



COUNSELING CORNER

NEWSLETTER— APRIL 13, 2020

Dear Parents,

Hope you have been staying safe and staying healthy this last week! Thank you for picking up this newsletter once again, and I hope we are beginning to address some of your questions, or at least, begun to get your wheels turning in discussion. I commend you for your continued willingness to read about the issues surrounding students who struggle with ADHD. With understanding, we are slowly changing the guilt and shame that our students wrestle with. Many students with ADHD wind up feeling like they are failures, but with understanding and compassion, we can change that narrative.

In this issue:

- ADHD's Impact on Friendships
- Practical Tips

Next issue:

ADHD's Impact on Self-Esteem

ADHD's Impact on Friendships

As we discussed last week, ADHD is a neurological issue that can lead our students to be inattentive at school (or anything that doesn't drive their interest in the moment), become restless and hyperactive, or very impulsive in making life choices. We discussed how this impacts ADHD student's academics and behavior, but this week, we will integrate this understanding with how they interact with their peers and in their friendships.

Inattention — With younger students, inattention may not become a serious issue until later peer relationships when interpersonal interactions or conversations become more important. Typical activities of play, games, or organized sports, if it holds the child's interest, will often NOT become an issue of inattention. However, if the activity or game does not interest the ADHD child, their peers will have a harder time holding the child's attention.

Hyperactivity — Hyperactivity does not become an apparent issue with most boys and girls with ADHD if their activity, game, or organized sport requires them to be constantly moving. When the hyperactive energy is channeled into the activity, game, or sport, the ADHD child will often be pretty good, perhaps at times, even out performing others. Hyperactivity becomes an issue when the social activity requires them to be more sedentary or inactive. It is typical for hyperactive children to not be able to sit still through a movie, or the playing of a board game.

Impulsivity — The biggest challenge for younger ADHD children is the impulsivity that leads to poor choices and behavioral issues with peer . As we illustrated last week, the ADHD child has a reactive, almost permissive, bent to the whims, thoughts, and ideas that come into their head. For example, if a group of children are playing together and this thought comes across the ADHD child's mind, "It would be funny to kick Joey right now," or "She is so ugly I wanna puke," the ADHD child will most likely act upon it. They will not think through, plan, or anticipate how their peers will react. They will just do it, and often times, be very regretful of it later.

The common misconception that people have of children who struggle with ADHD is that they are often perceived as bullies. Because of the impulsivity, combined with the hyperactivity, kids who are diagnosed with ADHD often say or do things they don't really mean. Being a bully requires planning, or scheming, to be mean to others, and the ADHD child typically does not do that. For them, their spur-of-the-moment impulses are too hard to refuse.



PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP ADDRESS PEER CONFLICTS

Addressing peer conflicts is the same whether you have a student that struggles with ADHD, or any other student. **IGNORING** or **FORGETTING** the conflict and offense would probably be the biggest challenge for our students, so it is important teach them to apply the peer conflict strategies as soon as it happens, before it compounds into more negative peer interactions.

- Teach your child to **ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY** by **SAYING SORRY**. Often times, it is amazing how saying, "sorry," will defuse peer conflicts in younger children. Teach the child to aware of the offense they may have caused and then **ACKNOWLEDGE IT**. This basic skill will begin to de-escalate the issue.
- Reinforce your child when you see them take responsibility and compliment on it. Say, "I like the way you saw he was hurt and said sorry," or "Thank you for being brave and admitting you were wrong." These words will make the difference between **feeling GUILT** or **feeling SHAME** (we will address more on these two feelings next week).
- Do you have any other thoughts or tips? I would love to hear them!!

If you have any thoughts, questions, ideas, or input, please feel free to email me at:

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I would love to hear from you!

Take care and be safe,

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