INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

ADDvanced Solutions
Supporting you to find the answers

Strategies for managing ADHD at home

- Understanding the condition is the best strategy for managing ADHD.
- Practice responding to examples of positive behaviour, however small they may seem, rather than reacting to difficult behaviour. For example ensure you praise your child in a descriptive manner if he / she behaves well, tell them what it is you are pleased with in relation to their behaviour, and describe what you mean by being kind to a sibling or sharing with a friend. Descriptive praise helps a child fully understand why you are praising them, they need to know what they are doing that is right and therefore worthy of the praise given.
- Learn to respond rather than react to difficult situations at home, a response is when you consider what action you will take given your knowledge of ADHD. The outcome you want, will be more effective in managing behaviour and maintaining a positive relationship with your child. A reaction is a non-thought out action or deed reacting can often escalate a situation rather than de-escalate it reduce the stress on all.
- Exercise can help reduce impulsive behaviour so give your child opportunities for movement. Walking, cycling, swimming or football, or a game such as Wii-fit can all help to reduce impulsivity and reduce stress.
- Tone of voice is very important in dealing with the day to day issues thrown up by ADHD. Try to keep your voice calm and reassuring – it will have a positive effect on everyone, including yourself.
- Support your child's organisation difficulties with visual reminders – timetables, reminders and lists. Try to encourage independence and responsibility by encouraging them to check these and update them. ADHD is known to be linked to a deficit in a person's Executive Functioning ability so organisation and memory are very much impacted
- Structure your home in a way that is helpful – set up routines for putting clothes away and sorting school bags out. Keep a regular place (maybe a large box) for school books and equipment in a place that is convenient for them.
- Have a routine for regular things like bed time and school mornings. This will help reduce stress and support their organisation. Encourage them to have their clothes ready in the order they will be put on.
- A change in environmental factors can help to reduce hyperactivity and sensory overload. This can be achieved by the use of calm colours (greens, light blue) in their bedroom, and minimal stuff in their rooms. If your child has difficulty getting to sleep it's important that the bedroom is considered a place to rest, so try to keep toys, games and TVs to other areas of the house. Using their bedrooms as a place for punishment is not helpful, this can send mixed messages to the child or young person so always try to keep these separate.
- For some people with ADHD, a diet which can include protein based products such as (bacon, egg, baked beans, nuts or seeds, for example) at the beginning of the day can be helpful. Although there is no specific food that causes ADHD, there are some which can increase hyperactive behaviours and impact on concentration so you may find that avoiding certain foods can help your child. Encourage your child's interests and hobbies – for example people with ADHD often enjoy and excel in music or performance arts. Having something positive to focus on has many benefits, not least an increase in self-esteem.

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