

# Understanding ADD/ADHD

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- I. It's NOT their fault (the science)
- II. Respect and humor (saving ourselves)
- III. The jewel inside (saving the kid)

# It's NOT their fault...

- What is ADD/ADHD?
- Inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity
  - hard-wired
  - genetically transmitted
  - shows up on brain scans
- Doing the best they can with bald tires and 5 to 50 pound ankle weights

# It's NOT their fault...

- Challenging students
  - talkative
  - spacey
  - disruptive
  - oppositional
- It *is* their responsibility
- They *and their parents* need our help and support

# It's NOT their fault...

- Another way to look at it ... ADD/ADHD folks are *unable to put the brakes on*
  - *Distractions* → ***inattention***
  - *Inside thoughts* → ***impulsivity***
  - *Acting on these distractions or thoughts*  
→ ***hyperactivity***

(from Russell Barkley in Kutscher, p 43)

# It's NOT their fault...

- *Problems with "Executive Function"*

- *The ability to inhibit*
- *Working memory*
- *Foresight*
- *Hindsight*
- *Organization*
- *Self-talk*
- *Sense of time*
- *Transitions*
- *Separating emotion from facts*

*(from Russell Barkley in Kutscher, p 44-45)*

# It's NOT their fault...

- *Problems with "Executive Function"*
  - *The ability to inhibit: no brakes*
  - *Working memory: "you never said that!"*
  - *Foresight: no thought to consequences*
  - *Hindsight: didn't learn a thing*
  - *Organization: what?*
  - *Self-talk: no angel on their shoulder*
  - *Sense of time: absent*
  - *Transitions: "don't interrupt me!"*
  - *Separating emotion from facts: "she made me do it"*

*(from Russell Barkley in Kutscher, p 44-45)*

# It's NOT their fault...

- *Problems with "Executive Function"*

- *Poor sense of self-awareness*
- *Poor reading of social clues*
- *Poor learning and generalization of rules*
- *Inconsistent work and behavior*
- *Hyper-focused at times*
- *Frequently overwhelmed*
- *Short fuse*
- *Inflexible/explosive reactions*
- *Feels calm only when in motion*

*(from Russell Barkley in Kutscher, p 47-48)*

It's NOT their fault...

- *The big hit*

**Low self-esteem**



**So what do we do?**

## II. Respect and Humor (saving ourselves)

- ★ Life is difficult. (that includes everyone)
- ★ Feed our own passions
- ★ Bring our best selves to work
- ★ Team nurture each child
- ★ Model our love of learning
- ★ Push back – we can't always save them
- ★ Choose every day to be there for them

# The jewel inside (saving the kids)

- ◆ Every child is precious
- ◆ Each is wired differently
- ◆ Their self-esteem from our love and respect
- ◆ Doing the best they can with the talents, experience, and tools they have
- ◆ A third of all children are hard to parent
- ◆ We can be the a bright light in their lives

# The jewel inside (saving the kids)

## 504 Plans

- ◆ Require a diagnosed medical disability
- ◆ Encode a civil right under the American with Disabilities Act
- ◆ Strive for a “level playing field”
- ◆ Be within the capability of the school

# The jewel inside (saving the kids)

## Teaching and Parenting ADD/ADHD

- ◆ Minimize distractions
- ◆ Animate interactions
- ◆ Use caring commanding eye contact
- ◆ Keep it simple
- ◆ !! what's important
- ◆ Confirm with feedback what got through

# The jewel inside (saving the kids)

## Teaching and Parenting ADD/ADHD

- ◆ Underline key words
- ◆ Keep hyper kids moving
- ◆ Preferential seating
- ◆ One notebook for subject materials
- ◆ Bi-fold notebook for homework due/complete
- ◆ Assignment book & monthly calendar

# The jewel inside (saving the kids)

## Teaching and Parenting ADD/ADHD

- ◆ Classroom routines (eg, quizzes, reading)
- ◆ Hand out written assignments
- ◆ Internet source for homework/grades/notes
- ◆ Initial assignment sheet after each period
- ◆ Daily comment book
- ◆ Pretest before major tests
- ◆ Email/phone parents as needed

# Medication

- ADD/ADHD is a hard-wired brain disorder
  - Medication is the only way to change how the brain works
- Stimulants (FDA schedule II)
  - Methylphenidates  
(Ritalin, Concerta, Daytrana)
  - Amphetamines  
(Adderall, Dexedrine, Vyvanse)
- Side-effects
  - Jitters, restlessness, nausea, headaches, hyper-focus, “dumbed down,” talkative



# Medication

- Non-stimulants
  - Antidepressants
  - Blood pressure meds
- Side-effects
  - Sleepy
  - Light-headed/dizzy

# The take-home message

- ★ ADD/ADHD is a hard-wired brain anomaly
- ★ No one's fault
- ★ Lousy brakes on reactivity, distractions, and impulses
- ★ Keep it lively!
- ★ Better on the wild frontier, rather than a busy classroom
- ★ Love 'em, respect 'em, redirect 'em as needed, and give 'em hope