COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES FOR ADHD

KATHERINE WALUKEVICH-DIENST, PHD

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

UW Medicine
UW SCHOOL
OF MEDICINE

Integrated Care
Training Program
UW Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

project
ECHO

SPEAKER DISCLOSURES

✓ I have no conflicts of interest to disclose

Planner disclosures

The following series planners have no relevant conflicts of interest to disclose; other disclosures have been mitigated.

Mark Duncan MD
Rick Ries MD
Kari Stephens PhD
Barb McCann PhD

Anna Ratzliff MD PhD
Betsy Payn MA PMP
Esther Solano
Cara Towle MSN RN

OBJECTIVES

1. Review the prevalence rates and diagnostic presentation of adult ADHD

2. Learn ADHD skills "starter pack"
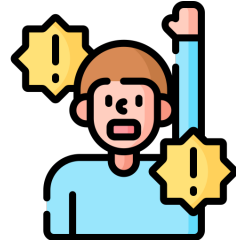
3. Identify common provider pitfalls to avoid

OBJECTIVE 1: REVIEW THE PREVALENCE RATES AND DIAGNOSTIC PRESENTATION OF ADULT ADHD
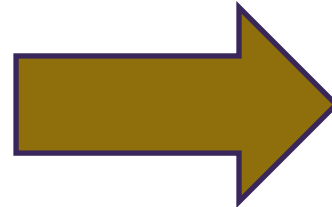
ADHD: KEY POINTS
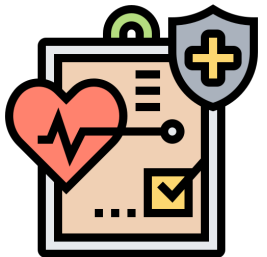

3 Main Symptom Areas

Inattention

Impulsivity

Hyperactivity

Other Considerations

Present in at least 2 areas

Not better explained by another condition

ADHD: KEY POINTS

Childhood onset, can persist into adulthood

Prevalence in adults

*Rising rates: 6.1% of US children/adolescents in 1997/1998 to 10.2% in 2015/2016 (Xu et al., 2018)

*Harder to estimate... but in 2020:
* ~2.6% persistent adult ADHD
* ~6.8% symptomatic adult ADHD
* (Song et al., 2021)

In the top 100 most popular TikTok videos about ADHD, over half were misleading **(Yeung et al., 2022)**

"You Can't Possibly Have ADHD": Exploring Validation and Tensions around Diagnosis within Unbounded ADHD Social Media Communities

Tessa Eagle
University of California, Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz, USA
teagle@ucsc.edu

Kathryn E. Ringland
University of California, Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz, USA

Millions to billions of ADHD-related hashtags on Twitter and TikTok

Discovery, validation, and acceptance → but can heighten tensions between medical + ADHD communities

(Eagle & Ringland, 2023)

ADHD SKILLS... WHERE TO START?!

Mastering Your Adult ADHD
A Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment Program
Second Edition
CLIENT WORKBOOK
STEVEN A. SAFREN
SUSAN E. SPRICH
CAROL A. PERLMAN
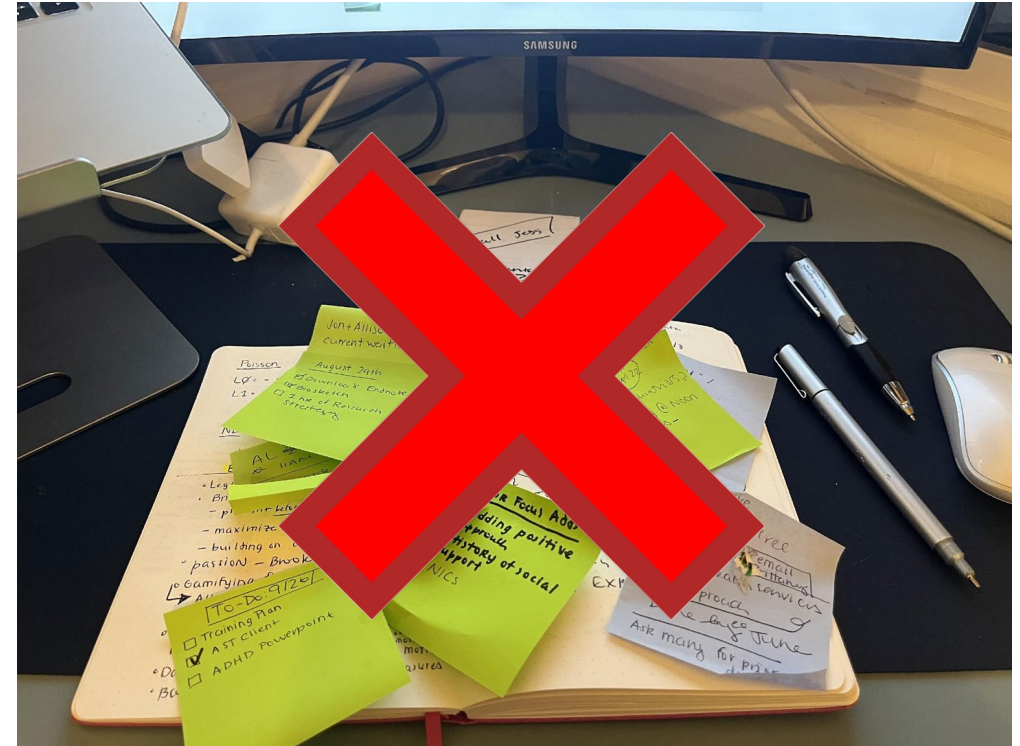MICHAEL W. OTTO

Link to book

① Organization & Planning

② Reducing Distractibility

③ Adaptive Thinking + Dealing with Procrastination

ORGANIZATION & PLANNING

CALENDAR AND TASK LIST

1

- Do they use a calendar and task list?
- If so, what do they use?
- How helpful do they find it?
- Do they actually use it _daily_?
- Too complex? Too simple?

TIPS
- **Goal:** Free up space in your brain by getting all your to-dos and appointments out of your brain and onto something else
- 1 calendar, 1 task list
- Doesn't matter if electronic or another format
- What matters is that they use it daily
- **Common Pitfalls:** anxiety, avoidance, not using the system

"I don't get the important things done!"

TIPS
- **Goal:** Manage overwhelm and figure out priorities
- Use the ABCs
- **A** = _needs_ to get done ASAP, like yesterday
- **B** = important, longer-term tasks
- **C** = can wait, but get done if time
- **Common pitfalls:** too many A tasks, never getting to C tasks (but that might be ok?), not scheduling the task, rigidity, Cs above As

2

PRIORITIZING TASKS

BREAKING DOWN TASKS

3

"I get so overwhelmed!"

TIPS
- **Goal:** Break down big tasks until they feel doable then add steps to task list
- What's the first thing that needs to happen for this task? What next?
- Do you want to avoid this? Is it doable in a day?
- **Common pitfalls:** not breaking tasks down far enough, difficulty identifying the steps

"I'm stuck!"

TIPS
- **Goal:** Identify what is getting in the way and help pt practice generating, evaluating and testing solutions
- 1st step: What's the problem exactly?
- 2nd step: How could you fix it? Always list "do nothing" or "keep it the same"
- 3rd step: Pros and cons
- 4th step: Rank – which seems like a good fit?
- 5th step: try it out + evaluate

4

PROBLEM SOLVING

UW PACC
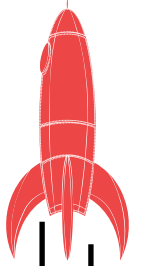
REDUCING DISTRACTIBILITY

"My attention span is so bad!"

- **<u>Skill:</u>** Attention tracking and training
- Attention is a muscle, and it varies!
- Tracking
  - Pick a boring task you've been avoiding
  - Time how long it takes until your attention wanders – do this a few times
  - Break the task down to fit average span
- Training
  - Do the task for the allotted time frame
  - Refocus when distracted
  - Use mantras: *Am I doing what I'm supposed to be doing?*

"I get super distracted!"

- **<u>Skill:</u>** Environmental modification
- Identify as many distractions in the environment as possible
  - Clutter
  - Noise
  - Competing tasks
  - Email, social media, phones
  - Other people
  - Pain
- Then, reduce or eliminate
  - Use abbreviated problem solving skills
  - Ask the patient – *how can you reduce or eliminate this distraction?*

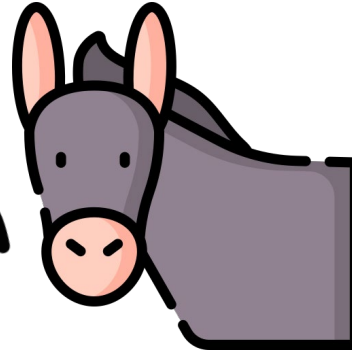# OBJECTIVE 3: IDENTIFY COMMON PROVIDER PITFALLS TO AVOID

ADHD SKILLS: COMMON PROVIDER PITFALLS

Doing the work for the patient (or centering your experience)

Making assumptions
- What skills someone already has or does not have

Not following up

Dumping, not dosing, skills