

Ask the Expert

Strategies for Promoting Positive Behavior in Children with ADHD and their Siblings



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Learning Objectives

- Better understand the role of emotional and behavioral dysregulation in children with ADHD and the impact of these difficulties on their families.
- Approaches for improving emotional and behavioral regulation.
- Differences in parenting ADHD and non-ADHD children.
- Strategies for addressing common conflicts between ADHD and non-ADHD siblings.
- Better understand the role of mindfulness and mindful parenting in improving children's emotional regulation.

Examples of Common Sibling/Family Difficulties

Jay is a 9-year-old boy whose 10-year-old brother, Andrew has ADHD (combined presentation).

Jay is often annoyed with his brother. Andrew needs several reminders to brush his teeth and get dressed. The boys, who attend the same school, are often both late because of Andrew's disorganization.

Andrew needs his mother to sit with him while he completes homework, and Jay has to wait if he needs help with his. Andrew receives a prize for completing homework without arguing. Jay thinks it is unfair that Andrew gets rewarded for something he is expected to "just do" every day.

Also, Andrew often shouts, and has broken several of Jay's possessions. Jay also believes that Andrew's behaviors put their parents in a bad mood.

He often complains to his parents that they "never get to do anything."

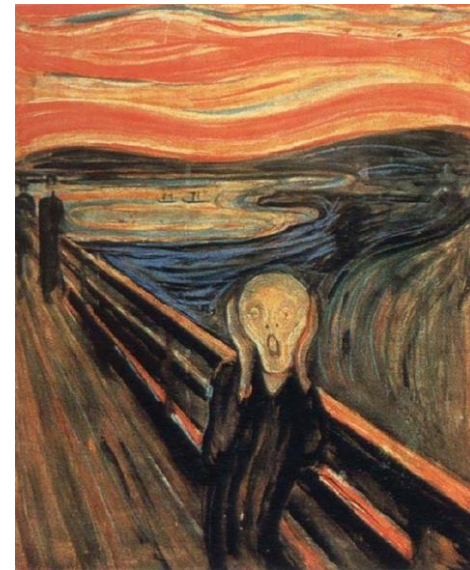
Questions to Consider

- What is the role of emotional and behavioral dysregulation in Andrew's behaviors?
- How can their parents address these difficulties?
- How can their parents manage the conflicts caused by differences in their treatment of the two children?
- What can their parents do to better regulate their own emotions?



The Role of Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation in ADHD

- ADHD is a Neurodevelopmental Disorder that may present with impairments in learning, language skills, self-help skills, and social skills.
- Executive functioning is a common area of difficulty in ADHD.
- Emotion regulation as an Executive function



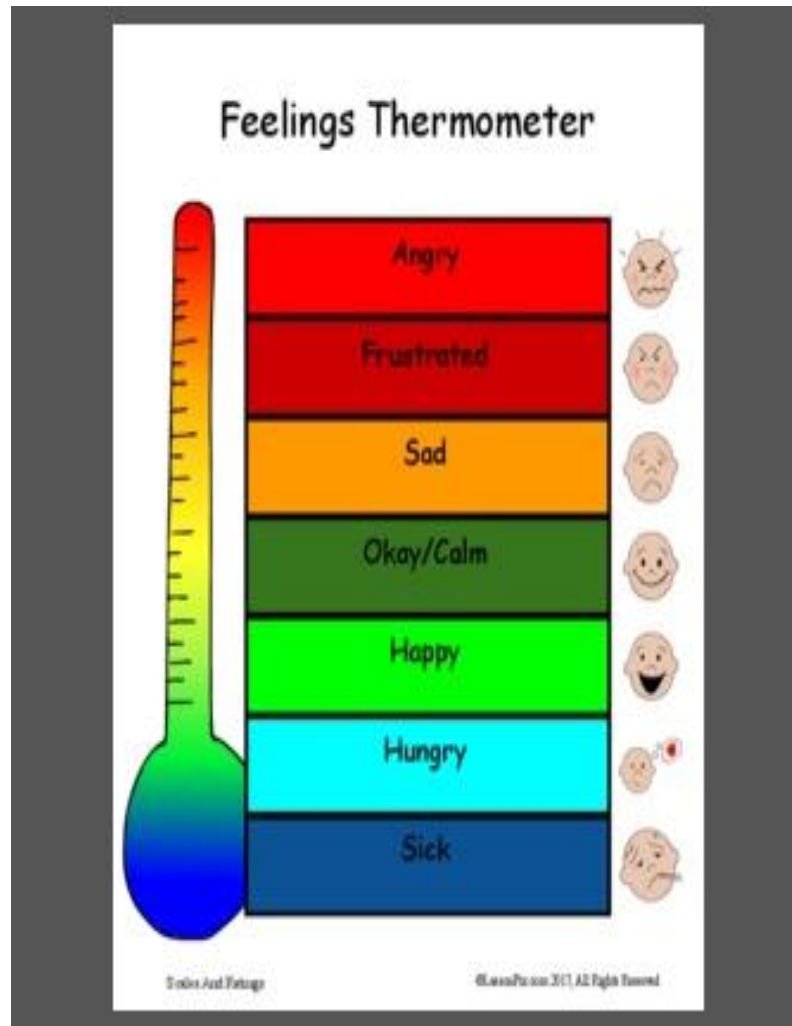
Uncomfortable



Comfortable



Feelings Thermometer



The Role of Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation in ADHD Continued

According to ADHD expert Russell Barkley, Ph.D., Emotion Regulation Skills that are particularly difficult for individuals with ADHD include:

- Inhibiting expression of emotion, (difficulty with this leads to emotional impulsivity).
- Moderating the expression of the initial emotional reaction
 - Typical emotions that are difficult for individuals with ADHD to regulate: Frustration; Impatience; Anger



Question Break

Did you type in your question yet?

Ask a question

Ask a question

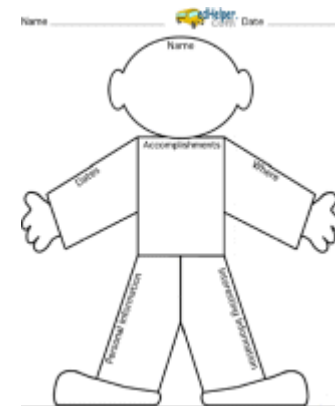


A screenshot of a web-based Q & A interface. The window title is "Q & A". The header bar is blue and contains the text "ROBYN MAGGIO: what is adhd". The main content area is a large white rectangle. At the bottom, there is a text input field and a speech bubble icon.

Strategies for Parenting ADHD Children with an Emphasis on Supporting Regulation

ANTECEDENT STRATEGIES (SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS)

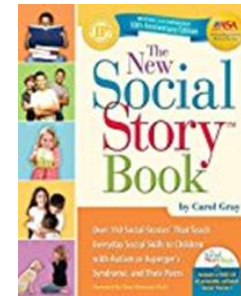
- Help them feel comfortable
- Provide Clear Expectations for Behavior
- USE HUMOR
- Modify challenging tasks
- Tell children what to do as opposed to what not to do.



Strategies for Parenting ADHD Children with an Emphasis on Supporting Regulation

More Strategies for Molding Positive Behaviors

- Communicate with a 1 to 5 Scale to Prompt Behavior Regulation
- Prompt appropriate emotional expression with reflection skills and visuals
- Validate emotions
- Facilitate Flexible Problem Solving (There is more than one solution)
- Catch phrases:
 - *It is OK to do Things Another Way*
 - *It was fun, but now we're done*



Strategies for Parenting ADHD Children: **CONSEQUENCES**

- Consistent Follow-through
- Be flexible, but try not to give too many chances or exceptions
- Emphasize Natural Rewards and Consequences
- Immediate Rewards and Consequences are Best
- Time Outs are best served briefly and in non-distracting environments
- Help the child self-soothe but put a “cap” on negative emotion expression (i.e. hand them a tissue and say, “OK we’re done now;” help them SHIFT to SOLUTIONS).

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Differences in Parenting ADHD Children

- ADHD children may need more environmental modifications (Antecedent Strategies)
 - ADHD children need more frequent, immediate reinforcement
 - ADHD children need more movement breaks
 - ADHD need more support for self-soothing

Addressing Conflicts between ADHD children and their Non-ADHD siblings

- Be Open about the Diagnosis/Difficulties. There are positive ways of explaining ADHD to children.



- Explain how modifications the ADHD child gets will help the non-ADHD child get what he/she wants. For example, Andrew is expected to do fewer homework problems, but this will open up time for the parent to help Jay with homework.
- Provide rewards to non-ADHD siblings for behaviors *they* are working on.

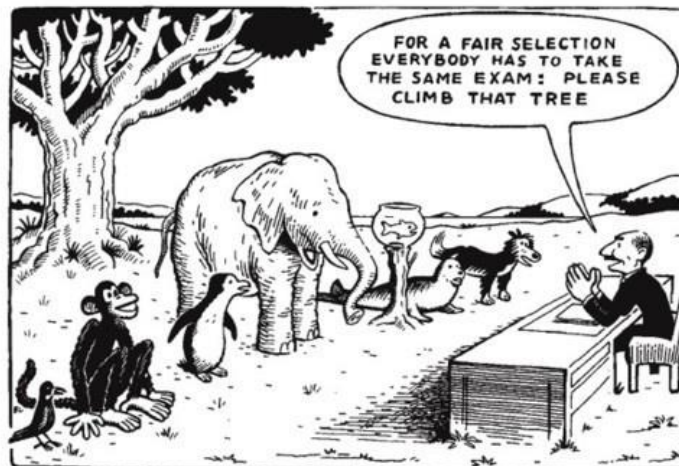
Addressing Conflicts between ADHD children and their Non-ADHD siblings 2



- Try to minimize impact of ADHD child's behaviors on non-ADHD child's earned privileges: Andrew may have to wait for Jay to be driven to school separately.
- Keep amount of praise balanced between siblings, even if you are praising different behaviors.
- Provide consequences for observed negative behavior towards siblings via Standing Rules

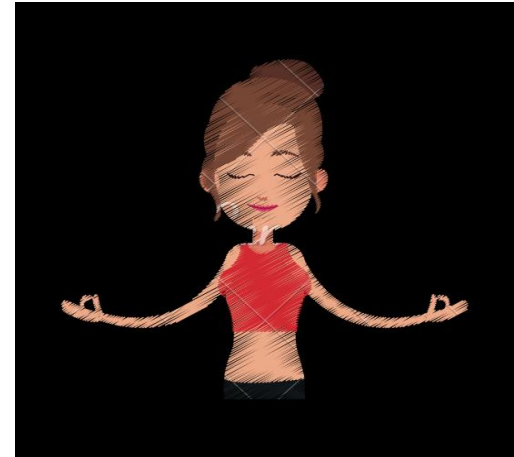
Addressing Conflicts between ADHD children and their Non-ADHD siblings, 3

- If appropriate, enlist the sibling in helping the child with ADHD.
- Spend special time with each sibling
- It's OK for siblings to do things separately. Be selective in shared activities and consider a shared reward for these activities specifically. Catch them behaving well together!
- Explain “Fair does not mean equal” in a sensitive way: This is an important concept for all children to learn.



Mindfulness Skills and Mindful Parenting

- Your self-care will impact the emotional health of the family as a whole.
- Learning how to hone your emotional regulation is key to helping your child regulate better.



Mindfulness Skills and Mindful Parenting



Mindful Parenting entails:

1. Observing your own frustration in response to your child's behaviors and watching it without reacting to it.
2. Telling yourself, "This feels bad, but I can stand it."
3. Taking time to understand the function of behaviors (i.e. Attention-seeking)
4. Use your inner wisdom to problem-solve and access positive strategies.

Summary: Key Points

- Improving a child's emotion regulation skills will help reduce problem behaviors,
- Differences in parenting skills for ADHD and non-ADHD siblings lie more in environmental modifications than differences in how consequences are given.
- Efforts to reduce negative impact of ADHD child's behaviors on non-ADHD sibling will help reduce resentment, as will providing immediate consequences for hurtful behavior.
- Being open and positive about differences will reduce resentment.
- Mindfulness skills for both children and parents help reduce overall conflict.

References and Resources

- *No More Meltdowns: Positive strategies for managing and preventing out-of-control behavior* by Jed Baker, Ph.D.
- *Helping the Noncompliant Child: Family-Based Treatment for Oppositional Behavior, Second Edition* by Rex L. Forehand, Ph.D.
- *Parenting a Child Who Has Intense Emotions: Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills to Help Your Child Regulate Emotional Outbursts & Aggressive Behaviors* by Pat Harvey, LCSW-C and Jeanine A. Penzo, LICSW
- *Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete Authoritative Guide for Parents, Third Edition* by Russell Barkley, Ph.D.
- *The New Social Story Book* by Carol Gray, Ph.D.
- *The Incredible 5-Point Scale: Assisting students in Understanding social interactions and controlling their emotional responses* by Mitzi Beth Curtis and Karen Dunn Buron

Thank You

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<http://www.stonybrook.edu/experts/profile/jennifer-keluskar>

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