



#LIBERTYSTRONG

Newsletter from your Clinical Team

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How are we doing and what would you like to see in the Clinical Newsletter?

We want to connect with you! Please let Angie Huber know what you would like to see in the newsletter. We will do our best to meet your request. Send any requests to aahuber@fcps.edu.

Are you concerned about attentional concerns for you or your child?

By: Angie Huber, School Social Worker, Liberty MS

For years, I have heard many students and parents referring to someone having ADHD (Attentional Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) because the person is having trouble focusing or are impulsive. On the other hand, I have also heard people saying someone does not have ADHD because he/she can hyper focus for a long time on something preferred. It is challenging to research attentional concerns without ADHD popping up? The bottom line is that all attentional concerns are not due to an ADHD diagnosis. When are attentional concerns normal? If someone's attentional symptoms are more than normal, what are the options for reducing the concerns, feeling less frustrated and feeling more success with academic and social difficulties. How could you find the underlying causes?

I will start by saying that CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder) has a lot of information about ADHD. It is a great site to visit and offers numerous resources. Their fact sheet has a good amount of information. [CHADD- About ADHD Fact Sheet](#) If someone finds that they do have ADHD, the person will have numerous options for treating their difficulties with attention. However, it is a personal decision and could involve medication, behavioral interventions, counseling and executive functioning skill development to name a few.

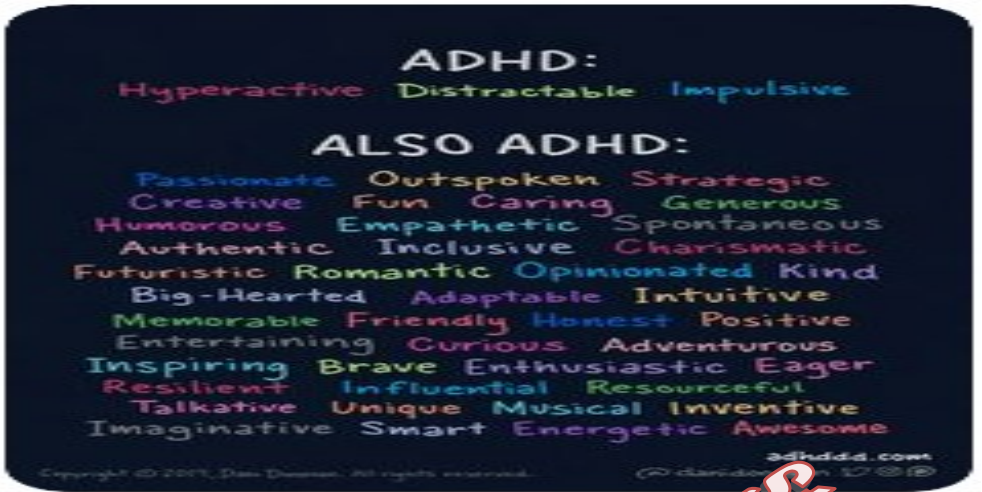
Not all attentional concerns meet the diagnosis of ADHD. People of all ages have attentional concerns for various reasons. Attentional concerns can be observed as inattentive, impulsive/ hyperactive or a combined presentation. Attentional concerns can be inconsistent or isolated to only certain situations. Everyone has times when they feel distracted. People often become concerned and want to investigate more thoroughly when these times seem to occur more often than not and are causing distress. Anxiety, depression, learning disorders, sensory problems, medications, life events, medical concerns, stress and trauma can cause concerns with attention. What if you are concerned about your ability to focus, what should you do? First, consult with a medical professional to ensure that there are no underlying health concerns. They can also send checklists to the school for the teachers or work to obtain a full perspective of what is occurring in all areas of someone's life. The [Connors Parent Rating Scale](#) is one assessment widely used to assess clinical concerns. Some children can hyper focus on preferred tasks, such as video games or Lego's because they are highly interesting and stimulated but cannot focus on less preferred tasks for longer than 5 minutes.

The bottom line is that attentional concerns are not something to ignore. When ignored, other symptoms often develop due to having untreated problems continuing to disrupt day to day functioning. If you are concerned, there is probably a reason. If you are concerned about your child, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher and school staff. We have resources and/or could help give you our perspective from the school setting in comparison to other children and could also develop strategies if needed for improvement to be seen.



Parent Support Line:

DFS parent support line, parent cafes and parenting classes ([link](#))



Stress Relief

Something
GOOD
is going
to HAPPEN



Routines and Organization.... How can they help?

By: Angie Huber, School Social Worker Liberty MS

Routines and structure are part of organizing your home. When accomplished with success, planned structure can lower stress, help with understanding expectations and clarify the relationship structure. Good daily routines and structure help families feel safe, in control and to develop skills and healthy habits. These should be planned, thoughtful, predictable, and consistent.



Families are often busy these days, requiring a great deal of coordination and communication to accomplish and take care of all needs in the family. Family calendars can help, especially if they are digital so members can have access to view whenever needed. One calendar that works well is an app, *Family Organizer*. It is available for all phones to use. It has many functions, including making a shopping list, which can also encourage members to update the list as needed items run out or also to add desired items. To do lists can also be created, as well as numerous other possibilities. If your family does not encourage electronic usage for these purposes, a visual calendar and posted grocery list can be helpful. Some also like to post checklists and schedules for students to recall their routine expectations for each day. In doing these visuals, students can become independent in meeting expectations by reviewing the list without needing your support.

What about technology? Do you have specific expectations for technology? How do you communicate and uphold those expectations? Technology is a huge draw and addictive to many people. Some people have noticeable changes in their mood and attitude when allowed to play. How do you monitor the appropriateness of the content for your child's age? Have you noticed that many video game programs and ads have very inappropriate ad popups for your child? What about monitoring who your child is communicating with online? Many children are communicating with people they do not know in person. You may want to give them a schedule based on their age and use parenting settings to limit some content.

How do you teach and encourage your child to follow expectations? Consistent and thoughtful expectations reinforces the family value system and each member's role. Consistency is very important. Visuals (such as charts or lists), hand signals, timers, encouraging the other children to model expectation, a friendly competition, and weekly family meetings to revisit expectations and how things are going (positive and for improvement) have proven to be effective.

Do you ever feel overwhelmed to the point that you cannot verbally express your expectations at the moment. There are several times when it is a good idea to use nonverbals when communicating expectations, such as timers and hand signals. When someone is in an emotionally heightened, they typically need less verbal communications and time to think and respond. Timers help with transitions and time expectations. Sometimes it is easier and promotes less opposition and distraction when hand signals are used, especially in public or with a child who likes to debate. **1-2-3 Magic** works well with hand signals. See below.

Children need to know what expectations are nonnegotiable. These should be clearly communicated. Any consequences needed should be consistently and quickly enforced with no exceptions. Children should not be "saved" from consequences. Consequences and uncomfortable experiences are where growth often occurs. We have all lived a couple of years with the unknown, resulting in some anxieties. Structure and consistency helps to counteract the unknown and builds trust for the future, feelings of safety, and knowing what to expect.

Finally but not least, do you have time in your day for going over the positives of the day? When your child is settling down at the end of the day or during a family dinner, you could take the opportunity to tell your child a couple positives from their day. If you are like me, it is easy to get caught up in what has to be done and continuously reminding about what needs to occur, which leads to forgetting to also point out the positive. I was told that 5 positives equal one negative. That is a very hard expectation to meet, but is a goal to strive for in parenting.

1-2-3 Magic

The effective, powerful and simple way to parent

Your child is arguing, fighting, whining, yelling or having a tantrum.

Hold up 1 finger and say "That's 1."

1

Bad behavior continues.

Bad behavior stops.

2

Hold up 2 fingers and say "That's 2."

Bad behavior continues.

Bad behavior stops.

3

Hold up 3 fingers and say "That's 3. Take a timeout."



PRACTICAL TIPS TO STOP YOUR MIND RACING

FOCUS ON THE PHYSICAL



Concentrate on your fingers and toes. Notice how they feel. Or try focussing on the tip of your nose. Another way is to take a shower and concentrate on how the water feels against your body.

WRITE IT DOWN



Buy a pretty notebook and journal your thoughts. A 'brain dump' of everything in your head is a useful exercise.

INHALE LAVENDER



There is evidence that lavender can help reduce anxiety, depression and insomnia. And it smells fab!

LISTEN TO MUSIC



Put on your favourite song, crank up the volume and sing and dance along! The change of focus plus the exercise is sure to distract you from your thoughts.

READ A BOOK



Lose yourself in a good book and feel the stress melt away!

WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS



There are many visualisation meditations you can try to help you get the hang of this. Try imagining your thoughts as leaves on a stream and watch them float by.

DISCIPLINE CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS WITH ADHD:

- ✓ Name both your expectation and the behavior
I asked you to take your plate to the sink and you started playing Minecraft instead.
- ✓ In one brief sentence, tell the child what to do
I want you to put the game controller down and clear your place.
- ✓ State the consequence for not complying
If you keep playing without clearing your place, I'm going to turn off the game for the rest of the day.
- ✓ Kindly but firmly implement the consequence
Your plate is still at the table and you're still playing. I'm turning the game off now.

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Heather Howell is a Child Welfare Program
Coordinator at www.mississippichildren.org

Your students can check out Ms. Huber's google office to see many cool things to do, learn about or to use to cope!



VIRTUAL ZEN DEN

[Sounds and Music](#)

[Meditation and Grounding Exercises](#)

[Visual Relaxation](#)

[Live Animal Cams](#)

[Yoga](#)

[Something Interesting](#)

[Pixar Short Film: La Luna](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Piper](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Day and Night](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Party Cloudy](#)

[Art and Creativity](#)

[Games and Puzzles](#)

Executive Functioning

Emotional Control

the ability to manage emotions while finishing a task or goal; controlling and directing behavior

Sustained Attention

the ability to focus and complete tasks despite fatigue or boredom

Response Inhibition

thinking before acting; ability to assess and evaluate a situation before responding to it

Task Initiation

starting projects without procrastination

Planning and Prioritization

making decisions and mapping out plans towards achieving a goal or completing a task while identifying irrelevant information

Inhibition or self-control

allows an individual to set priorities and curb impulsive behavior.

Organization

creating and maintaining a system that helps keep track of information, materials, personal possessions

Time Management

the ability to estimate and allocate the time needed to complete a task or meet deadlines

Goal-Directed Persistence

ability to not lose sight of a goal and seeing it to the end without getting swayed by distractions or competing interests

Flexibility

adapting to obstacles, new information, or changing situations

Metacognition

ability to step back to assess and observe oneself in situations; involves self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills

Executive functioning involves three major types of brain functions or core skills. These are:

Mental or cognitive flexibility

which enables an individual to adapt to changing conditions, respond to different demands, and analyze situations in several ways. This plays a key role in solving problems, whether in school or daily life.

Working memory

or the ability to hold and process information over short periods. It allows an individual to hold information while actively processing information without losing track of a bigger task.



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ADHD CALMING IDEAS



STAY POSITIVE

watch funny movies & video clips. Laughter is good for us & helps reduce stress



MEDITATE

breathe, relax, or do whatever makes you feel calm & chilled



SLEEP

I know it's hard but keep trying as it's essential for good health & the immune system



GET CREATIVE

use our creativity to help others by thinking outside the box



REDUCE EXTERNAL NOISE

to give our brain a break



PLAY WITH OUR PETS

it's well known to reduce feelings of anxiety & depression



EXERCISE

helps burn off excess energy, produce dopamine & endorphins



MUSIC

the songs we listen to can change our mood dramatically



NATURE

getting outside improves our mental health & well-being, & it just feels better doing stuff outside



SUNLIGHT

Vitamin D is essential for improved mood & a healthy immune system

gudidentity.com

The PARENT RESOURCE CENTER offers numerous webinar opportunities throughout the year.

We offer a welcoming and engaging environment for families, educators, and community members. We provide access to _____ to support the success of all students, including those with learning challenges, special needs, and disabilities.

2021-2022 SY Hours:

The Parent Resource Center is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

In-person consultations are by appointment only. Please call in advance to make an appointment. Virtual Consultations are still available. Please call [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941) or email prc@fcps.edu for an appointment.

<https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>

9 Truths About ADHD & Intense Emotions



You're not imagining things; ADHD really is linked to more powerful, sudden, and unruly emotions. Learn to understand your feelings — and how to get them under control. By Thomas Brown, Ph.D.

TRUTH #1: Intense emotions are a hallmark of ADHD.

Few doctors factor in emotional challenges when making a diagnosis. Yet recent research reveals that individuals with ADHD have above-average difficulty with frustration, impatience, and excitability.

TRUTH #2: Emotional challenges begin in the brain.

Brain connectivity networks carrying emotional information are constrained and congested in individuals with ADHD.

TRUTH #3: Individuals with ADHD can be swept away by a single emotion — fast.

Hearing uncertainty in a friend's reaction, for example, may lead to an outsized display of self-defense — regardless of the words she said.

TRUTH #4: Significant social anxiety is a chronic ADHD difficulty.

More than one third of teens and adults with ADHD live with an exaggerated fear of being perceived as incompetent, unappealing, or uncool.

TRUTH #5: Emotions motivate action.

Brain imaging studies show that people with ADHD are less able to anticipate pleasure or register satisfaction with tasks that promise delayed rewards — meaning you're more likely to favor instant gratification.

TRUTH #6: People with ADHD can suffer from dysthymia, a mild but long-term form of depression.

It is often brought on by living with the frustrations, failures, negative feedback, and stresses of undiagnosed and/or untreated ADHD.

TRUTH #7: The ADHD brain doesn't always distinguish between dangerous threats and minor problems.

As a result, you may struggle to deal rationally and realistically with events that are stressful but not of grave concern.

TRUTH #8: Emotions are tied to memory.

Memory allows us to plan, monitor, and self-regulate. Many individuals with ADHD, though, have weak working memory — and are often disorganized, quick to anger, or prone to procrastinate as a result.

TRUTH #9: Treating the emotional challenges of ADHD requires a multimodal approach.

ADHD medication may improve the emotional networks in the brain, but supplemental talk therapy is also needed to help a person manage their fear or low self-esteem.

Thomas E. Brown, Ph.D., is a Yale-trained clinical psychologist who specializes in the assessment and treatment of ADHD and related problems in children, teens, and adults.

ADDITUDE

www.additudemag.com/download/

Try these activities for your student!

⇒ Liberty Middle School Afterschool Program

<https://libertyms.fcps.edu/activities/after-school-program>

⇒ Fairfax County Park Authority Programs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

For more social-emotional resources and lessons please visit the LS Clinical Team's website (see the link below works best in Google Chrome):

<https://sites.google.com/view/liberty-ms-clinical-team/mental-wellness-topics>

some new videos added

VISUAL CHECKLIST EXAMPLE



Loveandlifecards.blogspot.com

Resources:

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please call [911](tel:911) or access one of the mental health resources below:

- ⇒ Reach out to a trusted adult (parent, counselor, teacher, coach, etc.); <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk>
- ⇒ Text NEEDHELP to 85511 for the [Crisis Link](https://www.needhelp.org) Hotline at or call them at 703-527-4077
- ⇒ Chat online with a specialist at [CrisisChat.org](https://www.crisischat.org) or [ImAlive.org](https://www.imalive.org)
- ⇒ Call an emergency mental health center at 703 573-5679 (Merrifield Center), 703-536-2000 (Dominion Hospital), or 703-289-7560 (INOVA emergency services)
- ⇒ CR2 – 844-627-4747
- ⇒ Go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital

Call 911

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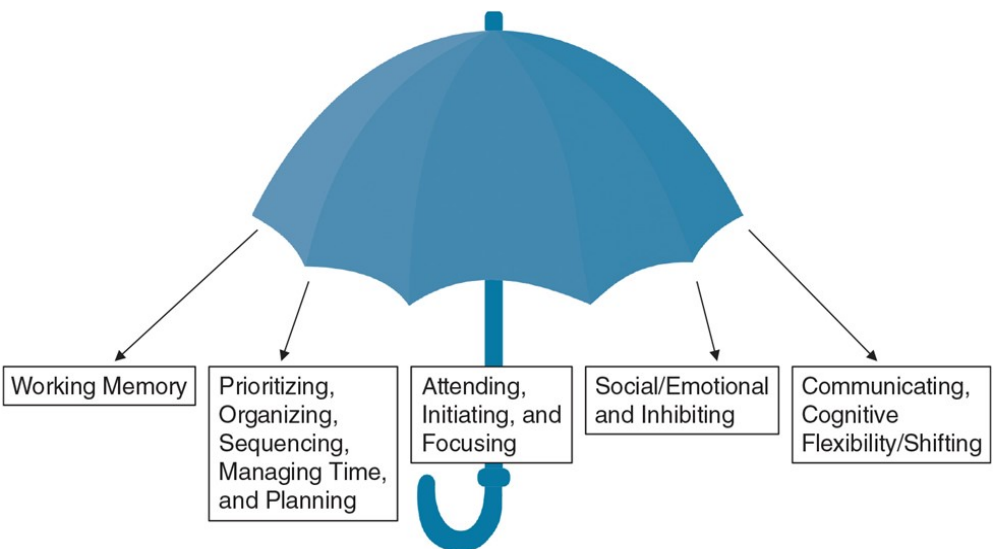
CONFIDENCE BOOSTING AFFIRMATIONS FOR YOUR CHILD

1. "YOU MAKE ME LAUGH!"
2. "YOU DID THAT SO WELL!"
3. "YOU CAN DO ANYTHING!"
4. "YOU MAKE ME SO HAPPY!"
5. "YOU'RE INCREDIBLE!"
6. "YOU'RE GOING TO BE SO SUCCESSFUL!"
7. "YOU DID THAT ALL BY YOURSELF? WOW!"
8. "I HAVE THE BEST LITTLE BOY/GIRL IN THE WORLD!"
9. "YOU ARE SO TALENTED!"
10. "THE WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE WITH YOU IN IT!"
11. "I LOVE YOUR CREATIVITY!"
12. "WHAT A GREAT JOB!"
13. "YOU'RE SO SMART!"
14. "GOOD THINKING!"
15. "I'M SO PROUD OF YOU!"
16. "YOU HAVE THE BEST IDEAS!"
17. "YOU ARE SO SPECIAL!"
18. "YOU HAVE SUCH A BIG HEART!"
19. "YOU SET A GREAT EXAMPLE FOR THOSE AROUND YOU!"
20. "YOU'RE MY HERO!"
21. "I BELIEVE IN YOU!"
22. "YOU'RE SO HELPFUL!"
23. "I'M LUCKY TO HAVE YOU."
24. "YOU ARE SO GOOD AT THAT!"
25. "I LOVE SPENDING TIME WITH YOU."

WWW.THEFAMILYMAAM.COM

Executive Functioning Umbrella

“Executive Functioning is How You Use Your Ability”



Counseling is often a good approach to help people to work through struggles that they are having in their life. Many feel comfortable with the idea of counseling and many do not feel comfortable. One of the benefits of counseling is that it can help you to find solutions or to problem solve more quickly than without it. However, some still may not be comfortable and to add to the challenges of becoming comfortable with the idea of counseling, during COVID, it is difficult to find counselors who are meeting in person and some do not feel comfortable with meeting virtually. A good alternative is to use journaling. Here are some journal prompts for December.



JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR DECEMBER

Classicallyorgnaized.com

1. When was the last time I felt organized?
2. What is my definition of being organized?
3. What are the clutter hotspots that stress me out the most?
4. What would I do with more empty space in my home?
5. What is it about my clutter that keeps me up at night?
6. What would I do in my home once it's organized?
7. When was the last time I had company over?
8. What do I want people to remember about me when I'm gone?
9. If I could wave a magic wand, what would I want to be removed from my home?
10. f I could change one thing about my house what would it be?
11. What do I wish I had been taught about being organized at a young age?
12. What's the best purchase I've ever made? Why?
13. What's the worst purchase I've ever made? Why?
14. I'm afraid people will _____ if they know about my disorganization.
15. Where is one place I feel most like myself? Why?
16. What are my short-term and long-term goals for my home?
17. Who or what gives me comfort? How?
18. What do I do for self-care?
19. Where am I compromising my own joy? What can I do about it?
20. List 5 things that I'm grateful for.
21. What do I think my life would be like if I didn't have _____?(anger, depression, OCD, anxiety, chronic disorganization, hoarding)
22. Write about my victories this week.
23. Write about 3 of my best talents.
24. Write a thank you letter to an object I am going to say goodbye to.
25. My ideal day would look like _____.
26. How can I treat myself today without acquiring anything?
27. Write about a role model of mine of who is organized?
28. When was the last time I got rid of something? How did I feel?
29. Name three words that describe my organizing style right now and three words I would like to use to describe my organizing style in the future.

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