

Supporting Children and Youth with ADHD During COVID-19: Challenges and Tips

Dr. Randall Gillis & Dr. Candice Murray

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Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

We help families across the province by:

- Helping with understanding and navigating the mental health system
- Listening and offering peer support, and
- Connecting families to resources and tools.





Housekeeping

- Attendees are automatically muted and cameras are turned off.
- Please submit questions for the speaker through the “Q&A” function. There has been an option enabled where you can vote for questions that you want answered.
- Please submit technical questions or comments through the “Chat” function.
- The webinar will be recorded and made available on the keltymentalhealth.ca website.
- At the end of the webinar, a survey will pop up that we invite you to complete.



Speakers

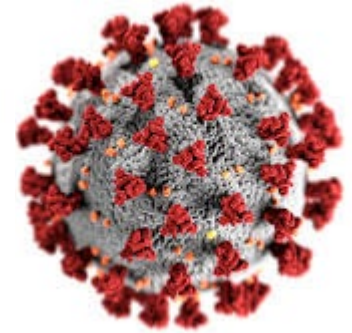
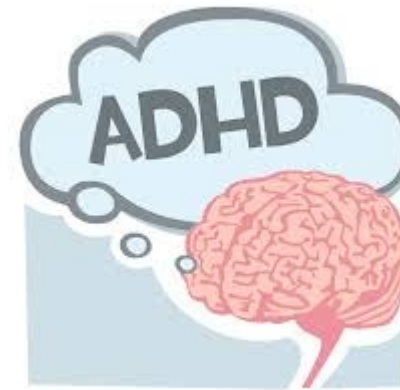


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Speakers acknowledge with immense gratitude that they live, work, and play on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlíl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation.



Outline

1. What the science says

2. Four guiding principles

- Self care
- Increase positives
- Support Executive Function
- Increase motivation

3. School:

- BC Ministry of Education Safety Plan
- Challenges and tips

4. Home:

- Challenges and tips



Starting Words...

COVID-19 has been hard on all of us

It is especially hard for children with ADHD, who were designed to move and interact more with their world

**Keep realistic expectations, be
forgiving, be kind to yourself
and your child**

What the Science Says...

- 1) Child ADHD symptoms worse compared to before COVID-19
- 2) Teens with ADHD are experiencing more challenges during COVID-19 compared to teens without ADHD
 - Fewer routines
 - More remote learning challenges (impacted by negative affect and distractibility)
- 3) Parents have lower confidence in supporting their teens with ADHD

Zhang et al., (2020); Becker et al., (2020)



ROLLING
WITH ADHD

Wish you could just *roll* with the
ADHD in your family?



Rolling with ADHD is the new
free online learning series from
BC Children's Hospital

Sign up and start today

rollingwithADHD.ca

Self Care



Sleep
&
eating

Enjoyable
activities

Relaxation
strategies

Self
compassion

Resources
and support

Plan &
schedule

Realistic
expectations

Increase Positives

Praise

Validation

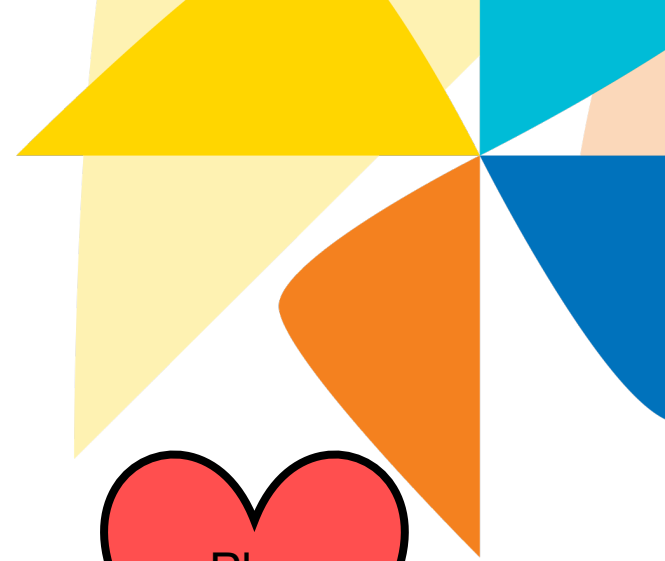
Enjoyable
activities

Play
& fun

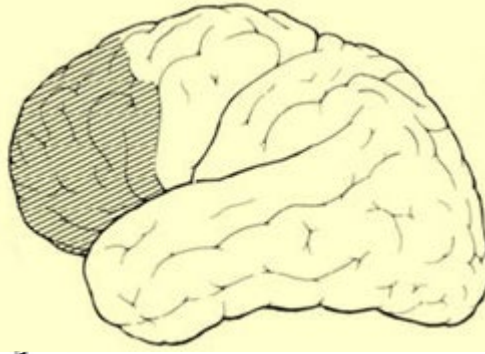
Peer time

Rewards

Child
directed
time



Support Executive Function



Structure

Consistency

Reduce
Distraction

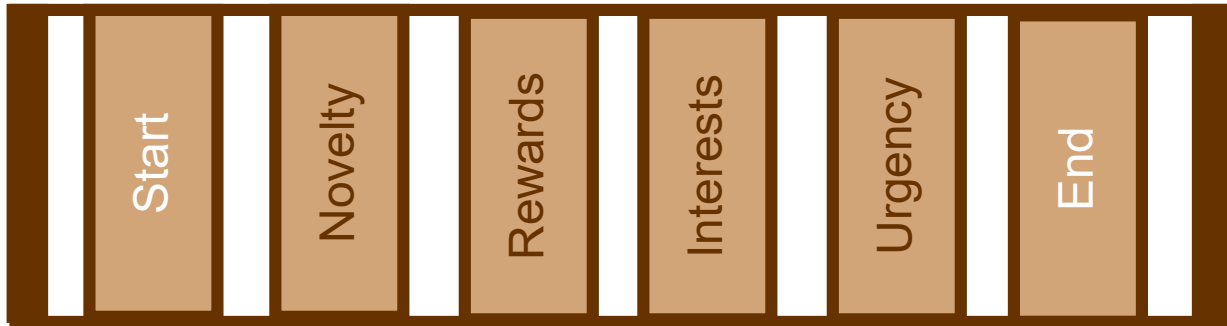
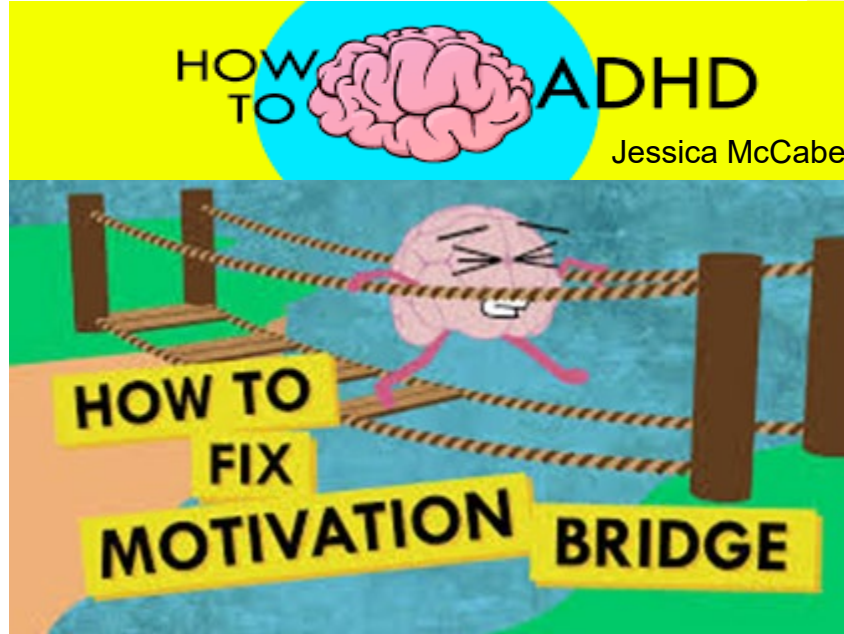
Reminders

Visual and
Auditory Cues

Say what **to**
do

Break it down

Check lists



SCHOOL



Health and Safety Guidelines

Challenges:

1. Obtaining support
2. Wearing masks
3. Washing hands
4. Reduced movement
5. Reduced physical contact
6. Less novelty
7. Lunch time
8. Quarter semesters – high school



Health and Safety Guidelines for BC Schools



Key Guidelines:

- Learning groups
- Masks
- Physical distancing / reduced touching
- Remote learning options

Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12

- <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf>

BC's Back to School Plan

- <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school>

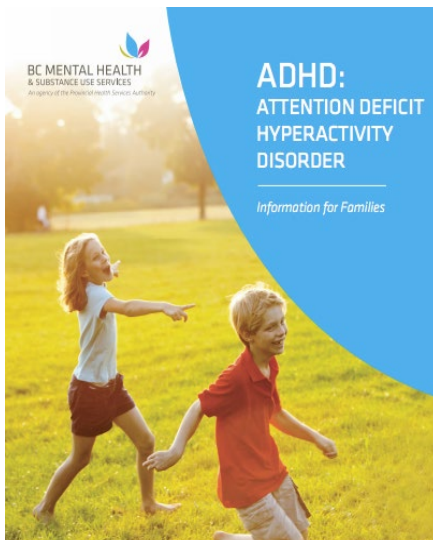
School

Challenge #1: Obtaining support

- No designation for ADHD alone
- Teachers busier now

Tips

- Parents need to advocate
- Share info about ADHD, your child, and the challenges with COVID-19
- More frequent (but brief) communication with teachers
- Individual Education Plans still active



School

Challenge #1: Obtaining support

- No designation for ADHD alone
- Teachers busier now



Tips

- Child self advocate – practice saying 1 or 2 phrases

“Moving around helps me focus”

*“Can you help me make a checklist?
That helps me remember.”*

School

Challenge #2: Wearing masks

Tips

- Proper use (inattention, rushing)

Request:

- Teach and model
- Reminders:
 - 'How to' picture
 - Verbal (gentle)
- Incentives (praise not punishment)
- Acceptance of some improper use



School

Challenge #2: Wearing masks

Tips

- Forgetting (then worrying, sharing)
- Stock up!
- Everywhere:
 - jacket pockets
 - backpack
 - glove compartment
- Sunglasses string, carabiner clip
- Fun, “cool” patterns



School

Challenge #3: Washing hands

Tips

- Touch more things
 - Shifting is hard
 - Waiting is hard (line ups, 20 second washing)
 - Excited for next activity
 - Forget
- 'How to' picture
 - Routines
 - Hand sanitizer > handwashing
 - Everywhere
 - Attach to pack
 - Smells good
 - Interesting containers



School

Challenge #4: Reduced movement

- Extra-curriculars limited
- Gym classes limited
- Less freedom to move
 - More confined to classroom, desks
 - Restrictions on fidgets



Tips

- Plan movement outside of school (walk to & from school)
- Request more breaks (e.g., hall pass)
- Request chair movement
 - Fidget tools
 - Wiggle cushion
 - Stand up at desk
 - Chair push ups
 - Theraband

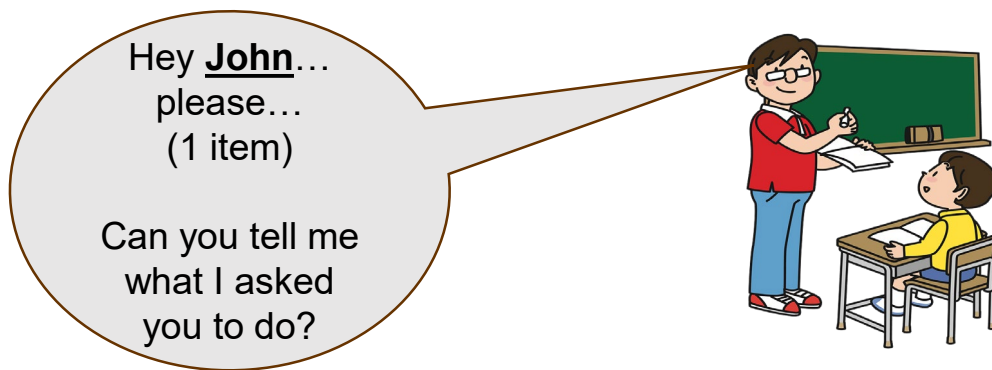


School

Challenge #5: Reduced physical contact

Tips

- Harder to get & maintain attention (no “touch, then talk”)
- Remind that listening hard
- Request that teacher:
 - Get as close as possible
 - Use child's name/eye contact
 - 1 short instruction at a time
 - Ask to repeat back
- Will impulsively touch
- Physical impulsivity is part of ADHD (can't vs won't)



School

Challenge #6: Less variety (more routines/rules)

- Boring! (increases distractibility, decreases motivation)



Tips

- Request frequent changes (seating)
- Request choices for projects/tasks
- Request special helper tasks
- Create surprises to look forward to
 - creative lunches
 - surprises in pack

School

Challenge #7: Lunch time

- Eating in learning groups
- Eager to get out (see friends, move)
- Teens socializing off school grounds more (time management)

Tips

- Quick and easy to eat lunches



- External cues for time
- Parent calls to check-in



School

Challenge #8: Quarter semesters - high school

Tips

- Longer classes (~2+ hours)
- Movement in class/hallway breaks
- Fidget at desk (bracelet, eraser, water bottle, gum, hard candy)
- Reduce distractions
 - Headphones (music or sound blocking)
 - Quiet place to work (resource room, study carrel)



School

Challenge #8: Quarter semesters - high school

Tips

- Hybrid learning (in-class & online)
 - Hard to keep track of schedule
- Accelerated (10 weeks)
- Write out schedule on calendar at beginning of each semester
- Move to online learning if needed
 - slower pace (1 yr to finish)
- Resource block
- Tutoring services



HOME

- Challenges
 1. Less social contact
 2. Parents and kids at home more
 3. Fewer daily routines
 4. Online learning



Home

Challenge #1: Less scheduled activities

- Less enjoyable activities
- Less social interaction

Tips

- Make a list of your child's interests
- Plan fun activities
 - make visible (calendar)
- Virtual and socially distanced time with peers and family
- Try new activities
- One-on-one or virtual lessons

NOVEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	
				29	30	



Home

Challenge #2: Parents & kids at home more

Tips

- Distract each other

- Designated work spaces (limit distractions)
- Post daily schedule of activities (parents & kids)
- Check-in times, use alarms
- Reminders, visual cues & rewards when parents cannot be disrupted
- Visual problem solving checklist
- Work when kids are working
 - 2 caregivers: offset schedules

Today:

- ☐ Item 1
- ☐ Item 2
- ☐ Item 3



Home

Challenge #2: Parents & kids at home more

Tips

- Increased frustrations



Stop
Take a breath
Observe
Proceed

- Plan breaks from each other
 - Leave the house (walk)
 - Caregivers take turns
 - Plan respite, if possible
 - Increased screen time is OK
- Use emotion regulation strategies
 - Calm down box / list
- Access mental health support

Home

Challenge #3: Fewer daily routines

Tips

- Disrupted sleep/meal routines

- Post visual routines
 - Morning and bedtime routine
 - Homework routine

- Keep screen limits, but add time

- Plan fun daily exercise

- Healthy, easily accessible snacks

Morning Routine



- ☐ Wake up at 8 am



- ☐ Get dressed



- ☐ Eat breakfast



- ☐ Brush teeth

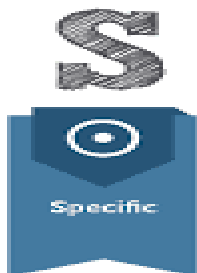


Home

Challenge #4: Online learning

Tips

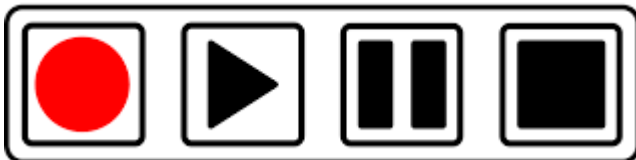
- Less structure / monitoring
- Write down clear agreed upon 'school time' rules
- Set daily SMART goals
- Break tasks down / use checklists
- Progress check at set times
- Use rewards



Home

Challenge #4: Online learning

- Hard to organize materials
 - virtual docs / tabs



Tips

- Schedule 'organizing time' each day
- Print & organize (binder, agenda)
- Pause and replay recorded material
- Tutor for study skills

Home

Challenge #4: Online learning

Tips

- More distractions



- Work when most alert (medication active, late morning)
- Exercise before work / plan movement breaks
- Headphones for online classes
- Create screen time plan together
- Remove distractions
 - Use screen monitoring apps
 - block websites & apps
 - Remove videogames

Overall Message

Challenge

- Children and youth with ADHD may NOT be CAPABLE of consistently following all COVID-19 rules and guidelines



Tips

- Acknowledge: Impulsivity, inattention and restlessness are core symptoms of ADHD
- Check: Are expectations reasonable for my child?
- Accept: Children and youth with ADHD are doing their best

Parting Words...

COVID-19 has been hard on all of us

It is especially hard for children with ADHD, who were designed to move and interact more with their world

**Keep realistic expectations, be
forgiving, be kind to yourself
and your child**

Resources

- Rolling with ADHD Parenting program: www.rollingwithadhd.com
- ADHD Clinic One-Day Workshop: <http://.mediasite.phsa.ca/Mediasite/Catalog/catalogs/adhdeducationday2018>
- Russell Barkley's "30 Essential Ideas Every Parent Needs to Know": www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCAGc-rkIf0&feature=youtu.be
- Jessica McCabe's "How to ADHD" blog/YouTube channel www.howtoadhd.com
- Kelty Mental Health: www.keltymentalhealth.ca
- The Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance: www.caddra.ca
- Center for ADHD awareness: www.caddac.ca
- ADD Vancouver Support Group: <http://addvancouver.support.ca/>
- Children and Adults with ADD (CHADD): www.chadd.org
- Family Media Plan: www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan
- Child and Youth Mental Health ADHD groups: 604-675-3636 or cindy.mardyn@vch.ca
- Private counsellors and psychologists with expertise in ADHD



Questions for the speakers?

Please use the “Q&A” icon

Thank-you for joining.

Contact the Kelty Mental Health
Resource Centre:

e-mail: keltycentre@cw.bc.ca

phone (toll-free): 1-800-665-1822

