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A model for supporting children with ADD

➤ **Taking stock of our own history**

- Awareness of generational transfer
- Assessing ways in which the parent has learnt to cope
- Acknowledging the suffering the parent had to endure due to ADD

➤ **Permission**

- Grief for the perfect child
- Acknowledgement of the child's efforts to maintain his current level of functioning.
- Acknowledging ADD as a neurological disorder
- Encouraging research & networking

➤ **Acknowledgement**

- Listening skills
- Acceptance of the child's feelings
- Acknowledgement of the child's current experience and needs
- Let the child know, in words he or she can understand that you appreciate how distressing it must be for him / her to forget, lose things, shout out etc. Understanding and acceptance, but not excessive sympathy.
- DO NOT:
 - Never make fun of a child's ADD.
 - Minimize the problem
 - Provide solutions
 - Change the normal practices and routines
 - Make the problem yours – manage the problem
 - Over-accommodate

- Do not bribe the child to overcome ADD – reward systems do not work particularly well.

➤ **Structure**

- Let the child know how you as the parent will be managing the issue.
- Do not alter the existing structures because the child is battling, for example, to be on time – it is the child's responsibility to adjust to clear boundaries.
- Be prepared for the fact that the child may not be able to control his own behaviour fully, but be willing to follow through but budget for discomfort and set attainable goals.
- Help the child become familiar with new surroundings, people and routines before expecting him to function effectively – provide opportunity to practice.
- Do not give in.
- Focus on managing the problem, not on trying to make it go away.

➤ **Aids & resources**

- Consistent checking routines
- Notebooks
- Whiteboards
- Alarm clocks
- Supervised rehearsals
- Tutoring
- Supervised homework
- Utilising medication effectively
- Dietary intervention

➤ **Preparation & anticipation**

- Prepare the child for changes in routine.

- Whilst acknowledging the problem and the emotional impact, let the child know how you will assist him.
- Limit your own involvement.

➤ **Following through with empathy**

➤ **Affirming the child's capacity**

- Let the child know that he is able to come up with a plan or with possible alternatives.
- Do not provide ready solutions or intervene unless completely unavoidable.
- By removing the child from the situation one would reinforce a feeling of hopelessness and incompetence.
- Help the child assess and implement options.
- Acknowledge any steps towards more appropriate behaviour.
- Be supportive throughout this process.

➤ **Encouraging emotional fitness**

- Be willing to let your child experience frustration / grief / anger.
- Teach him to get comfortable with discomfort
- Use it as a developmental tool.

➤ **Manage your own stress and invest in your partner**

- The degree to which the parent can look after his / her own stress and be supportive of his / her partner, will determine their ability to continue managing the child effectively.
- Move in / out of the problem.
- Create an effective support system
- Be problem-focused and present orientated