

2015 CADDAC Conference Presentation Abstracts

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Executive Functioning Skills Through the Lifespan

Morning Workshops

The morning sessions will explore Executive Functioning through the lifespan: When do they begin to emerge? How do we nurture them? What interferes with their development? And finally, what happens when they don't emerge in a timely fashion? We will briefly review the shared understandings in the field of EF and go on to reflect on the most current research (2014/15).

We will look at the home, the school, the classroom, and the individual student, identifying **strategies that promote EF for all**. We will examine the executive challenges that arrive on the scene when moving from elementary school demands, through middle and high school, and on into young adulthood.

Afternoon Workshops

Our two afternoon sessions will focus **separately** and more tightly on home-based strategies and school-based strategies through the lifespan. We will look more closely at understanding each individual with EF challenges and very specific strategies that will strengthen their skills. **We will go into more depth discussing how to bring these individuals to independent performance and success.**

Susan Pinsky

Organizing Solutions for People with ADHD

This presentation will teach an organizational methodology that responds to the specific needs of the ADHD population. Concrete examples of both organizational tools that actually impede efficiency and therefore the ability to maintain the system and tools that 'lend' efficiency thereby encouraging creating manageable systems will be given. Included will be problem/solution slides of real life homes and challenges that illustrate real world tools, systems, and solutions. Attendees will be encouraged to examine their own, tools, techniques and systems through the prism of their cultural biases, upbringing, and history.

Dr. Rhonda Martinussen

Update on Reading Comprehension Research in Children and Youth with ADHD: Implications for Classroom Instruction and Assessment

The ability to obtain meaning from written text is important to a broad range of academic domains (e.g., math reasoning) as well as employment and health outcomes. In this talk I will discuss recent research exploring comprehension processes and outcomes in children and youth with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Specifically, I will highlight the role of background knowledge, cognitive processes such as executive functions, and language proficiency (e.g., vocabulary knowledge). I will also discuss research that examines how to enhance reading comprehension in children and youth struggling in this area. Practical tips and useful online resources will be shared.

Dr. Mark Bertin

ADHD: A Matter of Routine

Research shows people with ADHD are more prone to an array of health concerns. These range from struggles with weight to eating disorders, and from difficulty settling for sleep to sleep disorders. They are also more likely to have driving accidents, smoke, or drink underage. Exercise may improve ADHD symptoms, but maintaining a routine is more challenging with ADHD. Managing technology in daily life is challenging, with research suggesting children with ADHD may spend double the time in front of a screen as peers. By recognizing these broad effects of ADHD, individuals and families living with ADHD can better address its impact on their lives and proactively plan for the future. And since establishing new habits and routines is also impacted directly by ADHD, the discussion will also emphasize practical solutions based on the science of habit formation.

ADHD: Attention Doesn't Half Describe It

ADHD is not only a disorder of attention, affecting a larger umbrella of skills related to self-management called 'executive function.' Executive function skills comprise all the cognitive abilities required to monitor, coordinate, organize, prioritize and manage our lives. Understanding ADHD as a disorder of executive function allows parents and individuals with ADHD to make skillful choices in deciding amongst possible behavioral, educational and medical interventions. It also clarifies the impact of ADHD on relationships and families. Understanding executive function, you understand ADHD. Understanding ADHD, you understand your child.

Everyday Mindfulness and ADHD

Mindfulness means aiming to live more fully aware of our moment-to-moment experience with objectivity and compassion. Through hundreds of studies, the practice of mindfulness has been shown useful for everything from stress management and anxiety to attention training in ADHD. While meditation is frequently part of the program and may seem intimidating to imagine, it is not required to

start. This talk will offer mindfulness exercises usable in everyday life for common ADHD related challenges such as chronic struggles to finish tasks, negative self-talk, as well as issues with eating, sleeping and well beyond.

ADHD Goes to School

To address ADHD only as a disorder of attention or hyperactivity also underestimates its impact on education. Impairments in executive function directly affect how children learn. In addition, up to two thirds of children with ADHD have a separate learning disability; studies suggest that nearly 40% have specific deficits in reading, math and writing. For children to maintain motivation and succeed, individualized planning must take a multi-faceted view of ADHD.

Many educational choices today put children with ADHD at a disadvantage. From classroom design to curriculum, schools place huge demands on executive function. These skewed expectations often start in kindergarten, with academic tasks assigned far beyond the development level of an average 5-year-old. Fourth grade classrooms frequently require what used to be a sixth grade level of self-regulation.

David Giwerc

Permission to Proceed: The Keys to Creating a Life of Passion, Purpose, and Possibility for Adults with ADHD

Abstract: As a professional Master Certified ADHD Coach (MCAC) with 20 years of experience working with adults with ADHD, David Giwerc, Founder/President of the ADD Coach Academy (ADDCA), has witnessed the diminished self esteem related to the invisible struggles of their ADHD, and the accompanied lack of desire to identify and access their many gifts.

Although most of these individuals do not realize it, they truly are gifted beings. Once they are able to realize that the negative stories they have been telling themselves are not true, they can change their narrative to one of uniqueness and authenticity. Ultimately, they can give themselves permission to proceed by creating a life full of passion, purpose, and possibility.

During his presentation, David will reveal a roadmap to success using proven models, tools, and strategies, which have empowered thousands of individuals with ADHD to dramatically improve their self esteem, and has inspired them to create lives focused on a purposeful mission in many key areas of their lives.

The practical tools David will introduce you to in this presentation are adapted from his book of the same title (Permission to Proceed: The Keys to Creating a Life of Passion, Purpose, and Possibility for Adults with ADHD), and has been forged through years of research, coaching, working with hundreds of clients, as well as training hundreds of coaches who have successfully used these models, strategies, and tools.

David will also introduce attendees to the VIA Character Strengths Survey, which is part of the ADD Coach Academy's ongoing research study in collaboration with the VIA Institute on Character. The VIA Institute on Character manages the world's largest and only free online, psychometrically valid and reliable strengths survey. This survey was created by Drs. Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson, and is regarded as a central tool in positive psychology.

This presentation, as well as the introduction of the VIA research, will be an excellent foundational session to provide a background for the second session entitled: "The ADHD Coach Approach: Building a Positive Blueprint for the Adult ADHD Brain."

The ADHD Coach Approach: Building a Positive, Balanced Blueprint for the Adult ADHD Brain

The ADHD Brain is a magnet for negativity. As an adult with ADHD, your life experiences have created dominant patterns of thinking, which naturally focus on your unpleasant memories. Your inner, negative GPS often overrides good news, as well as your strengths and successes. It floods your brain with bad news, weaknesses, and failures.

Research reveals all human beings have a dominant and pervasive tendency to focus on problems and imperfections; we tend to naturally focus on what is "wrong" with us, rather than what is "right." All of our brains are already hardwired with this "negativity bias." If you are an adult with ADHD, emphasis on pessimism will further aggravate the invisible challenges related to your impulse control, ability to concentrate, and emotional regulation. Adults with ADHD exacerbate their struggles while simultaneously neglecting their inherent strengths.

The bulk of published research and education on adult ADHD has extensively documented the impairments and struggles with the disorder. This prevailing focus has helped to increase the awareness of the challenges experienced by adults with ADHD, and has also highlighted the importance of obtaining proper diagnosis and treatment with a well-trained ADHD healthcare professional.

The ongoing research focuses on the ADHD pathology and negativity bias also underscores the importance of what has been forgotten and neglected: the prospect that ADHD might yield some strengths or benefits.

Fortunately, your brain has neuroplasticity: a powerful biological capacity and ability to learn and experience life in ways that can positively change the architecture of your brain. Over time, your daily focus and mental activity can change the structure and physiology of your brain, which can affect your functioning, performance, relationships, health, and overall quality of life. What you pay attention to grows.

We need a balanced approach to dealing with both our strengths and weaknesses. This can be achieved by applying what is "right" with us to what's "wrong." Our current research study will provide access to the only free, online, psychometrically valid and reliable character strengths assessment: the VIA Character Strengths Survey.

The VIA survey was created by doctors Martin Seligman, PhD, and Chris Peterson, PhD, and has been taken by over 2.5 million people around the world. The ADD Coach Academy (ADDCA) is the first organization that has been granted permission to use this tool for research purposes to identify the character strengths profile in adults with ADHD. Upon completion of the 15-minute survey, participants will be provided with their own personal character strengths profile. To take the VIA survey and receive your own personal strengths profile, please e-mail michelle@addca.com (Subject: VIA Character Strengths Research).

David Giwerc will conduct a coaching session using a volunteer attendee's character strengths profile to demonstrate how the use of common positive strengths language, as well as focus on an individual's top signature strengths, can balance the brain's natural propensity to be dominated by negativity. David will demonstrate how the use of the educational coaching models, coaching process, and use of the VIA Character Strengths can provide immediate access to one's best qualities, attributes, and capacities.