



## ADULTS WITH ADHD

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is an equal opportunity disorder: it affects adults as well as children, male and female alike, and people of all races and backgrounds. The only specific loyalty it appears to exhibit is it seems to run in families -- and some more than others. The disorder is a biological condition, and affects certain types of brain functioning. There is no cure for ADHD.

According to Harvard Medical School's Harvard Health, studies uncover statistically significant numbers of adults with ADHD. Estimates vary from 1% to 6% out of the total American adult population -- or up to 10 million people -- are afflicted; but all studies agree that figures probably do not adequately represent the actual population needing treatment. The National Resource Center on ADHD suggests 60% of children with ADHD maintain the disorder as adults. Profiles change as those with ADHD mature, and so some may suspect an issue but rationalize their way out of seeking further assessment.

Part of the challenge with the disorder is that not every person with ADHD exhibits the same symptoms, or to the same degree of severity. Some possess a mild form; others are dramatically impaired with severe ADHD.

### BASIC SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Poor attention
- Physical restlessness or hyperactivity
- Excessive impulsivity: doing/saying things without thinking
- Excessive and chronic procrastination
- Difficulty starting tasks
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Frequently losing things
- Poor organization, planning, time management
- Excessive forgetfulness

Adults with ADHD typically do not possess hyperactivity to the same degree seen in children. This attribute manifests itself in adults as issues with time management, self control, planning for the future and being able to persist towards goals.

For any adult who suspects he/she, or a loved one, may have ADHD, evaluation is highly suggested. A thorough physical exam is performed first to rule out any other issues. Then, clinicians question patients using standardized lists of ADHD symptoms to come up with a score on severity and persistence.

Harford Medical School offers this advice:

- **GET EVALUATED!**
- **GET INVOLVED.** Research your area for local ADHD Support Groups/Organizations.
- **GET MEDICINE.** Educate yourself on the benefits of this powerful maintenance tool, and work with a physician to explore options that might work best for you.
- **GET ORGANIZED.** Learn new strategies to improve your ability to manage day-to-day tasks.
- **GET COUNSELING.** Adult ADHD can put tremendous strain on a marriage/relationship/family.
- **GET MOVING.** Exercise is a healthy way to burn off excess energy and increase your ability to focus.

## SUGGESTED READING LIST

\*Recommended by The National Resource Center on ADHD

- **American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision.** Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association, 2000.
- **Attention-Deficit Disorders and Comorbidities in Children, Adolescents, and Adults.**  
Brown, T.E. (Ed.) (2000) Washington DC, American Psychiatric Press.
- **Clinician's guide to adult AD/HD: Assessment and intervention.**  
Goldstein, S., & Teeter Ellison, A (Eds.) (2002). New York: Academic Press.

## INSPIRATION CORNER

Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.

-JIM ROHN -

## DEVELOPMENTAL DYSLEXIA HEADWAY

Researchers are finding dyslexia to be a collection of disorders rather than one single disease, resulting from unique combinations of genes, mechanisms and changes in the brain. By correctly identifying the specific issues, optimal treatment possibilities improve. Children's Hospital Boston researcher Nadine Gaab, PhD, of the Developmental Medicine Center Laboratory of Cognitive Neuroscience, with Elise Temple of Dartmouth College, found that children with developmental dyslexia may lack the proper brain wiring to process fast-changing sounds. In Children's Hospital Boston's February 2008 issue of Pediatric Views, they together theorize the foundation of developmental dyslexia stems from a faulty understanding of the sounds that make up their native languages and suspect some infants' brains can't analyze fast changes within sounds. It is this challenge that results in an inability to properly learn the sounds of language which dramatically influences the ability to read successfully. "They miss, for instance, the 40-millisecond pitch sweeps that differentiate 'ba' and 'da.' This leads to a confused sound map in the brain. Later, when these children first try reading, they link the letters to this confused sound map."

Dr. Gaab has been documenting this problem working with 9 to 12 year olds, with brains responding differently when compared to normal readers charted by MRI patterns when listening to sounds that changed quickly in pitch. The observations suggest that these children's brains can be "rewired," and Dr. Gaab experimented with eight weeks of computer exercises to see if in fact improvements occur. While results were positive, it is unclear if affects are temporary or permanent, with more longitudinal studies needing to be conducted. Findings suggest that other forms of sound training offer hope to children with sound processing issues and a faulty language map in the brain. Dr. Gaab's ultimate goal is to catch and treat developmental dyslexia before children begin learning to read, sparing them years of frustration and low self esteem.

Dr. Gaab's study is published in the October 16, 2007 [Restorative Neurology and Neuroscience](#). To learn more about Dr. Gaab and research advancements at Children's Hospital Boston, visit her website: [www.childrenshospital.org/cfapps/research/data\\_admin/Site2545/mainpageS2545P0.html](http://www.childrenshospital.org/cfapps/research/data_admin/Site2545/mainpageS2545P0.html)

## TUROS ON NEW NICKELODEON WEBSITE

Confident Student's Mary Turos was recently invited to answer questions from parents on a new Nickelodeon website called ParentsConnect.com. Mary will be a regular contributor to the site providing her perspective from neuroscience research and techniques to help students and their families overcome everyday challenges on the road to becoming a lifelong learner. Check Mary out at [parentsconnect.com](http://parentsconnect.com)!

## BRAIN BYTE



### DID YOU KNOW?

The brain is the body's most active organ, consuming about 20% of the body's oxygen.

## NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING DAY

The Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, a non-profit organization that creates and expands summer learning opportunities for disadvantaged youth, is hosting its annual National Summer Learning Day on Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. The organization expects 300 events to take place nationwide over the week, including a major policy event in Washington D.C., where summer learning leaders from around the country will come together to make the case for increased federal investment in summer learning programs.

### A Sampling of Events in the Baltimore area include:

**Railroads to Success, July 9<sup>th</sup>**, The Harriet Tubman Elementary School, 1807 Harlem Ave, Baltimore

**Summer Learning Open House, July 10<sup>th</sup>**, Baltimore City Public Schools, 4520 York Road, Baltimore

**Family Literacy Fun Day, July 10**, DRU Family Life Center, 2100 Eutaw Place, Baltimore

**Nat'l Summer School Open House Celebration, July 10**, Harford County Public Schools, 111 Mount Royal Ave, Aberdeen

**Learning in the Out of Doors, July 10<sup>th</sup>**, Camp Fire USA, Camp WoHeLo, Capital Heights

For more information on National Summer Learning Day events, or The Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University, call 410.516.6228 or visit their website: [summerlearning.org](http://summerlearning.org)

## DYSLEXIC SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE

While technology experts forecast the inevitable day when the workplace will be completely paperless, that day is not today. In fact, at times it seems piles seem to grow right in front of your eyes! For dyslexic adults, keeping up with it all is far more than just a time management concern. But there are a number of suggestions to help you work through those paper piles, rather than allow yourself to get buried by them.

One of the most fundamental suggestions for dyslexics is to print on colored paper or use a colored transparent filter - such as tinted spectacles or a transparent plastic sheet specially designed for this purpose. Different colors suit different people so experiment until you find the optimum color for you. Paper color is only one of many strategies/resources available to help dyslexics work more successfully. Here are ten overall strategies offered by the **Dyslexia in the Workplace-Employment Issues** page on the website [www.dyslexia-adults.com](http://www.dyslexia-adults.com):

1. Break tasks down into small manageable chunks.
2. Note each task separately on a "jobs to do" list. Cross off tasks as you complete them.
3. Always ask for help when confused. Exchanging information, troubleshooting with colleagues, and attending to obstacles at the workplace head-on are proven methods to truly be successful at work. It also communicates that you take your responsibilities seriously and are results-oriented.
4. Utilize a variety of equipment that can ease work tasks:
  - a small tape-recorder/dictating machine
  - a word processor you can speak into (e.g. Dragon Dictate, etc) which will do the typing for you
  - software designed specifically for dyslexics (such as TextHelp Read & Write)
  - Spell Check, with a large, clear display screen
  - a "reading pen" which can run over a word you cannot read, and then sound it for you through a small ear-piece (not intended for entire passages)
5. Take advantage of your morning alertness. Brains perform at their best at the beginning of the day, after a nutritious breakfast, so this is the time to attend to specific tasks needing your full concentration to read, write or work accurately with numbers. Later in the day, your brain will pale in its abilities to deal with visual and sequencing tasks.
6. Take regular short breaks to refresh concentration and improve performance.
7. Slow down when completing paperwork to improve accuracy in details.
8. Use your creativity -- typically a strength when compared to colleagues who do not have dyslexia -- and brainstorm alternatives to organize your work or improve the service given by your company.
9. Try to have instructions given in writing. Respect that your "hearing memory" may be weak. Plus, in today's workplace, asking colleagues/clients to follow up requests in writing communicates your attention to detail and a desire for a clear understanding of goals/expectations.
10. When appropriate, delegate tasks that are troublesome to other staff members, or explore possibilities to trade assigned tasks. At times, it can be wise to assess good business procedure to apply company resources to maximize your strengths. It may actually more beneficial for the company to hire someone a few hours a week to handle paperwork that could otherwise take you all day, therefore freeing you up to attend to focus on areas the company needs you the most.

To explore other areas adult dyslexics can ease obstacles at work to become more successful, research resources available at work, explore new technological assistives, and become involved in local dyslexic organizations/support groups.

