

# Understanding ADHD in Adolescents Who Display Harmful Sexual Behavior

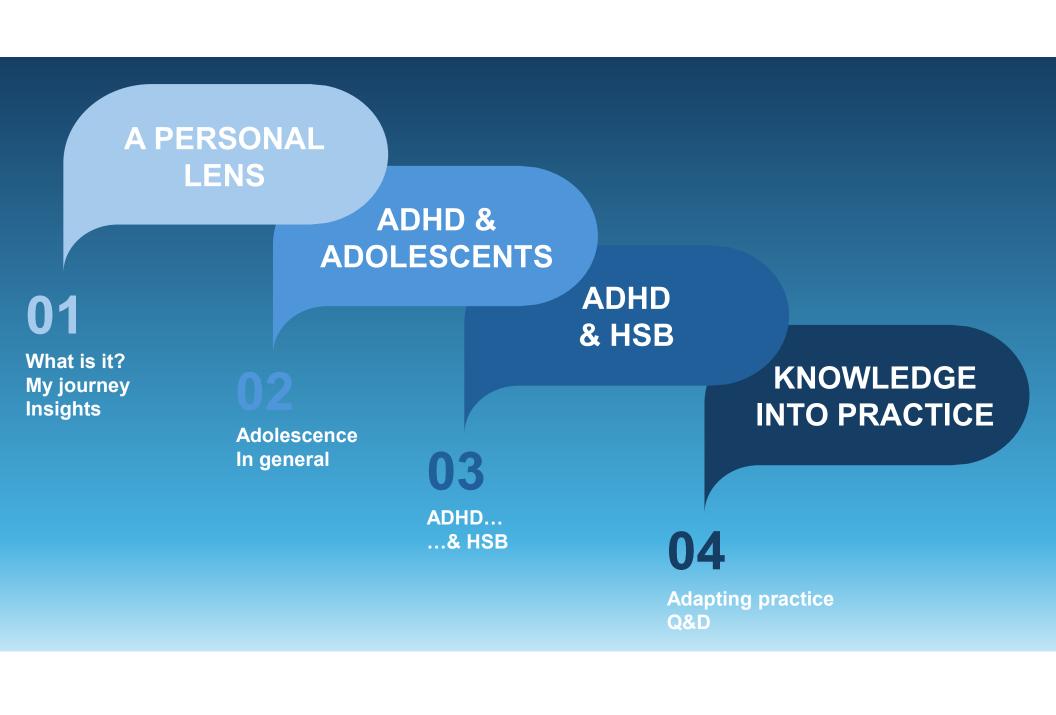
Thursday, February 27, 2025

11:00 am - 2:15 pm (ET) / 8:00 am - 11:15 am (PT)



JM





A PERSONAL LENS

01

What is it? My journey Insights

jonnyvm.substack.com

# A PERSONAL LENS

**01**What is it?
My journey

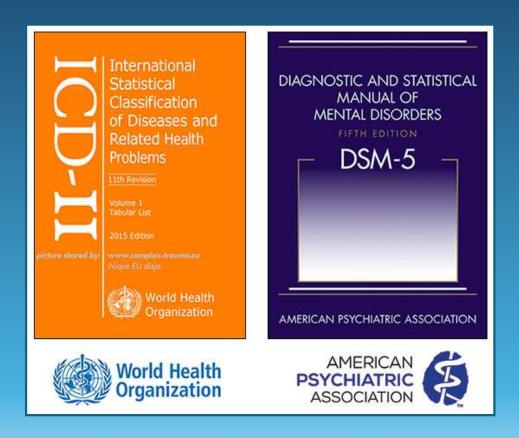
- What is it?
- My journey
- Insights



A PERSONAL LENS

# What is it?

01







A PERSONAL LENS

# What is it?

01

...a neuro-developmental condition that commonly affects children but can persist into adulthood. It is characterised by persistent patterns of <u>inattention</u>, <u>hyperactivity</u> and <u>impulsivity</u>, which can significantly impact an individual's daily functioning and quality of life.





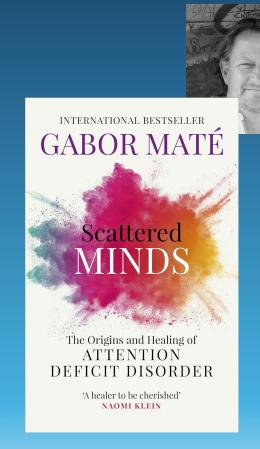
A PERSONAL LENS

# What is it?

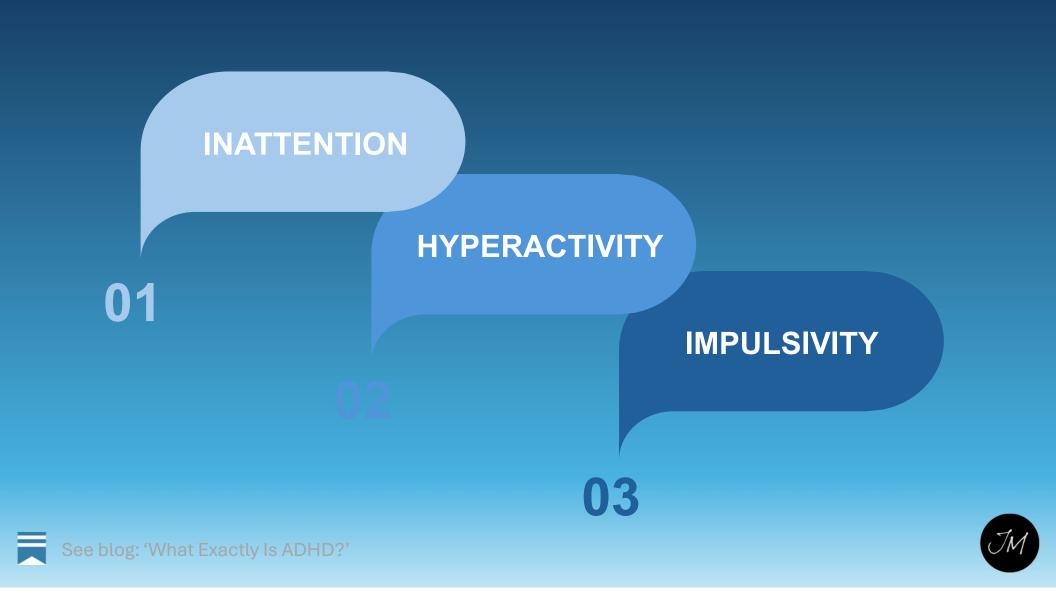
01

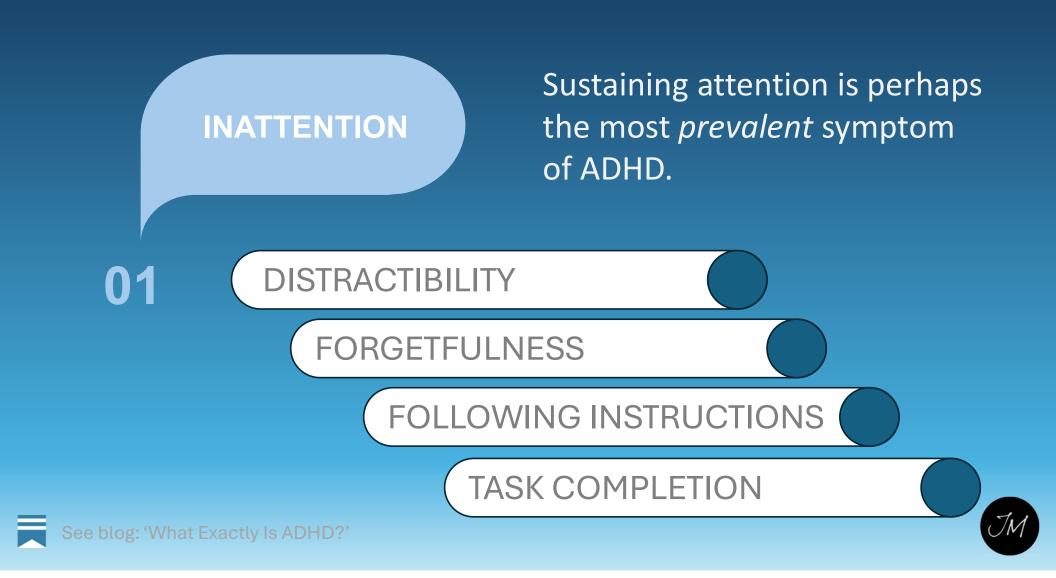
# **AETIOLOGY?**

- Genetic &/or epigenetic?
- Trauma-genic/ developmental









**HYPERACTIVITY** 

Perhaps the most well-known symptom of ADHD – may be even the stereotype?

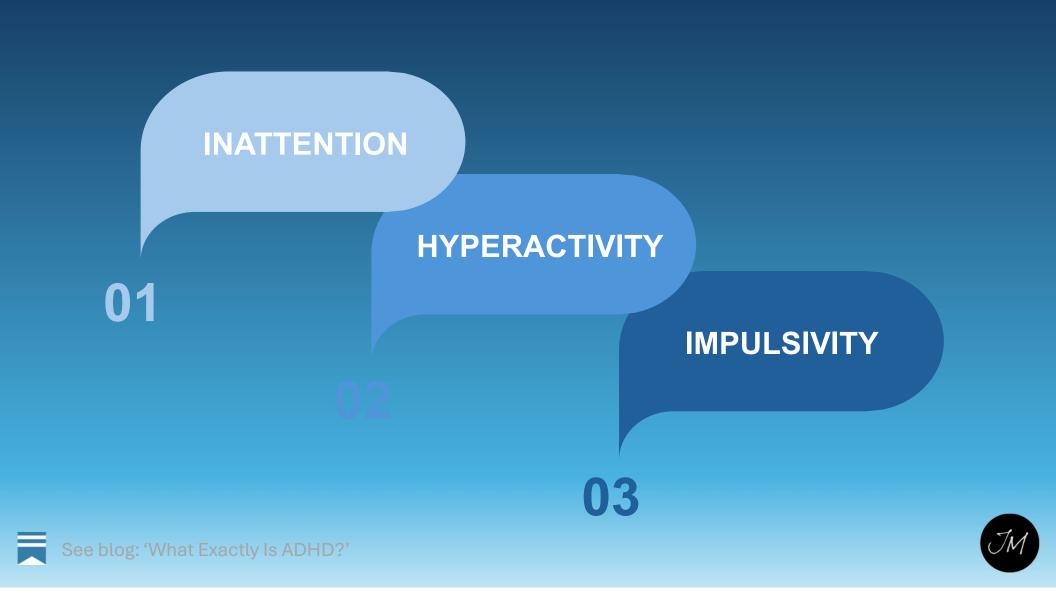
02

PHYSICAL AGITATION



ON THE GO ALL THE TIME

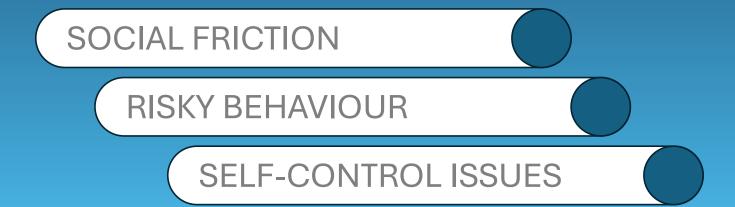




### **IMPULSIVITY**

Acting or speaking without thought for potential consequences. Act first, think...whenever!

03





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

# 3 subtypes



Inattentive

HYPERACTIVITY

**IMPULSIVITY** 



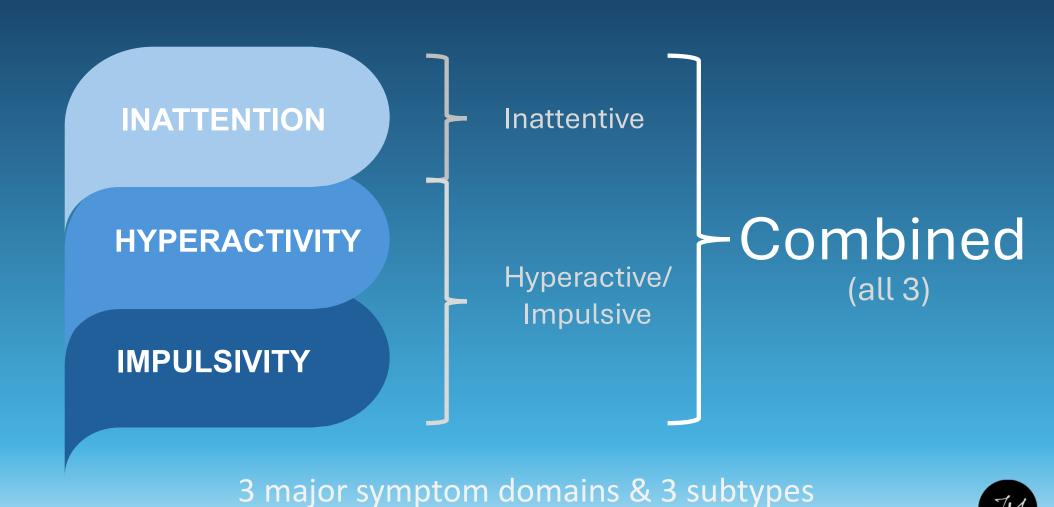
Inattentive

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

Hyperactive/ Impulsive





# A PERSONAL LENS

**01**What is it?
My journey
Insights

What is it?

- My journey
- Key insights



**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

Combined (all 3)



Inattentive

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 







Inattentive

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 







**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

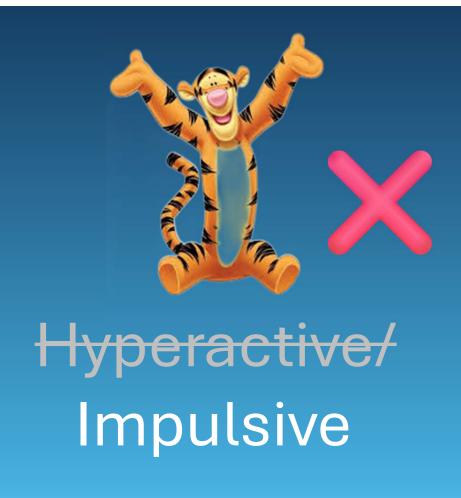
**IMPULSIVITY** 





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

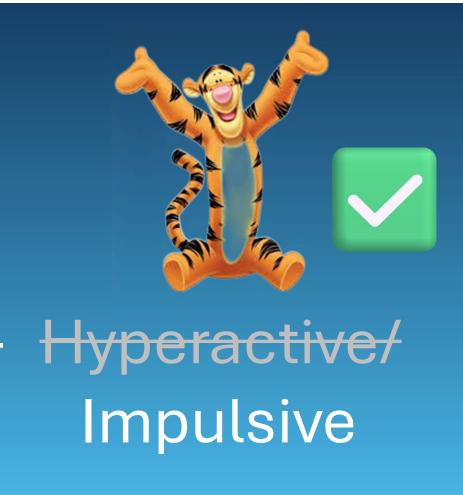
**IMPULSIVITY** 





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

Combined (all 3)



# A PERSONAL LENS

01
What is it?
My journey
Insights

- What is it?
- My journey
- Insights



**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

In general...

- Lean in
- Empathise
- Be kind





### It's PROBABLY not...

- personal or intentional
- insulting or rude
- avoidant or evasive

But it **/S**... (subjectively for them)

- infuriating
- shame-inducing
- overwhelming



**IMPULSIVITY** 



**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

## Approach suggestions...

- Breath don't rush to judge
- Pause, wait they'll refocus
- Quiet may ease them back
- Ask, 'are you OK?' (or whatever)
- Break the drift in some way





# 'My mind/brain is like...'

**INATTENTION** 

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 



- A TV with constantly changing channels
- A web browser with 100 tabs open
- An endlessly scrolling phone screen
- Someone talking way too fast to take it all in





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

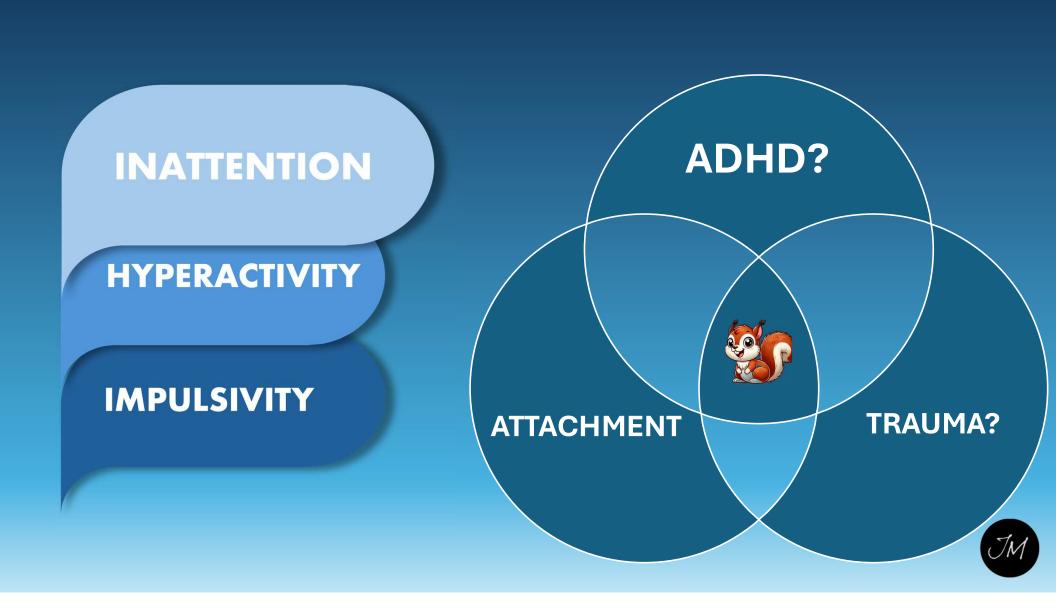
**IMPULSIVITY** 



### Approach suggestions...

- Breath don't rush to judge
- Pause, wait they'll refocus
- Quiet may ease them back
- Ask, 'are you OK?' (or whatever)
- Break the drift in some way
- Let it go...
  - If they don't refocus
  - Or they walk off
- Remind yourself 'it's not about me'





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 



**SCREENS EXACERBATE IT!** 





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 



**STRESS MAKES IT WORSE!** 





**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 









**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

Things to think about...

- There's a dynamo at work!
- There's an impulse to 'go'
- Focus is better with movement...
- ...it calms the itch a little





#### **INATTENTION**

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

#### Approach suggestions...

- Encourage movement
- Facilitate fiddling toys etc.
- Do something dyadic
- Intersubjectivity is good!
- Walk & talk together
- Driving = opportunism

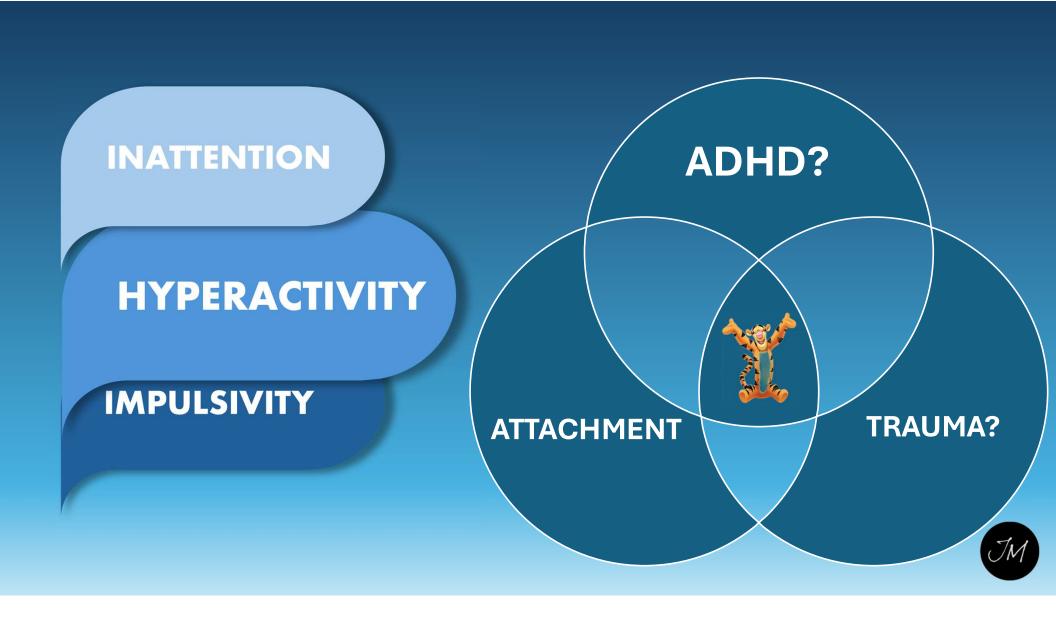






Stimming is a natural part of being human and can serve many purposes, including self-regulation, expression, and comfort

The way I see It (2009)



**INATTENTION** 

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 



#### Another plea...

- Lean in
- Empathise
- Be kind



**INATTENTION** 

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

#### It's probably NOT...

- A reaction to you/content
- Planned
- Done with an end in mind
- Said/done without feeling
- A lack of empathy





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INATTENTION

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

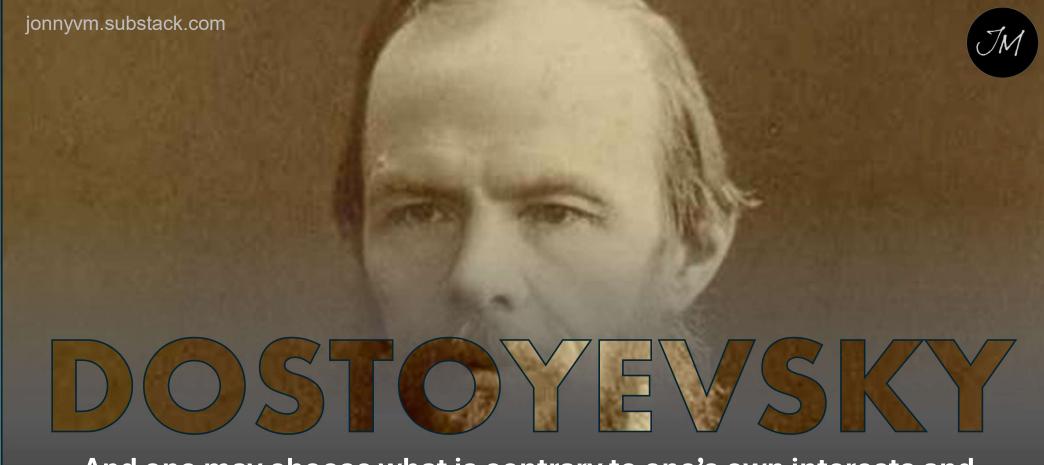
**IMPULSIVITY** 



'What were you *thinking*?'



'I wasn't



And one may choose what is contrary to one's own interests and sometimes one positively ought...

Notes From The Underground – 1864

#### **INATTENTION**

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

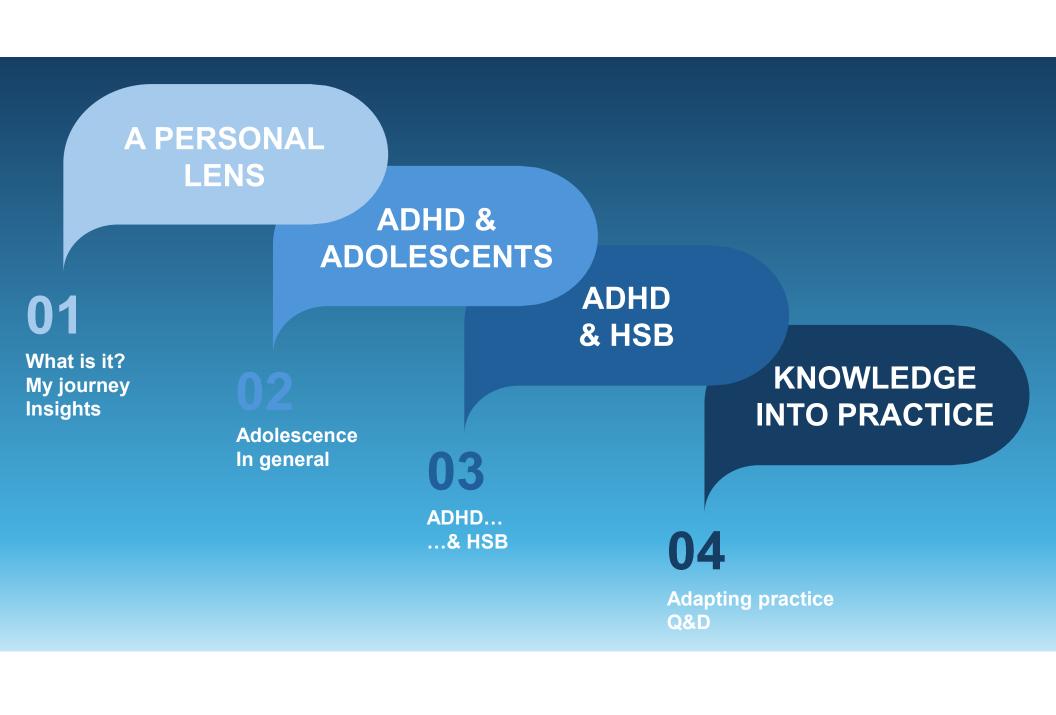




### **Summary Thoughts**

- Exciting Risky Fun
- Phasic (now celebrated 'pie phase')
- Injuries (ongoing but lessened meds?)
- Inner critic (a work in progress)
- Sweets (adaptive?)
- Isolation (still a preference)
- Constraints





02

Adolescence In General

# Friendships & Social Support

(Rokeach & Wiener, 2020)

115 teenaged participants aged 13-18 with and without ADHD:

- ADHD kids friendship ratings reduced over time
- Non-ADHD kids rating increased as they aged
- Girls in both groups reported more support than boys
- Girls & boys in both groups reported same sex friendships as more supportive AND more conflictual



## Friendships & Victimisation

(Becker et al., 2017)

#### Implications of peer rejection of children with ADHD:

- Increased risk of academic failure & school drop out
- Increased risk of depression & anxiety
- Increased risk of substance/alcohol misuse
- Victimisation by peers (any kind 57% ADHD 1 x wk +)
  - Physical victimisation 14% (boys more than girls)
  - Reputational victimisation 17% (no gender diff.)
  - Relational victimisation 51% (no gender diff.)



#### **Peer Victimisation** ↔

(Chou et al., 2018)

02

## 287 ADHD adols. were assessed for bullying victimisation/perpetration:

- Teens with ADHD more likely to be bullies
- More likely to threaten peers, BUT...
- Prevalence rates:
  - Pure victims 14.6%
  - Pure perpetrators 8.4%
  - Victim/Perpetrators 5.6%



# ADHD, Adolescence & Dating

(VanderDrift, 2019)

#### General findings: (self-report)

- ADHD associated with greater relationship difficulties
- Hyperactive symptoms associated with negative responses to bad behaviour
- In BOTH groups, <u>inattentive</u> symptoms associated with
  - Less constructive responses to partner bad behaviours
  - Greater interest in relational alternatives (new partner)



### **ADHD, Adol. & Intimacy**

(Norvilitis et al., 2015)

#### Young adults with inattention tended to: (self-report)

- Reach dating milestones at a later age,
- Have lower number of steady dating relation-ships,
- Feel less comfortable or assertive in particular situations,
- Use fewer relational
- Problem-solving techniques,
- Spend less time on their relationships, and
- Express love & affection less than individuals with fewer inattentive symptoms



### **ADHD, Adol. & Intimacy**

(Norvilitis et al., 2015)

## Those with <u>hyperactive/impulsivity</u> symptoms tended to: (self-report)

- Impulsive sex
- Risky sexual behaviour
- Risky anal sex
- Sex with uncommitted partners
- Results were pretty stable across both nationalities of subjects



# ADHD, Adolescence & Intimacy

(Norvilitis et al., 2015)

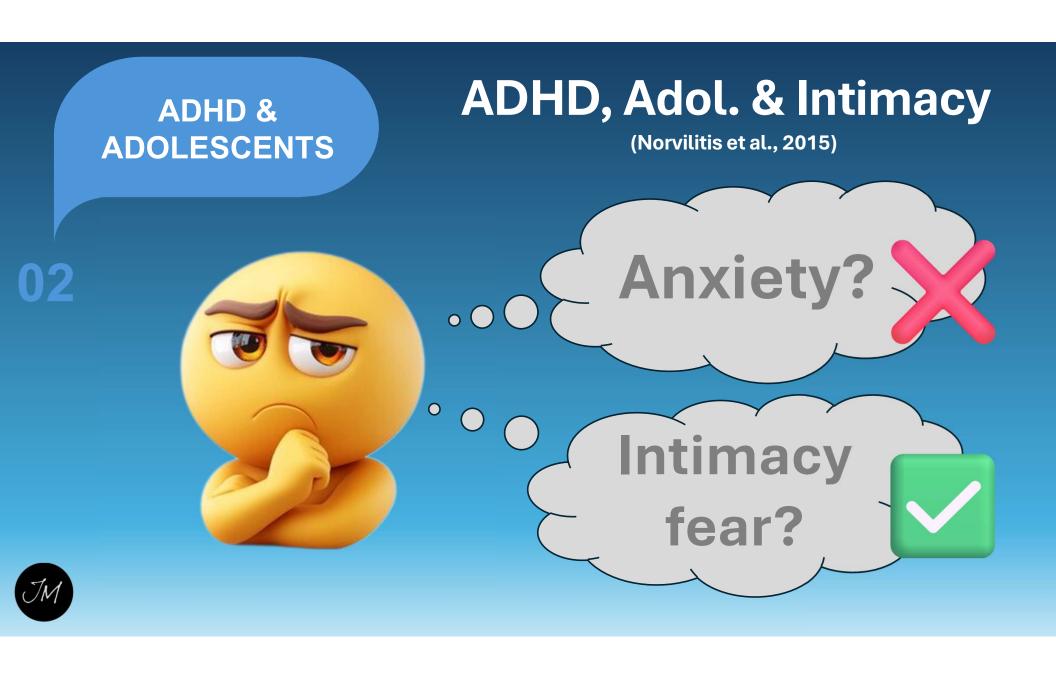
**02** 



More difficulty establishing close relationships

...but report higher rates of risky sexual behaviour







Deficient emotional self-regulation is the overlooked ADHD symptom that impacts everything

Clinical neuropsychologist & professor of psychiatry
Author: Taking Charge of Adult ADHD



## ADHD, Adolescence & Emotions

Some reasons why kids with ADHD struggle with their emotions:



- Brain structure & function
- Chemical imbalances
- Impulsivity & self-reg issues
- Sensitivity to rejection (RSD)
- Chronic stress & anxiety



See 'ADHD & Emotions' at jonnyvm.substack.com

# ADHD, Adolescence & the Body

02

- Emerging sexuality in a time of change
- Sexuality & affect regulation
- Adolescent girls and menstruation...





# ADHD, Adolescence & the Body

Specific oestrogen level comparisons between ADHD and non-ADHD girls are not available, but:

- Research suggests hormonal fluctuations impact ADHD girls significantly, including for example:
  - Increased emotional sensitivity and mood swings
  - Greater difficulty managing inattentive symptoms
  - Heightened feelings of being overwhelmed
  - Less effective medications at certain points in cycle



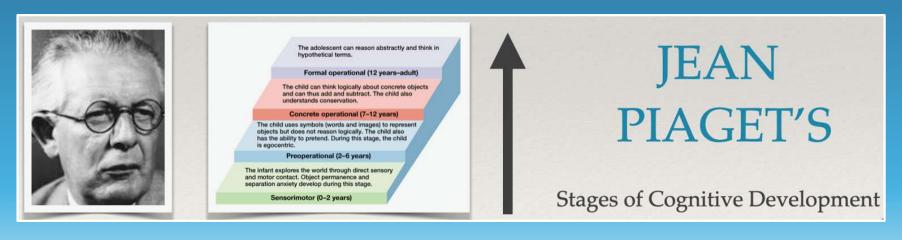




# ADHD, Adolescence & Cognition

02

May be delayed in development – still concrete? (Piaget)





# Friendships & Peer Social Support

(Spender et al., 2023)

#### 23 studies; 1509 ADHD kids; 1197 controls:

- ADHD-ers had significantly fewer friends...
- Lower quality friendships:
  - Fewer positive features & more negative features
- Poorer friendship interactions



02

# Friendships & Peer Social Support

(Spender et al., 2023)

Reasons posited for poorer friendship experiences in ADHD kids with their peers:

- Social skills
- Social cognition
- Emotional regulation abilities



02

### **ADHD & Friendships**

(Walters & Borus, 2020)

#### Snapshot of the literature on friendships in general: (p.230)

- Teens with ADHD have <u>trouble starting and maintaining friendships</u> and their <u>friendships are shorter</u> in duration than non-ADHD peers
- Adolescents with ADHD <u>have fewer friends</u> than their peers without ADHD
- Kids with ADHD are <u>perceived as less sociable and less likeable</u> by peers and experience more negative interactions with peers than non-ADHD peers
- They are also <u>more likely to exhibit specific social skills deficits</u> that contribute to peer rejection and bullying which in turn may contribute to future negative outcomes, including school dropout, substance abuse, and psychopathology





As with every aspect of the development of the ADD child, the growth of true, internal motivation requires a secure attachment relationship with the parent.

**SCATTERED MINDS (2011)** 

# Maté's 5 Myths of ADHD parenting

Myth 1: The child is just looking for attention

 The child NEEDS your attention to know they're loved and to feel safe

Myth 2: The child is deliberately trying to annoy the adult

The adult is failing to regulate

Myth 3: The child purposefully manipulates the parent

Sometimes. But usually it's <u>adaptive</u> - it works!



# Maté's 5 Myths of ADHD parenting

Myth 4: The ADHD child's behaviour causes the adult's tension or anger

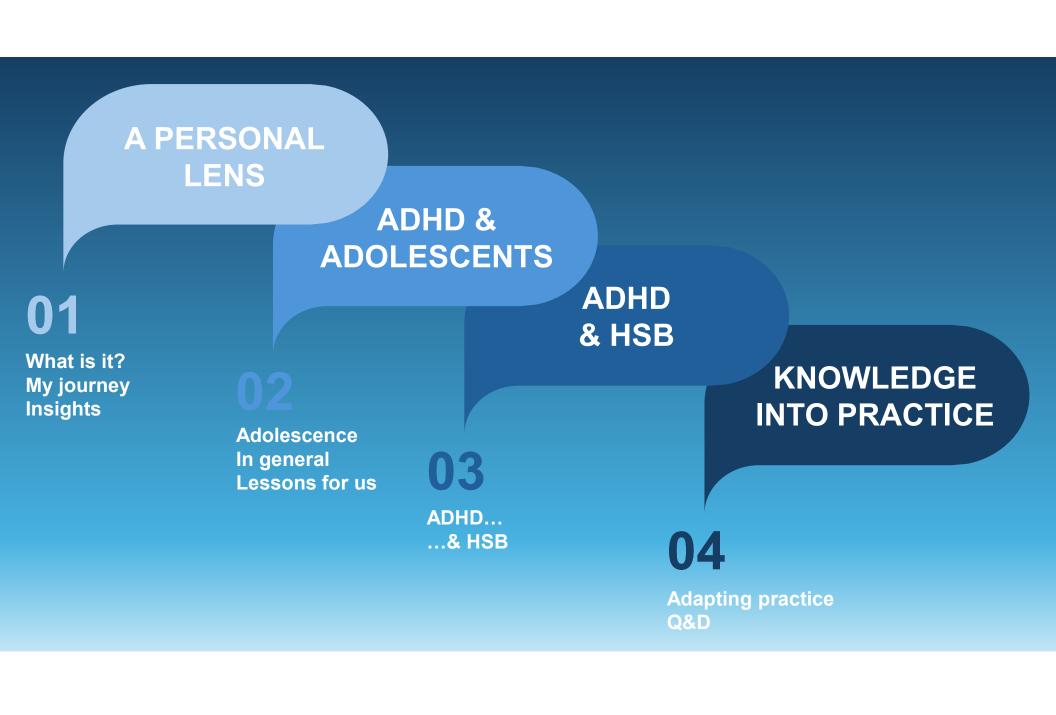
 We are responding to them, sure. But says more about us than it does about them

Myth 5: Children with ADHD are lazy

- Rarely, except in the usual teenage sense
- They're often more energetic, creative and intelligent than their peers







03

ADHD... ...& HSB

#### **Unsafe sex & ADHD**

(Walters & Borus, 2020)

## Unsafe sexual behaviour more common in adolescents with ADHD:

- Increased numbers of partners
- Higher rates of STIs
- Teenaged pregnancy
- Sexual abuse victimisation
- Sexual abuse perpetration



#### **Unsafe sex & ADHD**

(Norvilitis et al., 2015)

US college students with more ADHD symptoms, particularly symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity:

- Engage in more risky sexual behaviour (including less contraceptive use)
- More alcohol use before sex
- More intercourse with uncommitted partners
- Impulsive sex & more risky anal sex
- Sex with uncommitted partners
- NB: Inattention was only related to risky acts



#### **Unsafe sex & ADHD**

(Halkett & Hinshaw, 2021)

140 Girls aged 12-19 with ADHD. Followed up after 5 & 10 years (88 matched controls – no ADHD). Asked them about:

- Initial engagement in oral sex
  - Sig. younger age of onset &
  - Twice as many oral partners

**COMBINED** subtype only

- Sexual intercourse and Number of sexual partners
  - Not significant

#### **HSB Recidivism**

(Lussier & McCuish, 2024)

#### **General observations:**

- Recidivism is always in part a feature of the system it sits within
  - How 'justice' responds to offending (& so affects offenders)
  - Changes in measurement of what constitutes 're-offending')
- Early studies (1943/51/54) reported low sexual recidivism rates
  - So, this is not a recent 'decline'
  - Neither is it a feature of 'how we see things now'



#### ADHD & HSB

#### **HSB** Recidivism

(Lussier & McCuish, 2024)

#### The study findings highlight that the risk of:

- **GENERAL recidivism** (weighted pooled mean = .44 or 44%) is substantially higher than...
- VIOLENT recidivism (weighted pooled mean = .18 or 18%) and
- **SEXUAL recidivism** (weighted pooled mean = .08 or 8%).



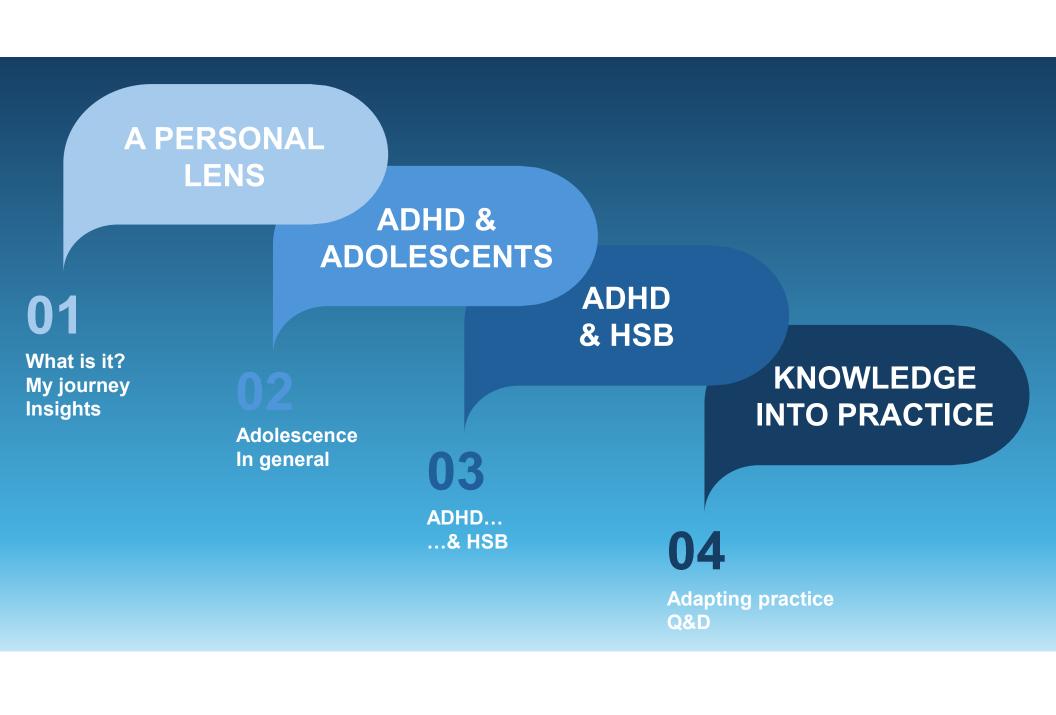
#### ADHD & HSB

#### **HSB & Risk Assessment**

ADHD & the impact on risk assessments – may be elevated around:

- Impulsivity
- Substance use
- Conduct problems
- Treatment adherence
- Peer relationships
- Academic performance
- Emotional regulation





04

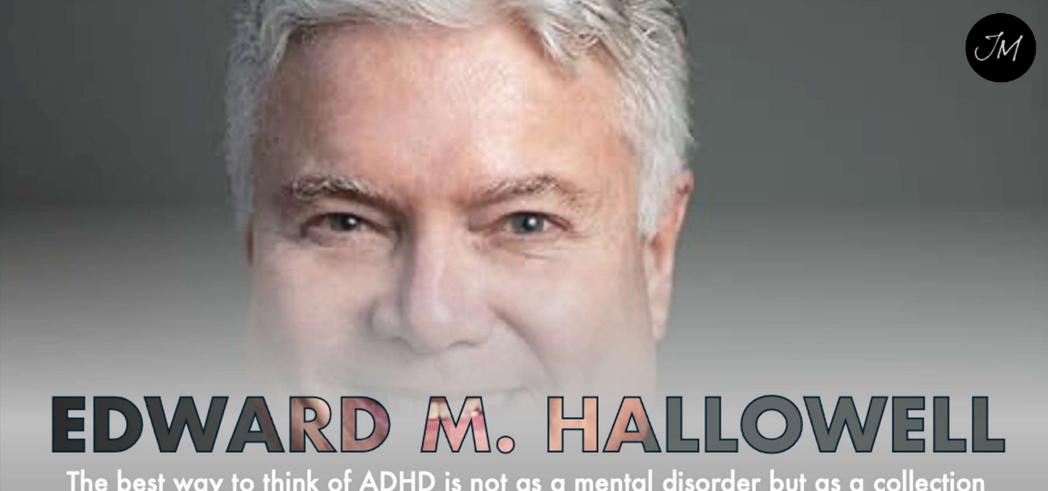
Adapting practice Q&D





My first interview with the parents of ADD teenagers almost always ends with advice that they relax the rules and regulations imposed in the hope of inducing better work habits and behaviors in their child. When it comes to rules and regulations, less is more.

**SCATTERED MINDS (2011)** 



The best way to think of ADHD is not as a mental disorder but as a collection of traits and tendencies that define a way of being in the world

**DELIVERED FROM DISTRACTION (2023)** 

#### **HSB** Recidivism

(Lussier & McCuish, 2024)

04



'Given the low weighted pooled sexual recidivism rate reported in the study, the use of adult-like strategies to increase public safety and prevent sexual recidivism seems misguided...'



### See the Struggle

(work of Valerie Sinason)

04

## Secondary & Primary disability (Valerie Sinason)



- Primary disability is the core condition autism as a neurological disorder – internal and predetermined.
- Secondary disability develops as the emotional and relational aspects of living and developing with the primary disability – external and circumstantial.





When you've seen one child with ADHD... you've seen <u>one child</u> with ADHD

Developmental Behavioural Paediatrician - Founder Sutcliffe Clinic

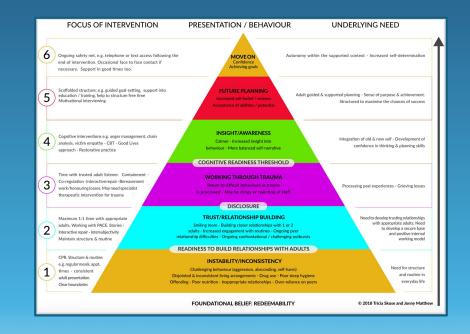
#### Think Developmentally

(Skuse & Matthew, 2015; Wareham & Matthew, in press)

04

#### **Potential Distractions:**

- Behaviour/risk
- Impact on other children
- CJS process pressures
- Over-reliance on risk predictors/instruments



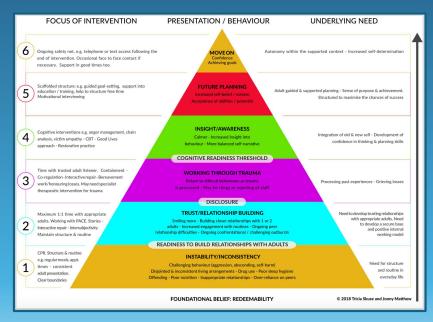


Trauma Recovery Model® (Skuse & Matthew (2015)

### Think Developmentally

(Skuse & Matthew, 2015; Glendinning et al., 2021; Wareham & Matthew, in press)

04



#### Instead:

- Manage risk (of course!) but then...
- FORMULATE!
- · Ask the 'why' question
- Look at the whole story
- CJS process pressures
- Over-reliance on risk predictors/instruments

Trauma Recovery Model® (Skuse & Matthew (2015)





'Formulation can be described as the process of co-constructing a hypothesis or 'best guess'...about the origins of a person's difficulties...'

Clinical Psychologist, Speaker & Trainer - 2017

#### **Sexual History**

(Onugha & Finlay, 2012)

- A number of studies found a link between high-risk sexual behaviour & ADHD
- Retro case note reviews of 50 x 12-18s with ADHD dx: none had a sexual history taken
- Clinicians & professionals of all kinds can help educate ADHD kids in the link between their condition & risky sexual behaviour
- Interventions can highlight this, too, and include proactive measures, input, programmes, etc. to support safe sexual practices



04



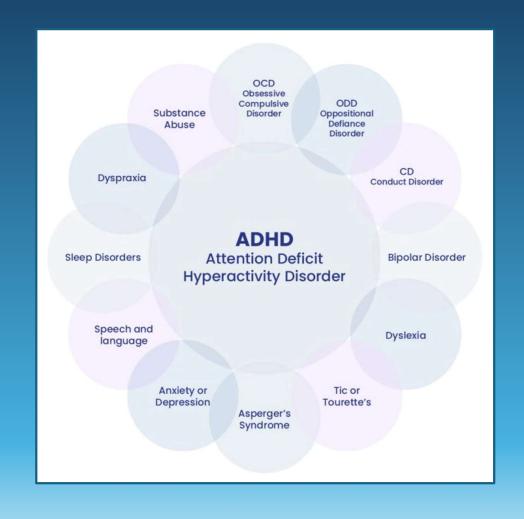
ADHD exists alone only about 25% of the time

Co-Founder & Chief Medical Officer ADD Health & Wellness Centers

04

# Stay mindful of co-morbidities

(Image source: <a href="https://psychiatry-uk.com/adhd/">https://psychiatry-uk.com/adhd/</a>)





#### **Social Skills Training**

(Spender et al., 2023)

04

'[The] development of [social] skills are crucial to enable successful peer relationships.

Social skills include both verbal and non-verbal behaviours that support peer interactions such as appropriate facial expressions, sharing, helping others and turn taking.'



### Social Cue Inhibition

(Walters & Borus, 2020)

04

'Caregivers and teachers should be mindful that <u>ADHD inhibits</u> adolescents' understanding of social cues needed to realize they are bothersome to others.'



#### **ADHD & Dating**

(VanderDrift, 2019)

- ADHD associated with greater relationship difficulties:
  - Social/relationship skills can help
  - Unmedicated/untreated kids fighting an uphill battle in dating relationships
- Hyperactive symptoms associated with negative responses to bad behaviour:
  - More overtly negative responses e.g. may lash out verbally/physically
  - Feels more hurtful/unfeeling for the partner?
  - This can drive allegations, confirmation bias, mis-reading the 'meaning' of the behaviour

04

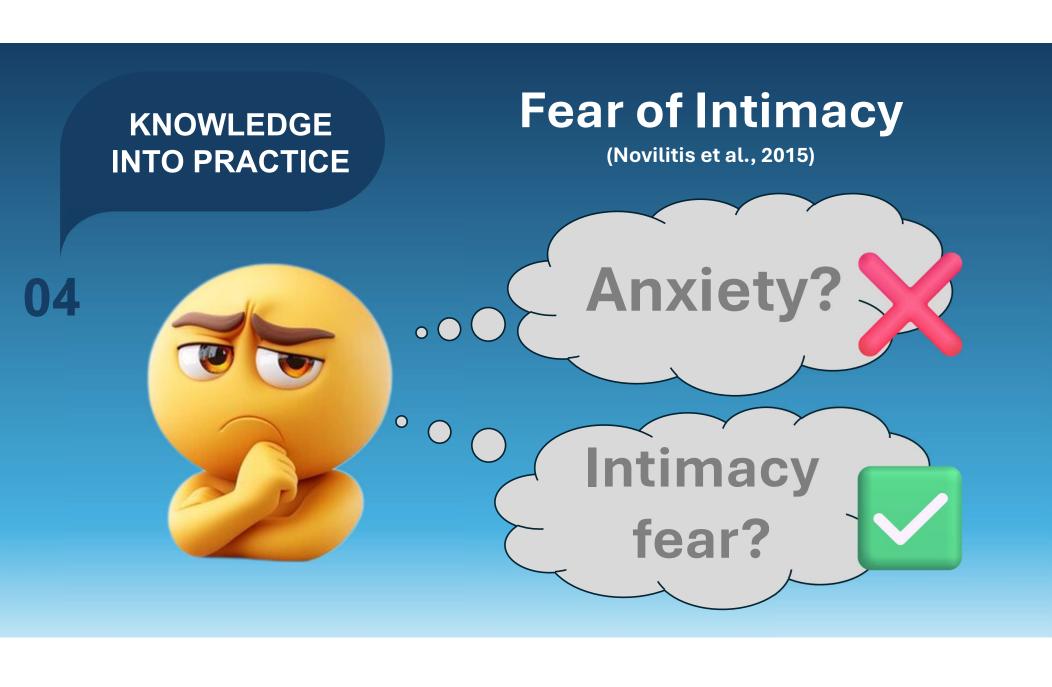
#### **ADHD & Dating**

(VanderDrift, 2019)

04

- In BOTH groups, <u>inattentive</u> symptoms associated with:
  - Less constructive responses to partner bad behaviours
    - May try to 'fix' it but not in particularly useful/constructive ways
  - Greater interest in relational alternatives (new partner)
    - May appear less interested a stressor to the partner in itself, may be
    - May *actually be* less tolerant & more likely to give up/bail out lower relationship life-expectancy?





### Fear of Intimacy

(Novilitis Marsh et al, 2015)

- Inattentive kids had decreased belief in expectations relating to (e.g.):
  - Communication
  - Love
  - Trust
  - Support

- Acceptance
- Compromise
- Coping
- Respect







Having ADHD doesn't mean you're broken, defective, or less than. It just means you need a little extra help navigating a world that wasn't built with your unique strengths in mind

ADHD According to Zoë (2014)

### Dialing down

04



Screens



**Stress** 

- Off, muted or hand them in
- Mindful of pace, volume, movement
- Consider relaxation/breathing
- Leave your phone, too! ;0)
- Regular venue (room if possible)
- Consistent day, time, order of events
- Seating or position in the room
- Engagement & de-brief practices



#### Dialing up

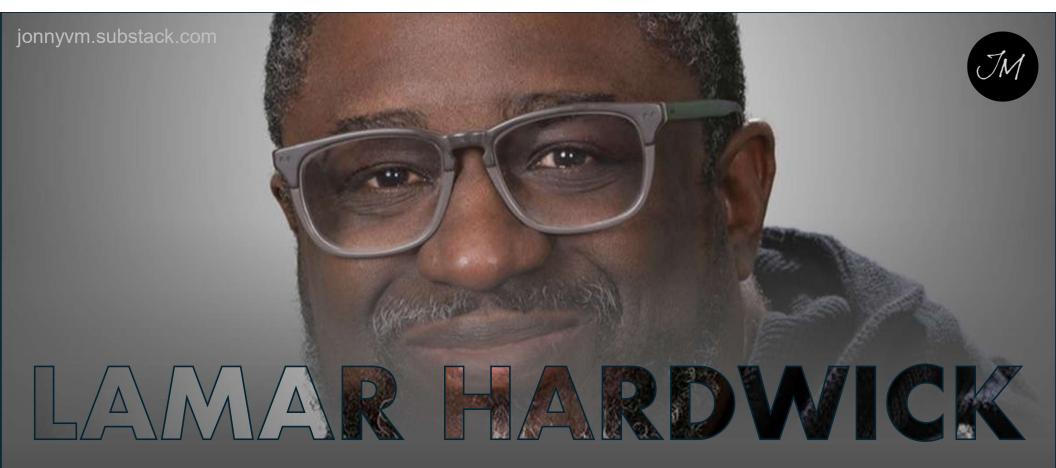
#### 04

#### Movement



- Explore how physical energy is with this kid
- Ask if they have ways of coping with this that work
- Do they stim & does this helps make it OK
- Does a fidget toy, blu tac, rubber band, etc. help?
- Incorporate movement where it helps...
- Take breaks if that's easier/better (moving during)





Stimming is like turning down the radio when you think you smell something burning. It's a way of turning off the other senses so you can make sure nothing's burning.

**AUTHOR, SCHOLAR, PASTOR (attrib.)** 

# Assess Friendships & Social Support

(Rokeach & Wiener, 2020)

04

Friendships are key for all teenagers navigating the developmental stage they're in:

- Make social functioning with peers part of our assessment
- A contextual Safeguarding approach can be useful here
  - Mapping the community & social network (family, friendships, etc.) to gauge the level of active support



### **Managing Emotions**

#### Remember:

- Impaired executive function?
- Self-reg problems?
- RSD?

#### Relationships matter (modeling):

- How you respond to their emotion
- How you model things...
- RSD is this an issue for them?

#### Relationships matter (modeling):

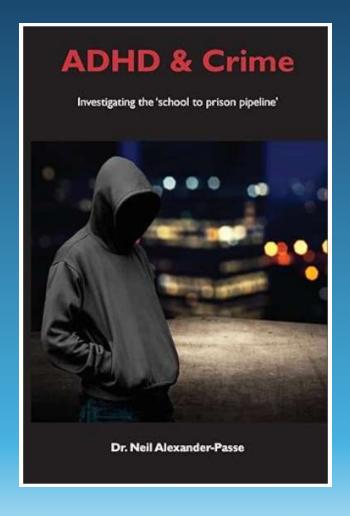
- Teach them how to 'see' emotions
- Teach/show them how to emote safely





For an interesting education focus & the impact of educational exclusion on the futures of ADHD kids

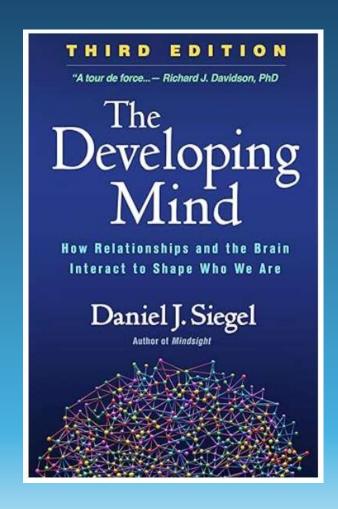
(more education-focused than the title suggests)





FANTASTIC for understanding the brain, attachment & interpersonal neurobiology

(a work of genius – <u>not</u> ADHD-specific)







## Interesting work with non-invasive & trans-cranial brain stimulation

Open Access
Volume 6 Issue 1
Review Article

Journal of Pediatrics and Neonatal Medicine ISSN: 2694-5983



Neuromodulation Interventions in Paediatric Neurological Disorders: A Contemporary Review of Scientific Advancements

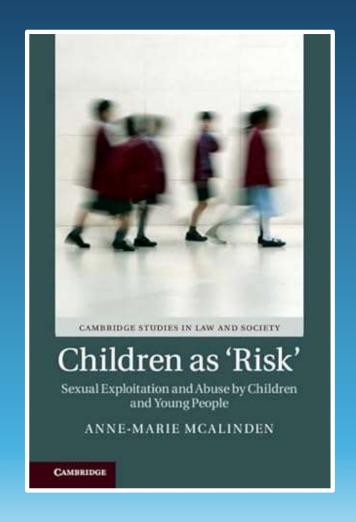
Singh SR, Bhattacharjee S and Udupa K\*

Department of Neurophysiology, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Hosur Road, Bangalore, India

Link in the references document

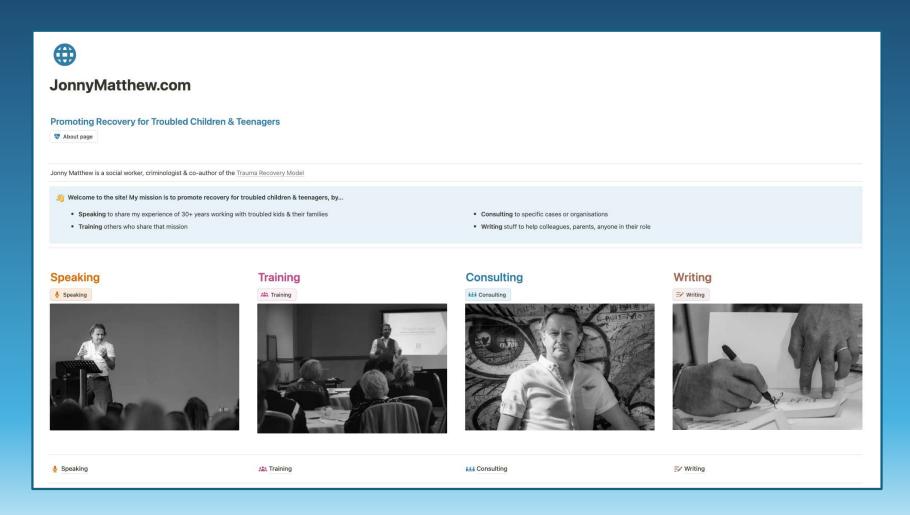
# Best book yet on 'risk' as it relates to HSB/CSE

(balanced, thorough & brilliantly researched – <u>not</u> ADHD-specific)





#### Temporary website - link in reference document





# jonnyvm.substack.com Instagram/jonnymatthew





#### **AUDIO BLOGS**

jonnyvm.substack.com





There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children

Nelson Mandela b.1918 d.2013

**INATTENTION** 

**HYPERACTIVITY** 

**IMPULSIVITY** 

Remember, if in doubt...

- Lean in
- Empathise
- Be kind

Ego Inimicus Est • Soli Deo Gloria

jonnyvm.substack.com



