



Does My Child Have ADHD?

In the October issue we looked at the symptoms of ADHD and learned that all ADHD is not characterized by hyper activity. This month we discuss the treatment options. See www.metrochristianliving.com for entire series.

What type of medicine is given and how does it help? No treatments have been found to cure ADHD, but the treatment that results in the greatest degree of improvement in the symptoms of this disorder is the use of stimulant medications (Concerta, Focalin, Vyvanse, Adderal) are examples of stimulant medications). The stimulant goes to the frontal lobe of the brain where the dopamine and norepinephrine is made and stimulates the brain to make more of these two essential neurotransmitters. The very best results come from a combination of medication management and therapy. In therapy the parent learns what ADHD is, what medication can and cannot do and how to provide more structure in the home, use a positive reinforcement system to help motivate the child, and how to help their child or teen improve organizational and study skills.

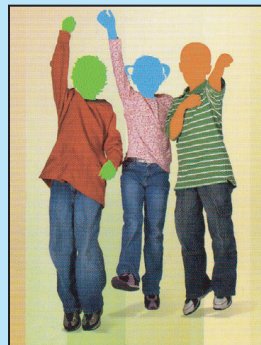
One aspect of treatment of ADHD that is often overlooked is determining how many skills have been missed prior to diagnosis. It is estimated that a child with ADHD who is unmedicated misses 50 percent of what is presented in the classroom; *medications cannot teach missed skills*. Medicine can only help your child focus on the skills that are currently being presented. If a diagnosis of ADHD is not made until second or third grade or later; it is imperative to have a thorough diagnosis of mastered and missed skill in reading and math. Then the parents can provide tutoring to help the child “catch up” on those missed skills. According to October 2009 issue of *Clinical Psychiatry News*, in an article entitled “Stimulants Fend Off Comorbidities in Boys with ADHD”; one year out 80% of children who start medication for ADHD are no longer taking their medications. There are several possible explanations for this low rate of compliance: parents abandoning treatment after one side effect occurs, failure to return to the physician when ONE medicine does not work, or failure to get the tutoring needed to get the child on grade level in reading and math. Then the parents concludes “the medicine did not work for my child”, and/or failure to follow up with frequent medication checks with the pediatrician or psychiatrist.

The good news is this developmental disorder can be effectively managed, and your child can not only do well in school but enjoy learning. The following email was sent to me after several family sessions this summer and one month into the new school year: “ I could not wait until our next appointment to tell you how well Taylor is doing. He is a different child; he is more focused and homework is not a nightmare now. He can read and carry on a conversation without getting distracted and his maturity level has already improved. He woke up Tuesday morning happy and ready to go to school, came into the kitchen and asked if he could have his medicine. He says he can tell a difference and he can pay attention and focus on his work. He is not the last one to finish his work now. “

TREATMENT WORKS. Unfortunately, ADHD assessment is rarely covered under the services of Special Education. If you suspect your child or teen has problems concentrating and retaining information, you will need to seek the help of a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Clinical Psychologist. ∞

Suzanne B. Russell, LPC; PLLC specializes in ADHD treatment for children, teens, and adults. Contact her at (601) 770-7355 or visit www.srusselltherapy.com.

Why is your child struggling in school?



Behavioral problems at school and home, problems with focusing, finishing assignments, following directions, anger outbursts, and defiance can be symptoms of TREATABLE DISORDERS. Phone 601-707-7355 for an appointment with Suzanne B. Russell, Licensed Professional Counselor; M.S. in Psychometry; and M.S. Reading Disorders.

SPECIALITIES:

Diagnosis and management of ADHD, inattentive ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder, depression, all types of anxiety disorders, and behavioral and academic problems for children and teens.

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