



My child has ADHD. Now what? Step 5: Create your support team



ADHD IS AWESOME! CULTIVATING THE ASSETS OF ADHD

DR. CAROLINE BUZANKO

As soon as you are able, it is essential you create a support team for your child. Together, you will collaborate to develop and implement a plan to promote your child's development and ongoing success.

Hopefully by now you already have a doctor working alongside you and you have already met with your child's teacher; these are the first two key people on your team. (Be sure to read the previous articles in this series for more detailed information). However, you and your child may also benefit from other professionals to optimize ongoing success.



When choosing any professional, ensure that he or she has experience working with children with ADHD across contexts, and especially with helping parents manage any emotional and/or behavioural difficulties at home and promoting children's academic and social success at school. Ask what approaches they take in working with families and children. Are they willing to be involved with the school? In the home? What can you expect in your work together? How often sessions are sessions and for how long? Can they address the specific concerns and needs you have for your family?

Psychologists

Psychologists are an important part of your team, especially with addressing challenging social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. They can help you develop and implement effective behavior programs and teach strategies to manage ADHD. Specific areas of focus include controlling emotions and behaviours, learning effective coping strategies, responding appropriately to various situations, and promoting social success. They can also teach parents and teachers how to use reinforcement, antecedent manipulation, and create ADHD friendly environments to maintain children's success.

Psychologists can also help develop strategies for school, such as helping children better focus, improve in-class productivity, manage working memory difficulties, and learn effectively.

Occupational Therapists (OT)

OT's are often an important part of your team because they can help with important life skills important for day-to-day functioning, such as keeping things organized, self-regulation, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and independence with daily tasks. They can also help your child manage fine motor coordination difficulties as well as sensory sensitivities. Some OT's help design programs to address children's stimulation needs throughout the school day (e.g., regular movement breaks and carrying heavy objects) or creating chill zones where children can go to help regulate emotions (e.g., crash mats or calm music).

ADHD Coaches

Coaches collaborate with individuals to develop goals targeting core impairments of ADHD such as time management, organization, and promoting self-confidence. Coaches can help identify where people are now, where they want to go, and how they can get there. Their focus is primarily on daily habits for successful functioning (versus more interpersonal and emotional difficulties that psychologists can help with). Coaching combines practical skill development along with education about ADHD. They support clients through encouragement and feedback to address specific challenges.

As coaches are not all regulated, it is imperative to ask them about their qualifications and experience with ADHD. Also ask about confidentiality and

privacy policies. Further, most coaches work with adults, so it is important to ask them about their experience working with children. If you hire a coach, it is best that they work with you to help you better understand and interact with your child.

Parent Coaches

Coaches are beneficial to build parent capacity and manage the daily frustrations they may experience. Parent coaching is particularly beneficial for parents who would like additional support learning strategies to boost their child's success as well as their entire family's happiness and well-being.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Feel free to contact Caroline if you have any questions
related to this article, or other related issues!

Dr. Caroline Buzanko

caroline@korupsychology.ca



Making Happy Happen

One Family at a Time