

Adult ADHD Treatment Group

Santa Clara Department of Adult Psychiatry

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This group is scheduled to meet every **Monday 5:30pm-7pm**

Program Overview:

Attendance:

All referred members are welcome to attend this 8 class series for education, skills training, and peer support for adult ADHD symptoms. The 8 topics are rotated through approximately every two months. There is open enrollment; therefore members can start the group on any Monday of the month and are welcome to return on an as needed basis for ongoing support in successful application of the skills, goal setting, accountability and material review.

Cancellations:

On rare occasions, the class may be cancelled due to clinic closure or dates in which the group facilitator is absent from the clinic. If you are pre-registered for the group on a date which group has been cancelled, the clinic will attempt to contact you to inform you of the cancellation. Given the drop-in nature of the class, it will be difficult to notify all potential members if the group is cancelled; as a result, if you have not been in attendance recently, we encourage you to call the clinic ahead of time at 408-366-4400 to ensure the class is being held that evening.

Group Expectations:

- Please do your best to come on time.
- Maintain confidentiality of other group members.
- Be supportive and respectful of each other.
- Take a break if you need one. Exit through the reception area for restrooms.
- Bring your folder to each class.
- Each time you check-in for the group you will be given a brief assessment (AOQ) to complete by the front desk staff. Please submit these to group leader by the end of each group.

GROUP STRUCTURE

Research outcomes suggest that routines and external structure are helpful to those with ADHD, therefore, we will follow a similar format each group session.

Check-in: This is your opportunity to briefly get to know group members; and, for returning members, an opportunity to discuss progress or barriers in application of the skills.

Core Concepts: Although we introduce a new topic each group, we will consistently include the following core concepts so that everyone has a foundational understanding of the ADHD brain and how these skills can help.

- **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Model:** The CBT model (Page 4) is a visual reminder of how each session targets an important aspect of ADHD treatment.

This helps answer the question:



*“Why is this important for me to know?”**

- **Brain-based Differences:** We will also highlight a particular aspect of neuro-cognitive functioning that is impacted by ADHD to provide a rationale for why the ADHD brain performs differently, and where additional support is needed in skills training.

This helps answer the question:



“Why is this so hard for me to do?”

- **Skills Training:** Although understanding your brain and behavior is important, chances are you sought out treatment in order to make some changes. At this time, we discuss specific, evidence based strategies related to the session topic (1-8).

This helps answer the question:



“What strategies can I use?”

- **Goal Setting:** Positive changes will not occur unless you take an active role in your treatment. This doesn't mean just showing up to group every week. Little will change unless you repeatedly follow through with application of these skills in your day to day life. This requires some commitment and planning. There is also a take home activity at the end of each session.

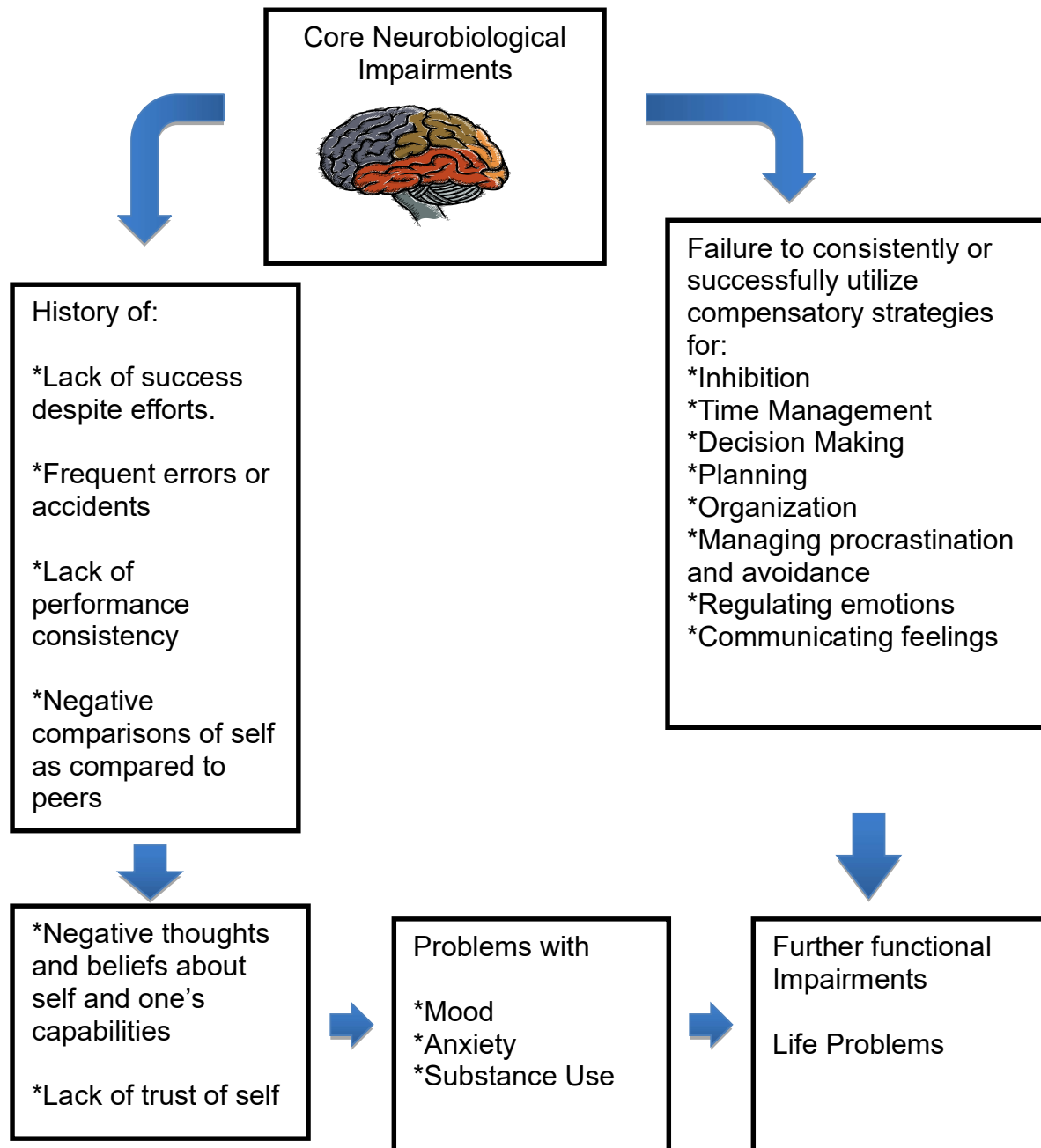


This helps answer the question:

“What am I willing to do?”

*Look for these symbols and questions as a guidepost in each session.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Model of ADHD



Although there is no “cure” for ADHD, many adults notice significant improvements in the quality of life through treatment. The most effective treatment of ADHD includes a combination of Cognitive Behavioral Psychotherapy & medication management of symptoms (as appropriate).

ADHD Basics: What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

ADHD is a neurobiological disorder which begins in childhood and often continues into adulthood. ADHD consists of a persistent problem with inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development.

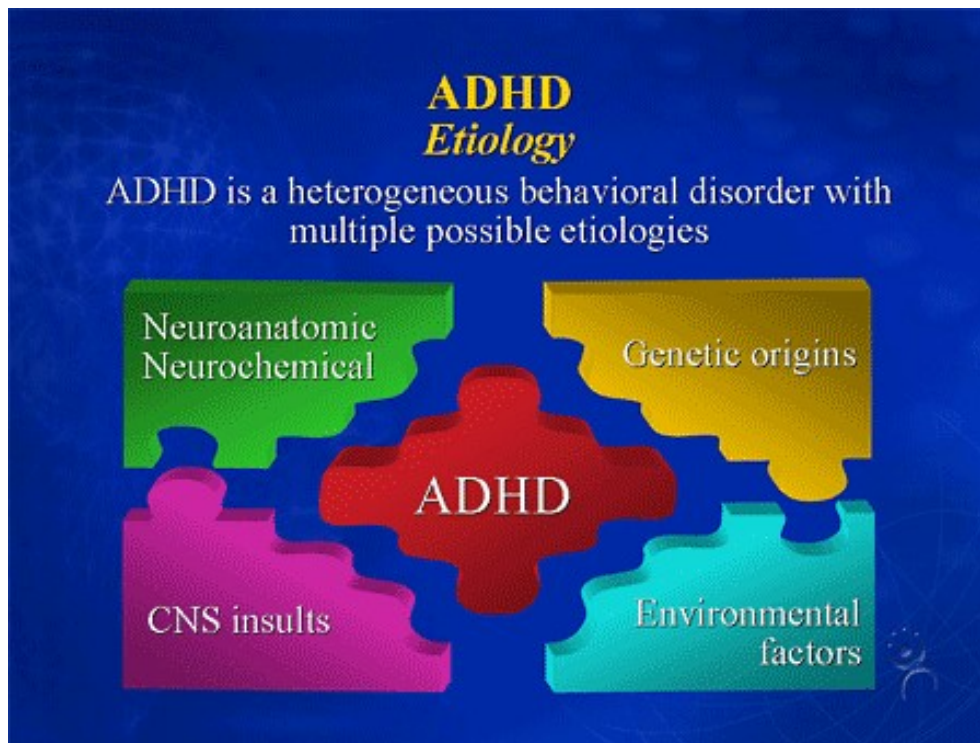
Individuals with ADHD have some combination of the following symptoms:

Inattention:

- Difficulty Sustaining Attention,
- Easily Distracted
- Failure to give close attention to details
- Chronic Procrastination
- Difficulty following through on instructions
- Difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Poor Time Management
- Frequently misplaces items
- Forgetfulness

Hyperactivity and Impulsivity:

- Often fidgety
- Difficulty sitting still
- Restlessness
- Difficulty engaging in leisure activities quietly
- Often "on the go" or acts as if "driven by a motor"
- Has difficulty waiting his/her turn
- Interrupts or intrudes on others
- Impulsive: Acts before thinking and often does things one later regrets.
- Emotional Regulation Difficulties (this is not included in the current diagnostic criteria, but is widely supported in research regarding ADHD symptoms)



Brain-based Differences:

What cognitive differences are responsible for these symptoms?

Executive Functioning Deficits: ADHD can be described as a disorder of Executive Functioning (EF). Executive Functioning is an umbrella term used to describe the brain's ability to self-manage or self-regulate (also known as cognitive control or supervisory attentional system).

We can think of EF as like the “Executive or CEO of our brain.” It is responsible for the following:

- Attention
- Inhibition/Impulse Control
- Activation and Motivation
- Judgment and Decision Making
- Organization and Project Planning
- Regulation of Emotions

Let's suppose that the CEO in charge of the ADHD brain could use some additional support and training in these areas.



Session 8: Occupational Wellness

Managing ADHD in work settings



Why is this important for me to know?

Adults with ADHD may face challenges in maintaining employment, completing tasks on the job, and managing their workload, among other issues.

This session topic is included in this program since work performance problems are often the catalyst for adults to seek evaluation and treatment for ADHD.



Why is this so hard for me to do?

ADHD symptoms which contribute to problems in the workplace originate with deficits in executive functioning. These are the cognitive skills that allow us to self-regulate behavior and include the following:

- Attention
- Inhibition/Impulse Control
- Activation and Motivation
- Judgment and Decision Making
- Organization and Project Planning
- Regulation of Emotions

Common workplace problems:

- Difficulty with prioritizing, planning and scheduling resulting in missed deadlines.
- Challenges with sustaining attention can lead to missing important rules, regulations, instructions or other relevant information to succeed.
- Problems providing clear, sequential steps affect management of people and projects.
- Verbal impulsivity and other limitations in social skills can create ruptures in relationships and decrease networking opportunities.
- Lost keys/PDA's, laptops and other items can result in security breaches.
- Disorganization, missed appointments or meetings, tardiness can undermine professionalism.

It is the combination of the neurobiological impairments, personal history, cognitive and behavioral habits and any co-occurring psychiatric concerns with ADHD that contribute to problems in occupational performance.



What strategies can I use?

Many of the skills and strategies outlined in the other 7 sessions are directly applicable to the workplace setting. In addition, this session includes:

- Considerations for selecting a career that is ADHD friendly.
- A number of workplace specific strategies to add to your repertoire.
- Info about workplace accommodations as ADHD is a disability protected under federal law.

Selecting a Career:

Success starts with selection of a career that makes the most of the strengths inherent in your ADHD brain.

(Adapted from “Taking Charge of Adult ADHD: Strategies that Work by Russell Barkley” Find this text listed in the references section at the back of the folder):

In general, ADHD friendly jobs have the following qualities:

- Room for flexibility of time and organization.
- Frequent supervision.
- Frequent movement.
- More emphasis on manual activities These tasks typically require situational adaptability, primarily innate abilities like dexterity, sight, physical strength.
- Less emphasis on long term planning ability or abstract tasks that require problem-solving and analytical capability.

These are points to consider more than firm rules. Many adults with ADHD have chosen a job or field that on the surface doesn't seem ideal for the strengths and weaknesses normally associated with the condition, yet they do very well.

How? They find a way to fit in the resources and support that they need in order to have success despite these challenges.

Important factors to consider in selecting work include the following:

- The type of work
- The working environment
- Work procedures

The Type of Work

Military- ensures greater structure and discipline, more immediate feedback and greater provision of benefits (medical care, dental care, etc.) than other fields.

Door to Door Sales- Involves freedom of movement, changes in setting, mobility, a flexible schedule, frequent meetings with new contacts, social interaction. Passion for the product definitely helps. Some help may be needed in completing reports and paperwork but “in the field” ADHD adults can do very well.

Drug Rep- Individuals with at least a BA degree in biology, nursing, medicine, pharmaceuticals or a related field may find this calling perfect for the same reasons given for door-to-door sales.

Carpenter, plumber, electrician, landscaper, tile layer, construction contractor- These and other trades may be more ADHD friendly because the individual is doing more manual than mental work, is outdoors more often, has frequent changes in job sites, gets to deal with a lot of different people, and is paid an hourly wage, which provides more immediate consequences than a salaried position.

Emergency medical technician, emergency room physician, police officer, fire fighter- These jobs do not keep people confined to offices or require hours of sustained mental effort or concentration. They also provide some excitement and thrills or even life threatening situations that can provide a burst of adrenaline that some adults with ADHD claim helps them focus their mind. Again freedom of movement, changes in setting, interactions with others.

Sports-related occupations- Even if you are not a professional-caliber athlete, you can find athletic or sports-related occupations, from being a physical education teacher and sports coach to working or even managing an outdoor sports park or teaching others your sport (surfing, skiing, wind-surfing, hiking, mountaineering, etc.), or working in or running a gym or health club. Working with park services as a ranger or other role.

Computer technician/consultant- With good computer knowledge and skills, this type of job can allow the individual to work throughout a business, hospital, or other venue to help other people with their personal computer problems at work.

Food service industry- Culinary arts can be a type of work that is creative, requires a focus on the moment, the immediate steps to create a finished product, doesn't require long-range planning or persistence at unrewarding activities for long periods of time.

Self-employment- Starting a small business or being a sole-proprietor can prove ADHD friendly. Whether you run a landscaping, computer consulting company,

open your own bakery or personal fitness coaching business, etc. The hours can be more flexible, you are your own boss, the consequences for working (or not working) are immediate and the work settings can vary considerable from day to day.

Photographer/videographer- Day to day changes in settings including filming sites, editing, client meetings. Work creatively with a diverse set of stories or topics to cover, short bursts of work interspersed with breaks, frequent opportunities for interacting with a variety of people.

Actor, comedian, performing artist, musician- These professions can allow impulsive emotions not only to be expressed but can also contribute to onstage charisma or persona while providing frequent changes in the setting and nature of the work, freedom of movement, limited need for long-range planning and organization, low requirement for self-motivation given the immediate and intrinsic pleasure people may get from engaging in these professions.

Use these examples and descriptions as a springboard for your imagination in identifying what other career paths might be suitable for you.

The Working Environment

Consider noise and distractions

Environments with an open work space or clusters of desks or cubicles can make it difficult for you to stay on task. Ideally you will have your own private office, but as this isn't always possible consider a workspace away from the main traffic pattern but close to supervisor or other person to whom you'll be accountable

Organizational Space

Will your assigned space help you stay organized? If there is no room for you to put your files or other materials, you could spend the majority of your workday looking for what you need.

Time Awareness

Will you be able to keep track of the passing hours? Windows and visible wall clocks are important cues to help you tell what time it is. Otherwise you will have to rely solely on your own tools which can be extra hard for adults with ADHD who cannot seem to harness their internal clocks to keep them functioning in a timely manner.

Work Procedures

How much flexibility is there? Is the job expected to be completed in a very specific way with strict requirements, or is there not enough structure in that you are expected to navigate on your own and be self-sufficient?

The following questions can be helpful to ask to identify how goals are expected to be met:

How long would you expect X to take to get done?

How much advance notice will I have of an upcoming project?

How often would I check in with you about my progress?

In what form would you expect to receive reports?

Will I be working on my own or with a team?

Also consider the following:

- Most adults with ADHD benefit from having a set of rules to follow so that they don't have to try to figure out what is acceptable and what is not on their own. If the firm hasn't established such rules, will a supervisor or mentor be available to clarify priorities?
- The more built in frequent incentives and rewards, the better. At times, being a "self-starter" and/or sustaining motivator can be a challenge, especially when there is no immediate external reward.
- Consider your strengths and weaknesses related to time management. If you tend to be less punctual for work and appear to manage time less efficiently, strict work hours can be your downfall. Or, if you find that a job that requires you to be present and start at a certain time helps you get started when desired because of your commitment, you might use this to your benefit.

Strategies for Success at Work:

- Find a mentor. This can be a supportive coworker, a more senior and receptive employee, or even a supervisor who supports work performance improvements. Review daily goals with the mentor and report progress to this person several times a day.
- Break projects into small tasks, take short breaks to refuel and provide rewards for completing each task.
- Eliminate external distractions. Keep anything not related to the current task off of the desk. Wear headphones if necessary.
- Use lists and prompts to focus on goals.
- Answer email and return routine phone calls once a day, at the end of the day as feasible (to avoid constant distractions or intrusions).
- Pay attention to focus and energy levels throughout the day. If you are mentally fresh in the morning, tackle the most difficult tasks early. Avoid challenging tasks in the mid-afternoon when more fatigued.
- Use aerobic exercise to renew concentration (e.g. take a brief walk, up and down a flight of stairs, do a few stretches). Utilize this just prior to a long meeting or other quiet period where you are expected to stay seated and be attentive.
- Find out if there is a library or information center that contains resources for further learning on the job. Also, attend extra informational sessions after hours and/or seminars or workshops offered as a change in scene may be more beneficial to you in learning than most adults.
- Take notes throughout meetings that bore you. Taking notes will keep you focused and provide a resource for reference later.
- Use the **SQ4R** method when you have lots of reading to complete before a meeting or event.

S- Survey the material to be read- leaf through it quickly to get some idea of how much is to be read, how it is organized, etc.

Q- Draft some questions that need to be answered from what you are to read.

4Rs- Read just one paragraph.

Recite out loud what was important in that material.

wRite that material down.

Review what you wrote

Americans with Disability Act (ADA)- The Federal law providing protection against discrimination to people with disabilities. This law seeks to ensure nondiscrimination in employment and to provide people with disabilities equal access to public places, programs and services.

Compliance with ADA is mandated for employers with more than 15 full-time employees. Federal agencies are exempt.

How to request accommodations:

- Identify the disability specialist in the human resources department at your company. This is the person you will provide with documentation of your ADHD diagnosis and the person who will explain the available workplace accommodations. This person may also work with your supervisor to make sure you get the accommodations you choose.
- You must disclose to HR at any time before problems develop to be covered legally.
- Disclosure information must be kept in a separate, secured, confidential file in the HR office; not in a general employee file.
- You may or may not disclose to direct supervisor or colleagues, however, if you are requesting formal accommodations, you must disclose to your supervisor. If you can tell that the company and your supervisor will be flexible and supportive without your having to name your disorder, you may be able to keep that information private. Many adults with ADHD prefer not to disclose their diagnosis, and you might not have to if you do everything in your power to minimize your symptoms such as medication, exercise, good sleep habits, etc.

Examples of accommodations:

- Portable headset or longer extension cord.
- Earplugs, noise canceling headphones or white noise machines.
- Use of conference room or other space away from busy/noisy area.
- Flex-time or telecommuting.
- Written agenda before meetings and written minutes/action items after meeting.
- Frequent accountability by email, phone or face-to-face.
- Written assignments/instructions- no quick conversations in the hallway.
- Secretary or assistant, or “buddy system” on project.
- Cell phone or computer alarm system or other support technology.
- Clear job description and goals with specific timelines in writing.
- Voice recognition software.
- Scheduled breaks.

Should I reveal that I have ADHD when I'm interviewing for a job?

It depends. If you are going to assert your right to receive workplace accommodations under the ADA act, yes. You may have to invoke that law to get what you need. If you are going to work in a field that requires periodic training, testing or certification, you may need special accommodations for test taking, available through the act. In that case you will have to provide paperwork to document your diagnosis. You may, however, be able to get what you need just by finding the right type of workplace.

Additional Information:

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
Free service for advice on work accommodations.
800-526-7234
www.jan.wvu.edu

Other Resources to Consider:

Personal coaching and vocational counseling can help patients manage their workloads and perform effectively on the job.

Personal Coaching:

This involves working one-on-one with a professional coach who advises, encourages and gives feedback. Coaches can work daily, by phone, or by email. Patients drive the process by deciding what goals they want to achieve. Coaches are particularly helpful with ADHD adults in that task persistence and lack of motivation are often problematic. The coach can help the person with ADHD stay on task by offering encouragement, support, structure, accountability and when needed, gentle confrontation.

Vocational Counseling:

This helps patients improve self-awareness and better understand strengths and weaknesses in the workplace. It can help them find employment that allows them to capitalize on these strengths and succeed despite their impairments. Unsuitable jobs for adults with ADHD are ones with too many timeline pressures or too little structure. In these cases, the patient is unlikely to succeed.



What am I willing to do?

ADHD TREATMENT GROUP

Session 8 Take-Home Exercise

Occupational Wellness

Reflection:

What are your vocational strengths?

Vocational weaknesses?

How does your current job match these qualities? Draw a line on the continuum of where you think your current role lands.

Flexibility of time and organization	]-----[	Strict Timeline Pressures
Frequent Movement	]-----[	Stationary Tasks
Manual, "hands on" activities	]-----[	Abstract Tasks Planning, analyzing
Low structure Or supervision	]-----[	Frequent Supervision

Reflecting on your past work experience:

What types of settings have been conducive to your work productivity?

Which settings have led to reduced work productivity?

How have people inspired you or provided you support and structure in a way that really helped?