

Life with Attention Deficit Disorder  
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Perhaps you were one of those kids who never quite “got it” at school and spent more time dreaming about building a rocket from spare parts in the attic than memorizing the spelling words your teacher assigned.

Later in college you found the introductory level #101 classes, which require memorization and regurgitation, much harder than graduate level classes where personal interest could guide your course of study.

You found a job and did okay for a while, but felt a sneaky slipping sensation any time your supervisor asked you to turn in paperwork or brought up a deadline you missed.

In your home, there may be areas of calm next to patches of chaos: piles of papers, forgotten bills, shoes on top of a sofa, a random clean sock in your stack of DVDs.

At some point you might have quit a job impulsively because you hated it, or you hated your boss. You might have ended a friendship or a relationship in a moment of frustration or unhappiness, and then regretted it.

You heard about Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder and researched some of the symptoms. You recognized yourself immediately and thought

“I’m not alone in my experience of managing life being so darn tough!” Then you thought, “What do I do now?”

Here is the good news about life with ADHD: You are in the company of many high-achieving entrepreneurial types. Folks with ADHD often have a strong intuitive connection, can ferret out pretense from a mile away, and are often artistic, verbally gifted, interesting people.

Here is the bad news: Without emotional support and a systematic learning program that teaches coping skills, people with ADHD are more vulnerable to major depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and more subtle, painful feelings of chronic overwhelm.

In relationships, people with ADHD can unintentionally create resentment in their partners due to not “pulling their weight” in tasks ranging from keeping a job to cooking meals and mowing the yard.

In spite of putting forth huge effort, folks with ADHD feel under the gun, behind the eight ball, constantly trying and failing to do the work they see others doing easily. This is a maddening experience!

In my work with ADHD clients, I recommend a three-prong approach starting with a medication evaluation by a qualified psychiatrist. Taking stimulant medication can make life a lot easier and when you are struggling with ADHD you want to “stack the deck” in

your favor. Secondly, support groups such as the ones led by Don Baker (<http://www.donbakerma.com/aboutdon.html>) can provide both emotional support in a climate of acceptance as well as practical tips and tricks aimed at helping you understand and manage your condition.

Finally individual, couple, and/or family therapy with a licensed therapist such as me can help you to unpack some of the frustration, pain, shame and anger that build up over a lifetime of trying to fit into a world that punishes the very characteristics which underlie ADHD. Couples and family therapy can help family members understand each other better, build upon strengths and negotiate areas of conflict in a neutral setting.

I often combine standard individual therapy with EMDR to process trauma, decrease old anxieties and lead to a more stable, spacious life experience.

If you are interested in exploring how therapy can help you, please call me at 206 375-7690 to make an appointment.