!)
 - ❖ Webinars
 - ❖ Fact sheets and other resources
 - ❖ Youth/YA peer support group; parent/caregiver support group
 - ❖ Direct support- calls and meetings
 - ❖ Connecting families to resources

The ADHD Numbers!

- A neuro-biological disorder which effects 5.8 million (9.4%) school-age children (CDC, 2016). Specifically:
 - 2.1% of children ages 3- 4
 - 8.5% of children ages 5-11
 - 12.9% of children ages 12-17
- **13% of boys; 5.7% of girls have been identified with ADHD**
- ADHD is highly genetic: If birth parent with ADHD, child has more than 50% probability of having ADHD
- Characterized by inappropriate levels of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity.

Virginia Numbers!



- Overall, fewer girls are identified and receiving special education and related services (100K boys vs 49,500 girls; 33% of those served are girls)
- The disproportion is even greater in Other Health Impairment (23210 boys vs 9695 girls, ages 6-21; 29% of those served under OHI category are girls)

Diagnosis of ADHD- 3 types of ADHD (DSM 5)

- (1) predominantly inattentive type;**
- (2) predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type; and**
- (3) combined type (where symptoms of the first two types are equally present)**

A persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development, characterized by
Inattention: Six (or more) symptoms and/or **Hyperactivity and impulsivity:** six or more symptoms which have persisted for at least 6 months, inconsistent with developmental level and that negatively impacts directly on social and academic/occupational activities

- Symptoms before age 12
- More than one setting
- Interferes with functioning
- Other mental disorders are ruled out

Identifying the Girls

“Flibbertigibbet”

“Will of a wisp”

“Clown”

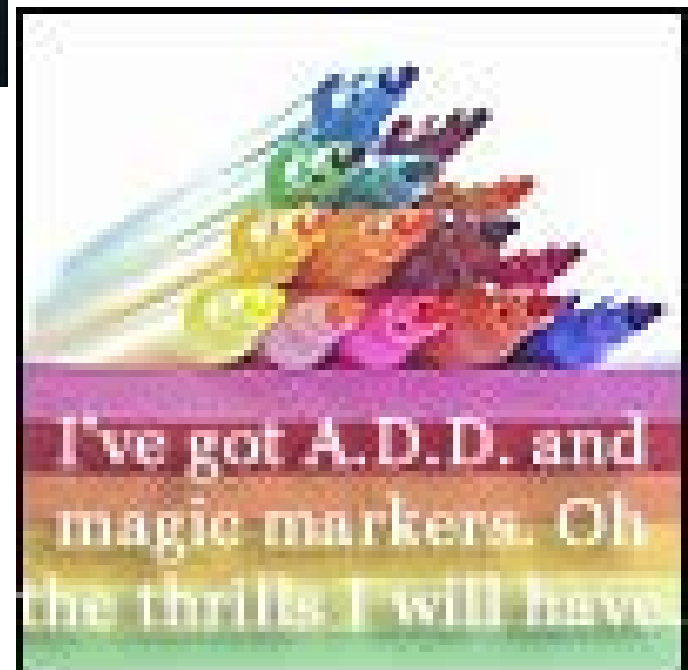
ANGEL

Wild

Darling

Demon

Gentle



GIRLS WITH ADHD

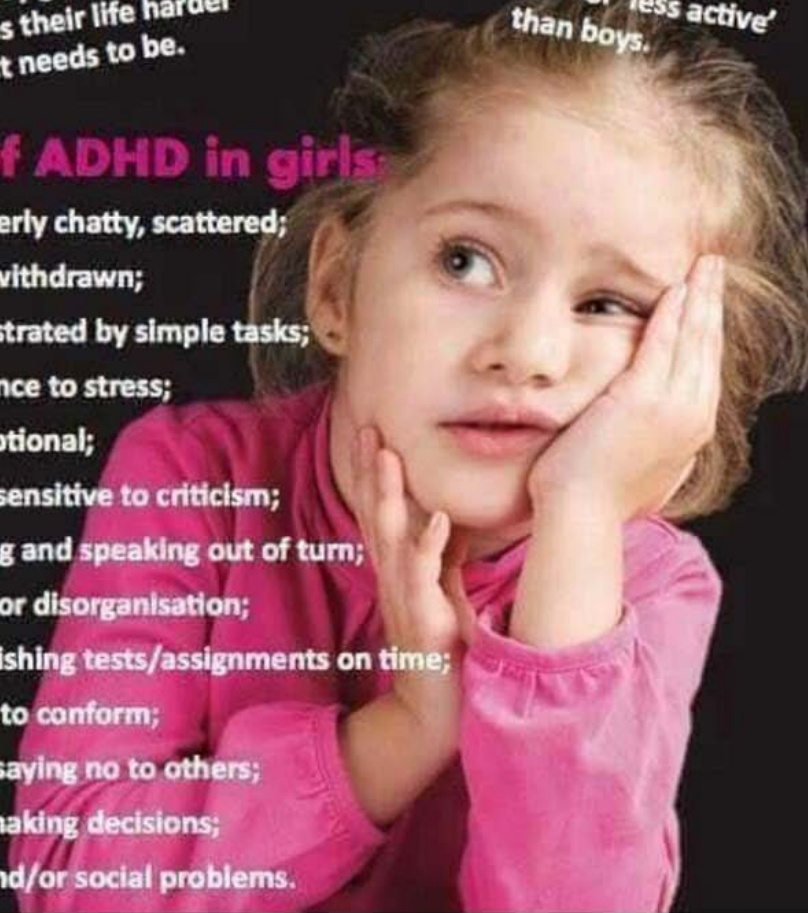
NOT WHAT YOU THINK

ADHD is not just a boys' disorder. Just as many girls have ADHD but they go undiagnosed. This makes their life harder than it needs to be.

Girls with ADHD often suffer in silence. They may appear 'less difficult' or 'less active' than boys.

Signs of ADHD in girls:

- Fidgety, overly chatty, scattered;
- Forgetful, withdrawn;
- Deeply frustrated by simple tasks;
- Low tolerance to stress;
- Overly emotional;
- Extremely sensitive to criticism;
- Interrupting and speaking out of turn;
- Messiness or disorganisation;
- Trouble finishing tests/assignments on time;
- Work hard to conform;
- Hard time saying no to others;
- Difficulty making decisions;
- Learning and/or social problems.



Characteristics of ADD/ADHD

Hyperactivity

Impulsivity

Inattention

**Physiological
Factors**

**Weak "Executive
Functioning"**

**Sleep
Disturbance**

**Impaired
Sense of Time**

**Delayed
Social
Maturity**

**Not Learning Easily
From Rewards and
Punishment**

**Coexisting
Conditions**

**Learning
Difficulties**

**Low
Frustration
Tolerance**

Hidden below the surface



ANXIETY ICEBERG REVISED

Behavior

ANGER **LACK OF FOCUS**
SLEEP ISSUES **DEFIANCE**
OVERPLANNING **CHANDLERING**
AVOIDANCE **NEGATIVITY**

Feelings

Anxiety

embarrassed
ashamed
disgusted
overwhelmed
depressed
stuck
jealous
disrespected
offended
frustrated
helpless
hurt
insecure
regret
uncomfortable
rejected
sad
grief
lonely
tired

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

Impact on Learning & Life Skills

- “I have always felt different!”
- “Can’t anyone see I’m struggling?”
 - “I am misunderstood.”



GENDER DIFFERENCES FOR GIRLS:

- Social/Emotional Development is Delayed
- **Girls' risk for depression triples between 12 and 15 years of age.**
- Hormones in brain make girls more vulnerable to stress, anxiety and depression.
- **Girls' desire to please makes them more vulnerable to academic pressure.**

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

Impact on Learning & Life Skills

- Girls tend to have low self-esteem and demoralization which can turn into anxiety and depression.
- During adolescence, issues of social acceptance, dating and “fitting in” are paramount
- Establishing and/or maintaining friendships with peers can be very difficult.





WHAT PREVENTS GIRLS FROM BEING DIAGNOSED?

- Girls are misunderstood and under-recognized for referral
- Studies show that the Inattentive subtype is harder to recognize
- Girls work hard to please and compensate as much as they can for their AD/HD and Executive Function challenges.

Accessing Services in the Schools

Federal Policy Tools

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** (1973)
- **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (IDEA; 1975)- guarantees right to a free, appropriate public education to children 0-22 who have a disability that creates an adverse effect on learning, thus creating an educational need. **Think: Specialized instruction...**
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act** (ADA; 1990)- protects the civil rights of people with disabilities in all aspects of employment, in accessing public services such as transportation, and guaranteeing access to public accommodations such as restaurants, stores, hotels and other types of buildings to which the public has access. **Think access, reasonable accommodations, & modifications of policies, practices and procedures.** Title II prohibits State and local governments from discriminating on basis of disability (regardless of federal \$).

Interplay between the laws

- Students with disabilities may be protected under two or three federal laws simultaneously.
- **IDEA** defines disability differently (categories) from **504 and ADA**
- All students with disabilities are eligible for special education and related services under IDEA are protected by 504 and Title II of ADA but inverse is not true.
- **Violations of Section 504 by schools also constitute violation of Title II.** But to the extent that Title II provides additional or greater protections than 504, covered entities must comply with Title II's requirements.



Section 504/ADA

IDEA/IEP

Section 504- eligibility

For purposes of §504, a “*qualified individual with a disability*” is one who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which *substantially limits* one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such impairment, or;
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.



Major Life Activities include

- Caring for oneself
- Performing manual tasks
- Seeing, hearing, etc.
- Walking, standing, etc.
- Speaking
- **Learning**
- Reading
- **Concentrating**
- **Thinking**
- Communicating
- Working

**MLAs includes
certain acts AND
bodily functions**

ADA amendments of 2008, PL 110-325



- Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (Amendments Act) clarified the **broad scope and definition of “disability”** and determination of whether an individual has a disability did “not demand extensive analysis.”
- Expanded the **list of examples of major life activities (MLA)** by adding, among other things, concentrating, reading, thinking, and functions of the brain.
- Stated that **mitigating measures shall not be considered** in determining whether an individual has a disability. Mitigating measures include, for example, medications, coping strategies, and adaptive neurological modifications that an individual could use to eliminate or reduce the effects of an impairment.

2 important Federal Guidance docs

- July 26, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter and Resource Guide on Students with ADHD
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201607-504-adhd.pdf>
- December 2016 Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf>

In Schools- MLA doesn't have to be **LEARNING**

- A student may have a disability and be eligible for 504 services even if disability does NOT limit major life activity of learning.
- School staff must consider how an impairment affects ANY major life activity and if necessary, assess what is needed to ensure students have an equal opportunity to participate in the school's programs. SO...
- A student may have a disability and be eligible for section 504 services, including modifications, even **if the student earns good grades.** The student's impairment may substantially limit a major life function regardless of where the student performs well academically, and the student may still need special education or related aids and services because of this disability.

Mitigating Measures



- When determining if a person has a disability, the school cannot consider ameliorative effects of mitigating measures when determining how the impairment impacts the major life activities.
- ADA Amendments include a “non-comprehensive” list of mitigating measures including assistive devices (but NOT ordinary eye glasses), **learned behaviors, medications, and adaptive neurological modifications** that an individual may use to eliminate or reduce the effects of an impairment.

Mitigating Measures, continued

- When evaluating for disability, “it is important to consider the mitigating measures that can treat the impairment, thereby obscuring the substantial limitations of the impairment. It is **useful to have evidence showing that an impairment would be substantially limiting in the absence of the ameliorative (beneficial) effects of mitigating measures...**” Page 20 of Parent & Educator Resource Guide, Dec 2016
- A student is not required to stop taking needed medication or using another mitigating measure in order to receive an evaluation.

ADHD and a High Level of Academic Success

School districts may rely on a student's average, or better-than-average, grade point average (GPA) in denying 504 eligibility, erroneously assuming that a student with an above-average grades does not have a disability.

School may fail to conduct a Section 504 evaluation of that student, even if that student is suspected of having or has been diagnosed with ADHD and receives family provided academic supports outside of school.



HOW CAN PARENTS CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR GROWTH AND RESILIENCY?





COMMUNICATION IS CRITICAL

Ask your daughter what she may want or need from you in a conversation:

- 1. Advice**
- 2. Simply listening**
- 3. Help in dealing with feelings**
- 4. Help solving a problem.**



CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Talk to your daughter and agree on expectations—

- Don't lecture
- Don't criticize
- Don't threaten
- Don't say hurtful things
- No Button Pushing



Most Important – Learn to Modulate Your Own Responses and Reactions.

HELP GIRLS WITH ADHD FEEL EMPOWERED

- ❑ Create a structured home environment with predictable routines.
- ❑ Encourage her to use private downtime to regroup.
- ❑ Establish a separate, quiet, uncluttered homework area.
- ❑ Maintain a bedtime routine that helps her wind down gradually.
- ❑ Validate her perspective, even if you don't agree with it.
- ❑ Offer structured after-school activities as outlets for socializing.
- ❑ Offer ample preparation for transitions and changes of plan.
- ❑ Try to minimize your role as the homework police.
- ❑ Build in weekly one-on-one time to connect that is not goal-oriented.
- ❑ Help her identify, embrace, and celebrate a strength or talent.
- ❑ Try to listen without offering solutions or corrections.
- ❑ Recognize that her functioning will be consistently inconsistent.
- ❑ Remember that well-behaved women seldom make history

TEACH LIFE SKILLS GRADUALLY

- Do not try to teach too many skills at once.
- Identify those that are the most critical and developmentally appropriate-focus on those first.

Cleaning

Cooking

Money Management

Health and Exercise

Medication Management

Transportation

Time Management



GIRLS SHOULD NOT BE SILENCED BY SHAME.

