

# ADHD social skills

supporting your children and teens

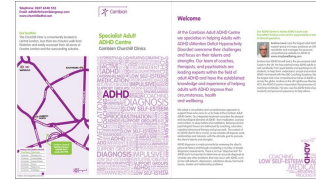
with ADHD Coach Andrew Lewis

# About me

- 🧠 Twenty year career in IT, from programmer to entrepreneur/MD
- 🧠 I began coaching 8 years ago, trained with ADDCA
- 🧠 I have coached over 200 ADHD Clients, including at least

50 entrepreneurs , 3 lawyers, 4 ADHD specialist psychiatrists, 25 entertainers, 12 medical doctors, 40+ university students, 80+ business professionals, yet only 1 professional hot air balloonist.

- 🧠 I am three times diagnosed (initially self-diagnosed at 43)
- 🧠 Ran SimplyWellbeing **Tear & Share** Support group & **Expert Talks** at UCL
- 🧠 Set up and ran Cambian Adult ADHD Clinic for a while
- 🧠 Single-parent of 15 year old (surely ADHD) daughter



# A bit more about me!



I'm not much into reflection or reminiscence but I read these just last week!!



## From 10-13

"tends **not to pay attention** in class"

"is inclined to **distract others**"

"**noisy** but keen"

"**must concentrate more**"

"must **learn to apply himself** to the things he dislikes as well as to those he likes"

"too **easily distracted**"

"volatile but excellent"

"very **challenging and exciting** for a teacher – but at times too high in spirits"

"**excellent but oh so noisy**"

"excellent, excellent work as usual – though still **too easily distracted**"

"lacks interest in most art work"

"**does not pay enough attention** in class"

"very good at maths, **loses marks through carelessness**"

"still volatile, still excellent"

"intelligent, but too **often inattentive in class** and sloppy in presentation"

## From 13-16

"does tend to **sit back and chat when he has finished his work**"

"**presentation is a disgrace** considering his ability, no trouble as far as ideas are concerned"

"outstanding pupil, however he is still **restless** in class, despite the extra work I give him"

"has **done what has been necessary** this year....hope he will do a little more than this in future"

"an able mathematician but **without practice** he will not achieve the grades he deserves"

"needs to guard against **mistakes made through carelessness** and **insufficient attention**"

"work is **untidy and diagrams always careless**"

"written work of course, leaves a little to be desired, and he **must concentrate** on this. Always motivated and effusive"

"does need to take more care, inclined to make **careless mistakes** simply through lack of thought"

## From 17-18

"must **apply himself more** to the subject and **concentrate a lot harder** in class, he might be able to improve upon this grade"

"always seems to **manage to do just enough** to get by"

"effort has improved over the year but he is **still underachieving**....far too casual"

"pleasing exam result. No doubt he will pass A-level Physics, and the grade will depend upon **how energetic he feels**"

"Is this the beginning of the **long awaited Lewis revival**: or will it begin tomorrow (again)?"

"I hope that his **casual approach to punctuality** will not lead to him having undue problems when he enters the less strict environment of Higher Education" – [Quite depressingly prescient!](#)

# My ADHD social skills experience



- Not my expertise but
  - I think I am reasonably socially skilled but have had problems
  - I have coached many ADHD adults, some a little Aspie, with social challenges
  - I was an ADHD child and have fathered my ADHD daughter and seen similar problems to mine
  - I help a lot with communication and difference
  
- There are real problems
  - "I never get invited to birthday parties"
  - "the kids were teasing me today at school"
  - "I don't fit in"
  - "I can't find a friend"
  - "the other kids have all these rules"
  - "why do they have to be so mean"
  
- ADHD kids often have a tough time with friends and authority, but do they need to be fixed?

# Start at the beginning, what is ADHD?



**In a Desert**  
Under Stimulated from Low  
Dopamine



## Interest-based focus

Difficulty with low stimulation task, hyper-focus on high. Bored



## Memory issues

Recall, rote learning, "trivia", steps, future and past memory



## Stimulation seeking

Addictions, adrenaline, deadlines, variety, novelty, impulsive



**Missing Conductor**  
Less Dominant  
Executive Functions



## Reduced self-control

Sleep, busy thoughts, focus, emotions, self-esteem



## In the Moment

Problem with time, future, reward, activation, procrastination



## Maverick

No "rules and values slot", moral, different, independent, adrift



**Seeing Patterns**  
More Dominant  
Right-Brain Functions



## Pattern recognising

Connections and knowledge seeking, big pictures, intuitive



## Creative

Ideas, verbal, perfectionist, inventive, solutions, less filtered



## Emotional

Empathetic, sensitive, passionate, "unstructured", motivation

# ADHD social struggles

- 🧠 Feeling alone and disconnected from peers is distressing thing
- 🧠 Parents feel frustrated not knowing how to help their children make the friends
- 🧠 Social conformance enables kids to make and keep friends, and gives a feeling of acceptance
- 🧠 Friendship significantly improves self-esteem
- 🧠 Conventional social skills enable children to get along well with others but not necessarily be happy
- 🧠 But kids are complicated (well adults are worse), our minds, values, attitudes are so varied
  - For some complex maths is easier than chatting with a peer
  - For some playground politics and hierarchy are obvious yet bizarre
  - For some computer games are more interesting than facebook aspirations
  - For some big ideas are more interesting than football or celebrities
  - For some play is repetitive and boring



*As some guides say “the good news is that social skills CAN be taught to children, the same way you can teach a child to read or spell. Parents can learn easy training techniques to work on with their child, and the positive results are often immediate and dramatic.”*

**Just not sure I entirely agree!!!**

# Problems with friends

Here are some examples, from the standard ADHD advice, of problematic ADHD behavior. So does your child:

- 👤 have trouble approaching a new group of children?
- 👤 wait for an appropriate break in the conversation before saying something?
- 👤 look others directly in the eye when speaking? (sounds Aspie to me!)
- 👤 "go with the flow" of the group - try to do what others are doing, and at the speed they're doing it?
- 👤 stand too close or too far away from other children?
- 👤 manage his or her emotions appropriately - without losing his/her cool?
  
- 👤 My daughter had problems, but so did I
- 👤 Your examples please???



# ADHD social skill techniques



Some (Nike style) suggestions:

- 👁️ watch others - check out what the group is doing first and determine if it's a group that you'd like to join
- 👁️ watch yourself - make sure you appear friendly and approachable, in your tone of voice and posture
- 👁️ think of what to say ahead of time
- 👁️ think of when to say it - wait for a break in the conversation or the game before speaking
- 👁️ look at others straight in the eye when speaking to them
- 👁️ go with the flow of the group
- 👁️ find common interests and talk about them, ask a question that shows interest
- 👁️ don't tease others, brag about yourself, criticize others, take charge and control the behavior of other children, stand too close or too far away from other children, disrupt the game
- 👁️ sit down with your child and review the DOs and DON'Ts lists.
- 👁️ ask your child if he can come up with other DOs and DON'Ts to add to the list
- 👁️ focus on the DOs of good social skills, praising your child when he exhibits an appropriate behavior
- 👁️ discuss things from the other child's perspective - an essential element in a child's understanding of his behavior and its impact on others.

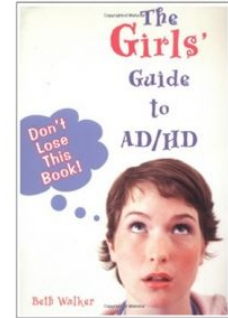
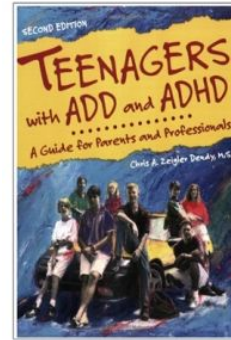
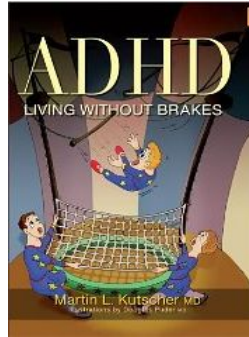
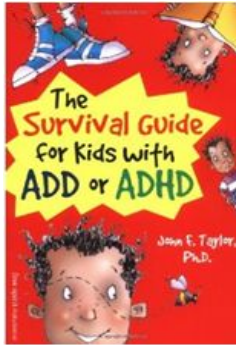


# Better help for your ADHD child

- Help your child manage the details of running a social life on their own
- Work with them on advance planning, so that events are confirmed in advance
- Work on one social skill at a time - wait until one goal is mastered before you move on to the next
- Help them understand the differences in thinking between people
- Reward your child when he/she makes any sign of progress
- Review social goals with your child PRIOR to social outings. For instance, “what are you going to do when you first get to the birthday party?”, “what will you do if you are bored/annoyed/frustrated”, “who do you most want to hang out with?”
- Help your child nurture friendships through cool events, so the invitation is more likely to be accepted
- With gentle reminders, help your child return phone calls to friends or instagram etc
- Listen to them, hear their perspective of the issue, coach them to a solution
- Help them Understand, Accept and Embrace their ADHD



# Cool reads



Thanks for listening, any questions!?

[www.simplywellbeing.com](http://www.simplywellbeing.com)

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ADHD coaching, education and insights with Coach Andrew Lewis