



# Addressing Internalized Stigma in ADHD Treatment with Women & Gender Diverse Clients

**Southern Arizona Psychological Association**

**Friday, May 12, 2023 | Tucson, AZ**

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# Announcements, Disclosures and Paperwork



# Disclaimer

“Materials that are included in this webinar may include interventions and modalities that are beyond the authorized practice of mental health professionals. As a licensed professional, you are responsible for reviewing the scope of practice, including activities that are defined in law as beyond the boundaries of practice in accordance with and in compliance with your profession’s standards.”

# Disclaimer

- None of the techniques described in this webinar will work for all persons with ADHD. Every person with ADHD is different.
- There are no absolutes.
- All treatments have negative side effects. Some more than others. The presenters will do their best to cover the most common ones.
- The theories described in this webinar do not have the same amount of empirical evidence supporting each one of them. The presenters will do their best to describe the pros and cons of each.
- If you are concerned about a treatment technique described in this webinar, ask the presenters about it.

# Disclaimer

- **Speaker Disclosures:**

- **Dr. Blake**

- **Financial:** Kevin Blake maintains a private practice. He is a stockholder in Johnson & Johnson, Inc. and Amgen, Inc. Dr. Blake receives a speaking honorarium from TPN. Health and royalties from PESI, Inc.
    - **Non-financial:** Kevin Blake is a member of the Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (CHADD), Board member of CHADD of Tucson, member of the International Dyslexia Association (Orton Oak), Learning Disabilities Association of America, and American Psychological Association.
    - **Positionality:** Kevin is a cisgender, temporarily able bodied, white male. He is neurodiverse with severe Specific Learning Disorder-developmental phonological processing, rapid automatized naming, and orthographic processing difficulties (A.K.A., dyslexia), severe developmental bilateral sensory-neuro hearing impairment and tinnitus. On occasion he has trouble with executive function.

- **Dr. May**

- **Financial:** Sarah May also maintains a private practice.
    - **Non-financial:** Sarah May is a volunteer with the Tucson chapter of Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (CHADD), a Southern AZ Psychological Association (SAPA) Board Member, and a committee co-chair for the AZ Psychological Association (AzPA)
    - **Positionality:** Sarah is a cisgender, temporarily able bodied. White woman. She is neurotypical yet experiences mental health symptoms which impair executive functioning.

# Disclaimer

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# Learning Objectives



State research-based ratios of ADHD in girls and boys as well as in women and men. Explain how the ratios are different and at least one reason why.



Define manifestations of ADHD that cause impairment, especially: “time blindness.”



Explain how ADHD experience and manifestations may differ across gender.



Define internalized stigma in ADHD.



Understand how internalized stigma can impact individual functioning and treatment progress.



Explain how this may interact with other forms of internalized stigma, especially related to gender identity and expression.



State and discuss two treatment methods that can reduce self-stigmatization in ADHD.

# Outline

1. Share Information (*25 minutes*)
  - a. ADHD symptoms – Time Blindness
  - b. ADHD prevalence & presentation differences across gender
  - c. Internalized stigma (definition & impact)
2. Offer Treatment Interventions (*20 minutes*)
3. Case Consultation (*25 minutes*)
  1. Think of your clients during Parts 1 and 2!
4. Closing and Questions (*10 minutes*)



# ADHD Symptoms – Sense of Time

*(and ADHD “Time Blindness”)*



# ADHD Symptoms – beyond the book.

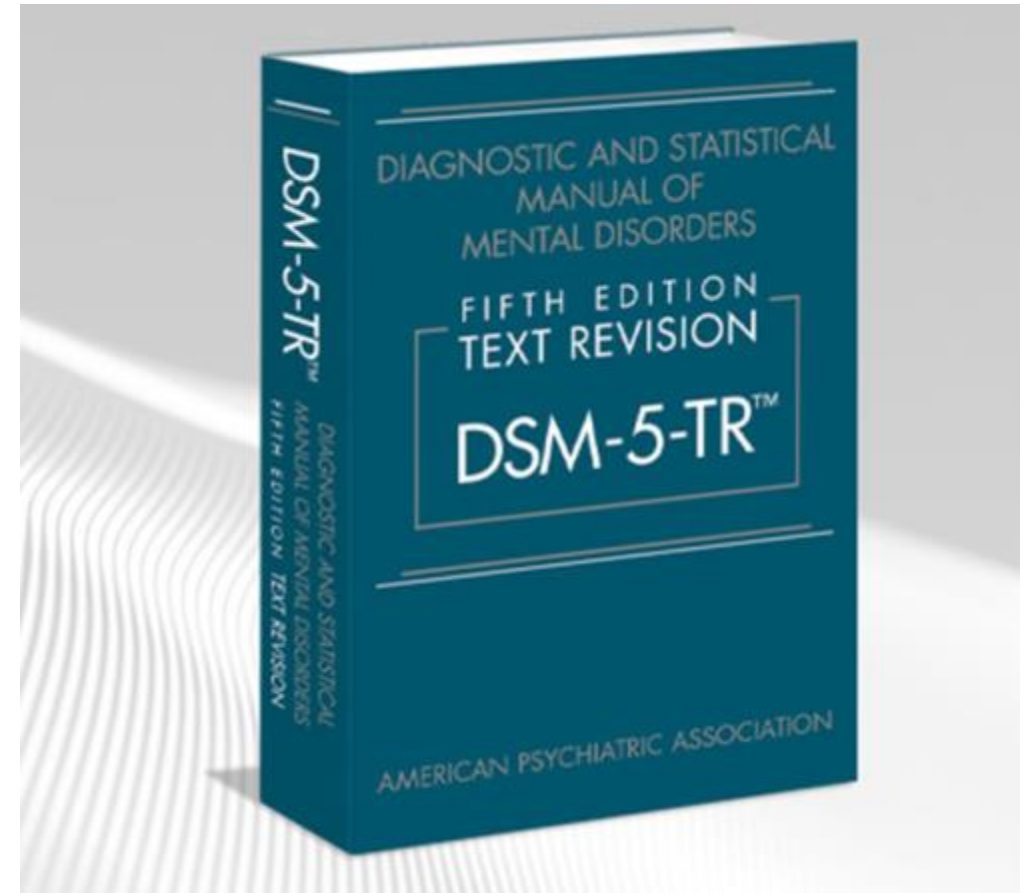
314.01 (F90.2) Combined Presentation

314.00 (F90.0) Predominantly Inattentive Presentation

314.01 (F90.1) Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive Presentation

“A persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development, as characterized by...”

- 6+ inattentive symptoms (for  $\geq 6$  months), 5+ in adults
- 6+ hyperactivity and impulsivity symptoms (for  $\geq 6$  months), 5+ in adults
- Several symptoms present prior to age 12 years
- Several symptoms present in 2+ settings
- Symptoms cause impairment and don't occur exclusively during a psychotic disorder. Are not better explained by another disorder.



# How Sense of Time Develops

How far into the future can the neurotypical see?

- 2-year-old: Now & Not Now
- 3 to 5 years: 5 to 20 minutes
- First grade: 3 to 5 hours
- Third grade: 8 to 12 hours
- 12 to 16 years: 2 to 3 days
- 17 to 23 years: 2 to 3 weeks
- 23 years on: 3 to 5 weeks

Goldrich, C. (2017). Executive Functions and ADHD in Children. Seminar Presented by PESI, Inc., Eau Claire, WI.



# ADHD and Time Blindness

“This text takes as its premise that a blindness to time is the ultimate, yet nearly invisibility disability afflicting those with ADHD. If the ultimate function of the prefrontal lobes is the mental building of events across time so as to aim behavior more effectively toward the possible future and ADHD is a prefrontal lobe disorder, then those with ADHDs should obviously be less capable of doing so.” (p. 326)

“Those with ADHD are left with a form of temporal nearsightedness or time blindness. This temporal myopia produces substantial social, educational, and occupational devastation of day-to-day adaptive functioning relative to time and the future.”(p. 331)

Barkley, R.A. (2006). Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Third Edition. New York, NY: Guilford.

Barkley, R.A. (November 2022). High Time Preference Is a Key Cognitive Deficit in ADHD: Impact on Daily Life, and Life Expectancy. ADHD Report, 30(7), 1-5.



# ADHD and Time Blindness

Time blindness may be the primary reason people with ADHD often have a significantly shorter life expectancy than the general population.

Barkley, R.A. (November 2022). High Time Preference Is a Key Cognitive Deficit in ADHD: Impact on Daily Life, and Life Expectancy. ADHD Report, 30(7), 1-5.





# Time Management Technology for ADHD: Devices



WatchMinder



Time Timer



Time Tracker  
Visual Timer  
& Clock



Talking Timer



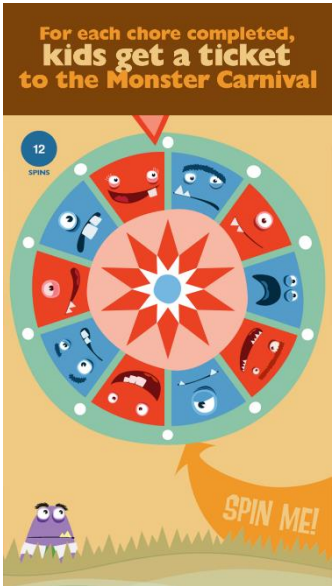
e-pill CADEX  
VibraPlus



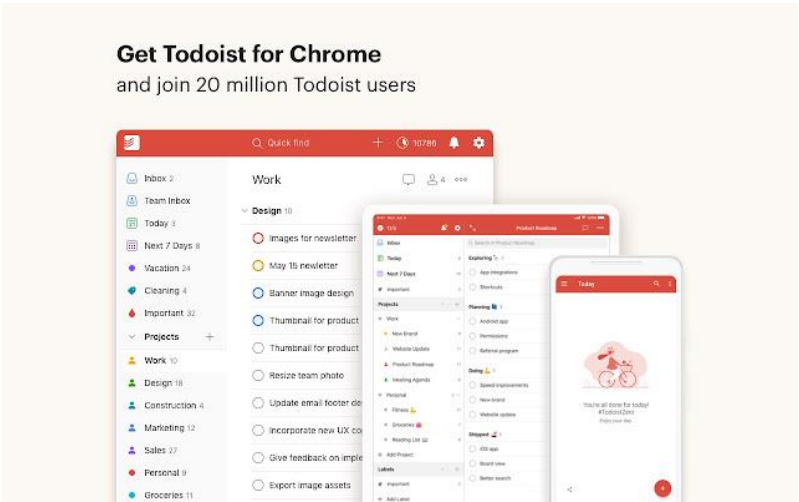
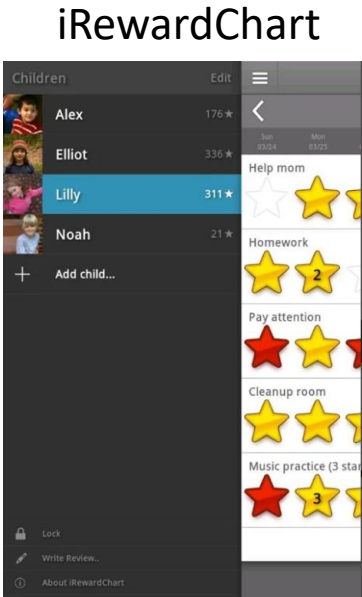
# Time Management Technology for ADHD: Apps



Epic Win



Chore  
Monster





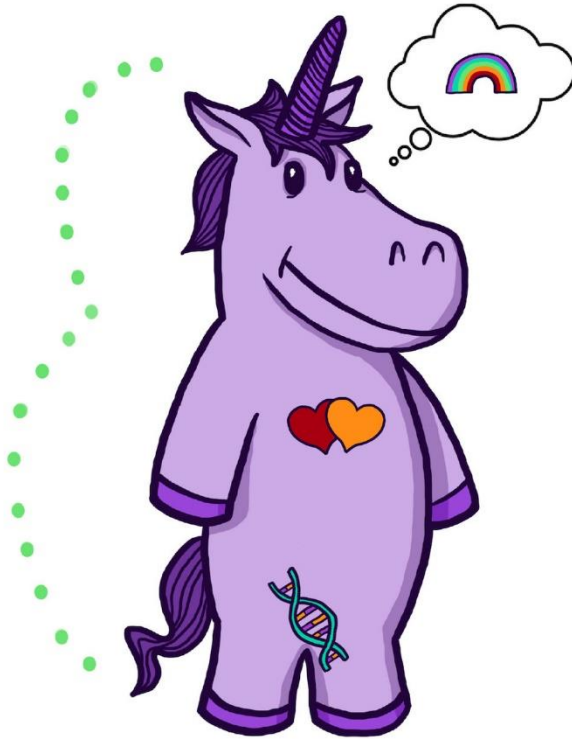
# ADHD Prevalence & Presentation Across Gender





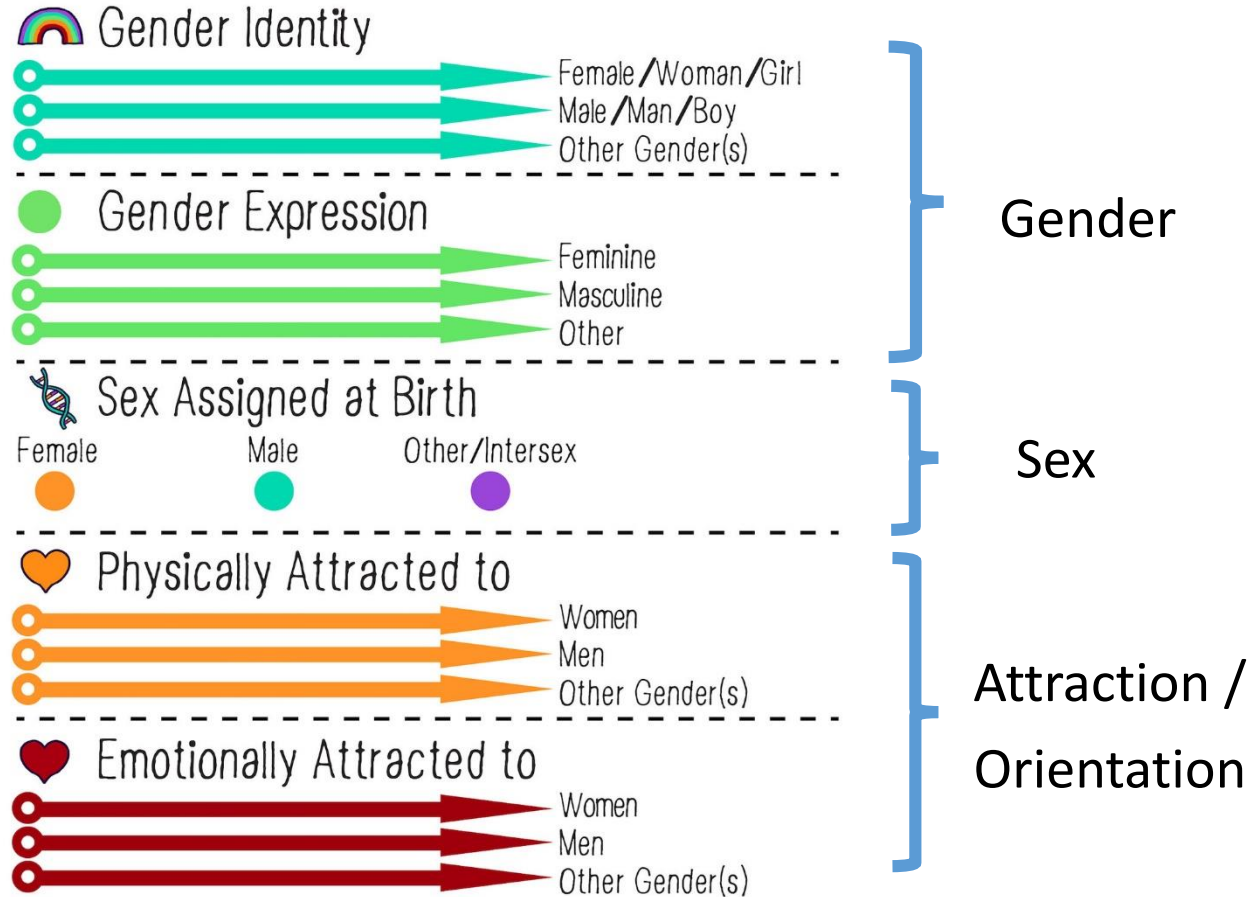
# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



# Adult ADHD Prevalence

2.58 to 6.76% of adults worldwide

Song, P. et al. (2021). The prevalence of adult attention- deficit hyperactivity disorder: A global systematic review and meta-analysis. Journal of Global Health. DOI: [10.7189/jogh.11.04009](https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.11.04009).





# Ratio of Females to Males with ADHD

“In childhood, the male-to-female ratio of ADHD is 3:1. In adulthood, however, it is close to 1:1.” (p. 215)

da Silva, A.G. et al. (February 15, 2020). Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Women. Women's Mental Health. DOI: [10.1007/978-3-030-29081-8\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29081-8_15).



# What could explain this ratio change?

- **Differences in ADHD symptom manifestation across sex/gender**

- Externalizing vs. Internalizing Symptoms
- Lack of provider education about ADHD symptom manifestation differences

- **Misdiagnosis**

- Women with ADHD may report more depression and anxiety than men who are their peers. ADHD may be missed.

- **Stigma**

- Women may suppress or mask ADHD symptoms as they may violate “gender norms”
- Providers (yes, us!) were trained that ADHD in children presents as “jumping off the walls.” We may miss internalizing symptoms because of this bias.

# Differences in ADHD Symptom Manifestation

**Research findings are mixed.**

- Quinn, 2008: Women with ADHD internalize more than men, hence have more anxiety and depression as well as experience more emotional dysregulation.
- Rucklidge 2008: “Girls and women are more often diagnosed with the inattentive subtype of ADHD than boys and men. Women with ADHD may have more depression and anxiety than men with ADHD. Women with ADHD are more internalizers while men with ADHD are more externalizers. However, women and men with ADHD have more similarities in their ADHD symptoms than differences.”
- Stibbe et al., 2020: “women and men with ADHD may differ in cognitive capacities, with women being more impaired than men in working memory and impulse control.”
- Faheem et al. 2022 concluded “even though the literature contains many contradictory conclusions”, there is reason to believe women may manifest ADHD differently than men. Women experience more difficulties with mood disorder, time perceptions, stress tolerance, and social function than men. Men have significantly more impairment in working memory and education than women.



# We recommend....

A grain of salt.

Hold the science lightly.

Understand that ADHD presentations are varied and diverse! (Just like presentations of anxiety, depression, trauma...)

Trust your clients to be experts in their lived experiences.





# ADHD & Gender Diversity





# ADHD & Gender Diversity

**The science is meager and mixed.**

Some researchers note an increased prevalence of neurodivergence (ASD and ADHD) among transgender and gender diverse children and adults..... “for unclear reasons” (Bretherton et al.)

- e.g. Becerra-Culqui et al., 2018; Bretherton et al. 2021; Goetz & Adams, 2022; Yildirim et al., 2017

Others conclude there is a lack of science regarding gender identity or gender dysphoria and ADHD.

- e.g. Goetz et al, 2022



# ADHD & Gender Diversity

## However, we do know...

Gender diverse children and adults consistently report higher prevalence of mental health diagnoses and symptoms than the general population, especially:

Depression, Anxiety, Non-Suicidal Self-Injury, Suicidal Ideation, and Suicide Attempts

Gender diverse people consistently report high levels of discrimination and lack of community support – which may exacerbate and even underlie mental health disorders.

ADHD impacts all parts of life. Including: exploring one's own gender identity and navigating gender affirming healthcare.

ADHDers and gender diverse people navigate unique and significant stigma in daily life.



# ADHD & Gender Identity

## What we recommend...

Screen for ADHD among gender diverse clients

Learn about gender identity exploration and address stigma early!





# Stigma & ADHD





# Internalized Stigma in ADHD: Definition

## *Defining Internalized Stigma*

Internalized stigma occurs when we absorb messages present in society and adopt them as truth.

Messages may be direct (*bullying, teacher's feedback*) or indirect (*social media images, "grind culture"*).

This may be a conscious or unconscious process.

*"The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice."*  
*-Peggy O'Mara*





# Internalized Stigma in ADHD: Definition

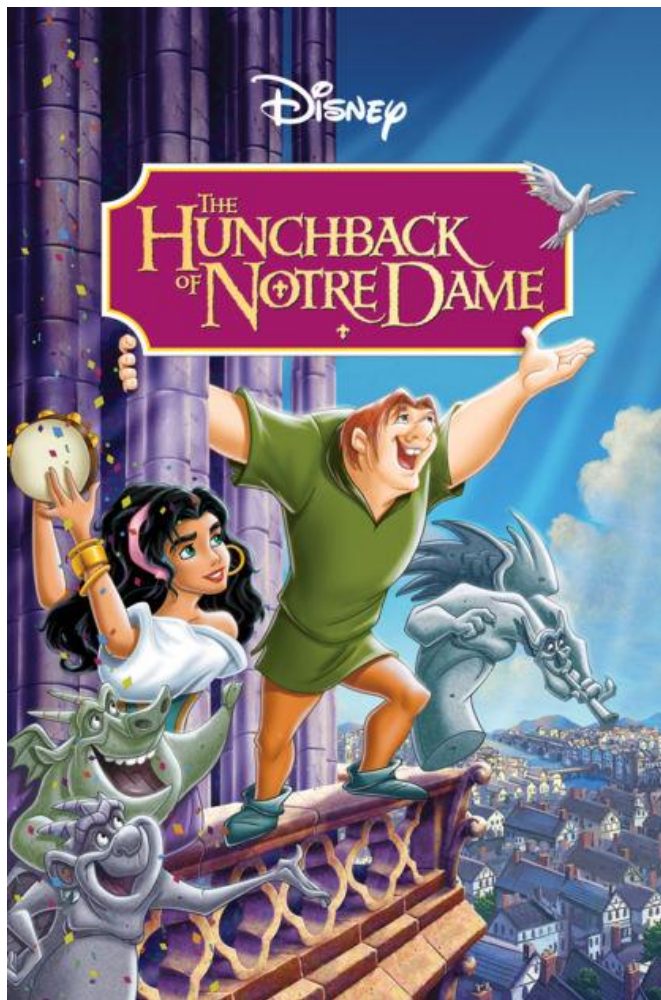
## *Defining Internalized Ableism*

“Ableism is a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be ‘fixed’ in one form or the other.”

*The Center for Disability Rights*



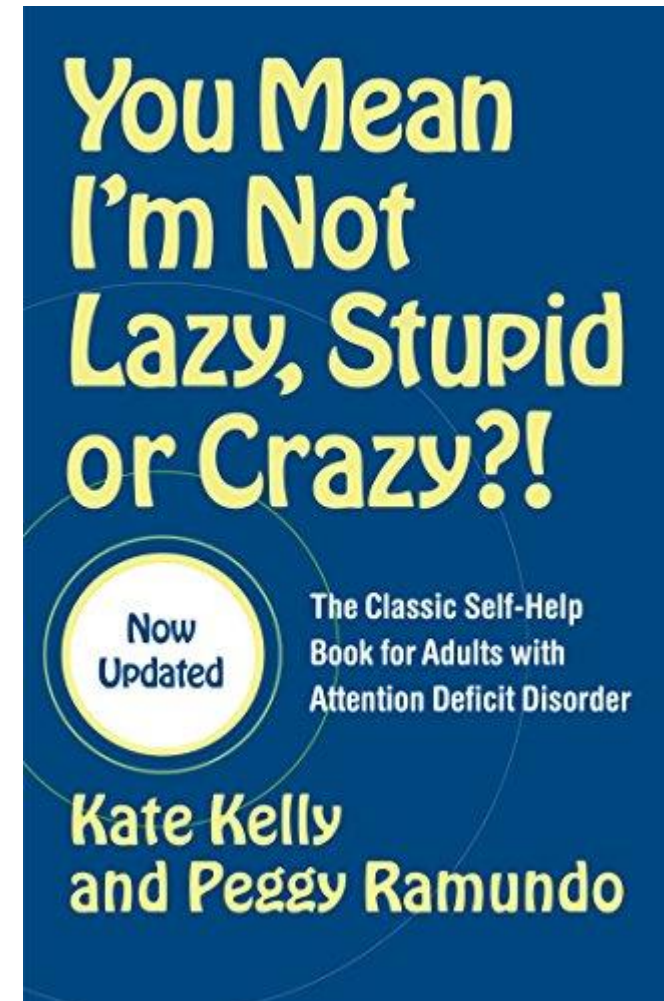
# How do we learn and internalize ableism?



# Internalized Stigma in ADHD: Definition

Public perception of Adult ADHD:

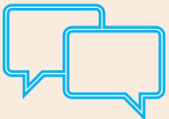
- Impulsive, inattentive, hyperactive at work & school
- Prone to engage in risky behavior
- Adult ADHD = young boy ADHD
- Untrustworthy, Unreliable
- Lazy, Apathetic



# Internalized Stigma in ADHD: Impact

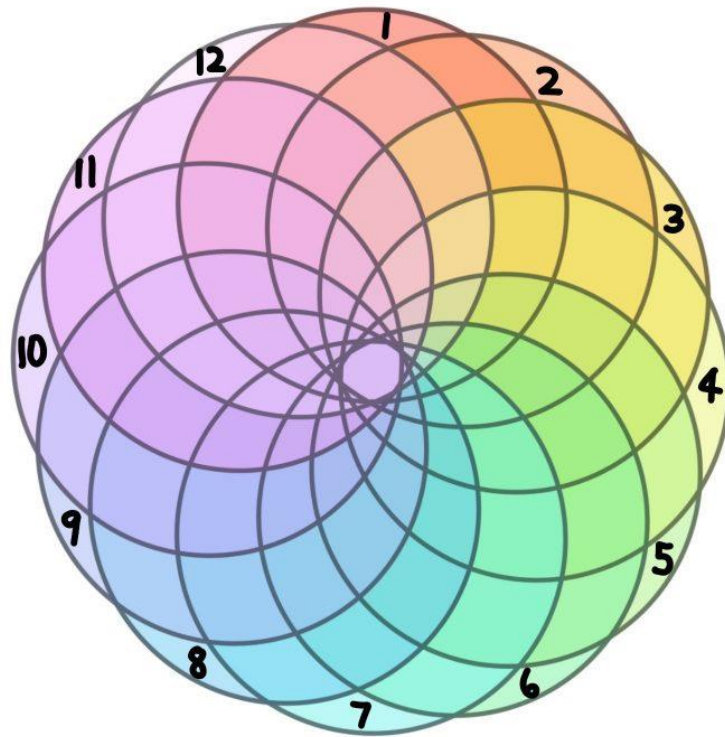


\*add list of  
research-  
documented  
outcomes of  
internalized  
stigma





# INTERSECTIONALITY



- 1 Race
- 2 Ethnicity
- 3 Gender identity
- 4 Class
- 5 Language
- 6 Religion
- 7 Ability
- 8 Sexuality
- 9 Mental health
- 10 Age
- 11 Education
- 12 Body size
- (...and many more...)

Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

— Kimberlé Crenshaw —

@sylviaaduckworth

# WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Adapted from ccrweb.ca

@sylviaaduckworth



# Interventions for Internalized Stigma

## Psychoeducation

- About: ADHD, Neurodiversity, Ableism...

## Mindfulness-Informed Psychotherapy

- Including Self-Compassion

## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



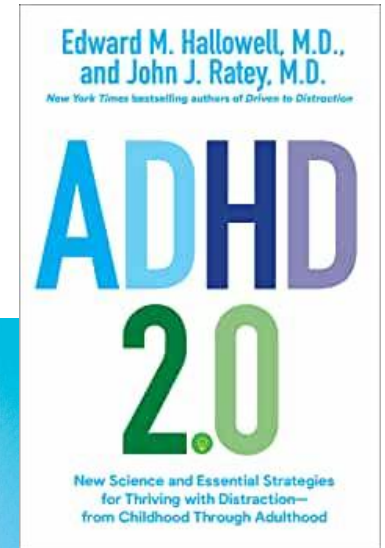
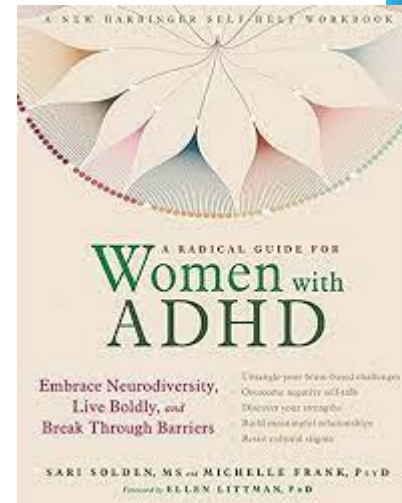
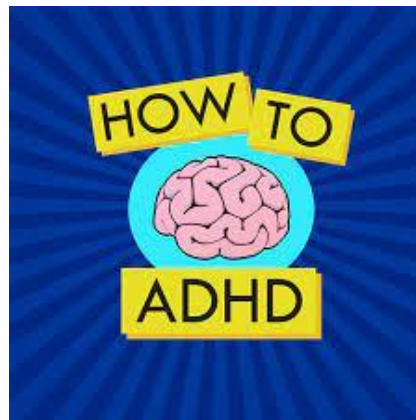
# Psychoeducation

## Cultural Humility

- Step 1: educate yourself
  - Bonus Step 1.5: Practice strategies yourself!
- Share expertise with your client while psychoeducating & discussing materials
- Give yourself permission to learn from clients!
- Learn together when you need to

## Teaching strategies:

- Learn from Jessica!
- Prioritize memory between sessions
- Review next session

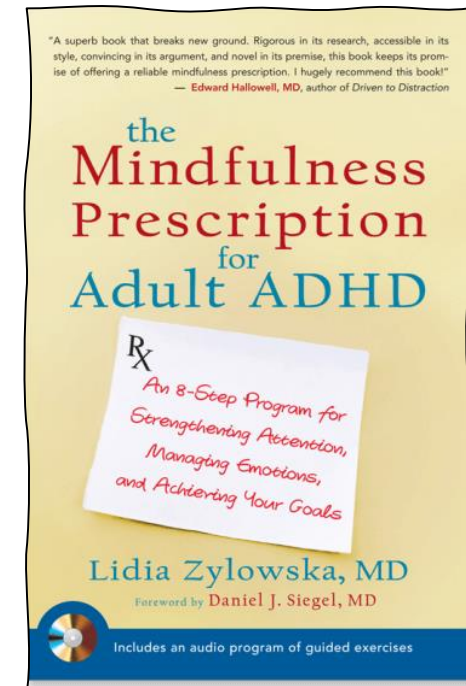


# Mindfulness-Informed Psychotherapy

“Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings (*and executive functioning difficulties!*) as they are without trying to suppress or deny them, or to become ‘over-identified’ with them.”

*(adapted from selfcompasison.org)*

The Self-Compassion Break



# CBT for Adult ADHD

*[insert image with general model of CBT for Adult ADHD treatment]*

Include key skills I often start with:

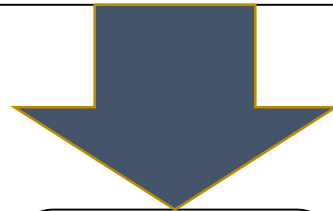
- Distractibility Delay
- Environmental Changes (including externalizing working memory)
- Organizational System
  - Master & Daily To-Do Lists (TODO List and To Do Lists)
  - Task Prioritization
  - Scheduling (including brain breaks)





# Build on the Foundation of Stigma-Busting

- You are not broken.
- You are not lazy.
- (In fact – you are resourceful and creative!)
- When you say you know what to do and it matters to you, but you just can't seem to get it done – I believe you.



Skills



# Case Conference



# Questions?

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- Barkley, R.A. (November 2022). High Time Preference Is a Key Cognitive Deficit in ADHD: Impact on Daily Life, and Life Expectancy. *ADHD Report*, 30(7), 1-5.
- da Silva, A.G. et al. (February 15, 2020). Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Women. *Women's Mental Health*. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-29081-8\_15.
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- Glaser Holthe, M.E. et al. (January-March, 2017). The Strives, Struggles, and Successes of Women Diagnosed With ADHD as Adults. *SAGE Open*. DOI: 0.1177/2158244017701799.
- Godfrey, E. et al. (November 25, 2020). Public perceptions of adult ADHD: Indications of stigma? *Journal of Neural Transmission*. DOI: 10.1007/s00702-020-02279-8.
- Goetz, T.G. et al. (August 15, 2022). The transgender and gender diverse and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder nexus: A systematic review. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*. DOI: 10.1080/19359705.2022.2109119.
- Goldrich, C. (2017). Executive Functions and ADHD in Children. Seminar Presented by PESI, Inc., Eau Claire, WI.
- Greven, C.U. et al. (May 2018). Sex differences in ADHD. In Tobias Banaschewski, David Coghill, and Alessandro Zuddas (eds), *Oxford Textbook of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*, Oxford Textbooks in Psychiatry . DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/med/9780198739258.003.0016>, p. 154-160.
- Henry, E. et al. (2011) Experiences of Older Adult Women Diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, *Journal of Women & Aging*, 23(3), 246-262, DOI: 10.1080/08952841.2011.589285
- Rucklidge, J.J. (May 2008). Gender differences in ADHD: Implications for psychosocial treatments. *Expert Review of Neurotherapeutics*. DOI: 10.1586/14737175.8.4.643.
- Song, P. et al. (2021). The prevalence of adult attention- deficit hyperactivity disorder: A global systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Global Health*. DOI: 10.7189/jogh.11.04009.
- Stibbe, T. et al. (October 15, 2020). Gender differences in adult ADHD: Cognitive function assessed by the test of attentional performance. *PLOS ONE*. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0240810.
- Yildirim, B. et al. (July 27, 2017). Gender dysphoria and attention problems: possible clue for biological underpinnings. *Psychiatry and Clinical Psychopharmacology*. DOI: 10.1080/24750573.2017.1354417.



# Public Perceptions of Adult ADHD

- Typically seen as impulsivity, inattention, and hyperactivity at work, and school.
- Will engage in risky/dangerous behavior often.
- The public perception of adult ADHD is negative, and matches the stigma of adult ADHD.
- The general public believes the typical symptomatology of adult ADHD matches that of a boy with ADHD.
- The stigma of adult ADHD can negatively effect their quality of healthcare, housing opportunities, employment.

# Public Perceptions of Adult ADHD

- Research demonstrates that education about adult ADHD does not change the negative stigma of having the disorder, except for school related behavior.
- The general public does not believe in ADHD subtypes.

Godfrey, E. et al. (November 25, 2020). Public perceptions of adult ADHD: Indications of stigma? Journal of Neural Transmission. DOI: [10.1007/s00702-020-02279-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00702-020-02279-8).

# **The Burden of ADHD Stigma on Women with ADHD**

**A qualitative study of 5 women between the ages of 32 and 50, all of whom were diagnosed as ADHD, all had college degrees and were married/in a relationship. All were interviewed about how ADHD, and its stigma has affected their lives.**

- One negative of being diagnosed early in life was since ADHD cannot be “cured” the stigma of low expectations was placed on them.**
- That may have cause discouragement and to feel more hopeless than before they received their diagnosis.**
- The participants said they way professionals, the media and public negatively viewed ADHD profoundly affected they.**



# **The Burden of ADHD Stigma on Women with ADHD**

- **They described the stigma of ADHD as being “burdensome”.**
- **That stated others say them as lazy, as faking their disorder, immature, purposely non-conforming, and morally questionable.**
- **As a result they said others:**
  - **Did not understand/comprehend the magnitude of the struggles they faced.**
  - **As a result they were very reluctant to disclose their ADHD diagnosis.**
  - **Some feared disclosing their ADHD at work would lead to negative sanctions.**
- **All this appears to put them at risk of negative self-stigmatization due to their ADHD.**

Glaser Holthe et al. 2017

# However!

**“...our results indicate that women and men with ADHD may differ in cognitive capacities, with women being more impaired than men in working memory and impulse control.”**

Stibbe, T. et al. (October 15, 2020). Gender differences in adult ADHD: Cognitive function assessed by the test of attentional performance. PLOS ONE. DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0240810](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0240810).



# Gender Specific ADHD Comorbidity

- Patricia Quinn, M.D. (October 17, 2008) stated:
  - Women with ADHD internalize more than men, hence have more anxiety and depression as well as experience more emotional dysregulation.
  - Women with ADHD are 5.4 times more often to be diagnosed with major depression than men and 3 times more often to be diagnosed with depression first then later ADHD.
  - Physicians are not aware of how the symptoms of ADHD manifest differently in women than men.

Quinn, P. (October 17, 2008). *Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and its comorbidities in women and girls: An evolving picture.* Current Psychiatry Reports. DOI: [10.1007/s11920-008-0067-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-008-0067-5).



# Differences in ADHD Symptoms

- ADHD males manifest significantly more externalizing symptoms than ADHD females.
- ADHD females manifest significantly more internalizing symptoms than males with ADHD.
- Male ADHD symptoms are more overt than female ADHD symptoms.
- This appears to explain why fewer females are diagnosed with ADHD and/or misdiagnosed.





# Differences in ADHD Symptoms

There may be some neurobiological reasons why females are less likely to be diagnosed with ADHD. These may include:

“... endocrine factors (testosterone, glucocorticoids, and hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis activation differences), aetiological sex differences (sex-chromosome genes), sex differences in neurocognitive functioning, and differences in brain structure and function.” That may cause females to manifest ADHD symptoms differently than males.

Greven, C.U. et al. (May 2018). Sex differences in ADHD. In Tobias Banaschewski, David Coghill, and Alessandro Zuddas (eds), Oxford Textbook of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oxford Textbooks in Psychiatry . DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/med/9780198739258.003.0016>, p. 154-160.



# Differences in ADHD Symptoms

- Girls and women are more often diagnosed with the inattentive subtype of ADHD than boys and men.
- Women and men with ADHD have more similarities in their ADHD symptoms than differences.
- Women with ADHD MAY have more depression and anxiety than men with ADHD.
- Women with ADHD, as a whole are more internalizers
- Men with ADHD, as a whole, are more externalizers.

Rucklidge, J.J. (May 2008). Gender differences in ADHD: Implications for psychosocial treatments. Expert Review of Neurotherapeutics. DOI: [10.1586/14737175.8.4.643](https://doi.org/10.1586/14737175.8.4.643).



# Differences in ADHD Symptoms

In general, ADHD greatly affects all areas of psychosocial functioning but, for the most part, ADHD expresses itself similarly in males and females.

Rucklidge, J.J. (June 2, 2010). Gender Differences in Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Psychiatric Clinics of North America. DOI: [10.1016/j.psc.2010.01.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2010.01.006).



# Women, Depression, Anxiety, & ADHD

- **The genetic risk burden of women with ADHD and comorbid depression and anxiety appear to be much higher than men with ADHD.**
- **The genetic risk from ADHD may manifest in women much more as depression and anxiety than in men. That may be why women are often underrepresented in ADHD populations.**
- **Difficulties with depression and anxiety are not included in ADHD diagnostic criteria.**

Martin, J. et al. (February 16, 2018). Sex-specific manifestation of genetic risk for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in the general population. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. DOI: [10.1111/jcpp.12874](https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12874).





# What Therapy for All Adults with ADHD Should Include

**Cognitive behavioral therapy and psychoeducational interventions with adults with ADHD should include addressing:**

- **The core ADHD symptoms (impulsivity, hyperactivity, inattentiveness)**
- **Executive function difficulties**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Self-harm and suicidal ideation**

# What Additional Do Women with ADHD Need

**However, women with ADHD may need help with the following in addition to the above:**

- **Specific help with occupational multitasking demands,**
- **Home/parenting responsibilities,**
- **Home management,**
- **Encouragement to focus on their strengths, not their weaknesses/failures**

# What Additional Do Women with ADHD Need

**In addition, therapy with women with ADHD should address their vulnerability due to their sexual behavior and relationships in order to improve their health and safety.**

- **The stigma of risky sexual behavior in woman with ADHD may limit their occupational and social opportunities.**
- **ADHD in combination with low self-esteem may make women with ADHD more at risk for abusive relationships, sexual harassment, and exploitation.**
- **27% of the women in the United Kingdom who experience extensive sexual and /or physical violence are ADHD.**

**Young, S. et al. (August 12, 2020). Females with ADHD: An expert consensus statement taking a lifespan approach providing guidance for the identification and treatment of attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder in girls and women. BMC Psychiatry. DOI: [10.1186/s12888-020-02707-9](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02707-9).**

# Summary

- Girls meet diagnostic criteria for ADHD about half as much as boys. (2 to 1)
- Women meet diagnostic criteria for ADHD about the amount as men. (1 to 1)
- Girls and women with ADHD display more inattentive and internalizing symptoms than ADHD boys and men.
- Boys and men with ADHD display more hyperactive-impulsive symptoms than ADHD girls and women.
- Girls and women with ADHD are at higher risk for self-harm and relationship violence.





# Summary

- Girls and women with ADHD are more often overlooked because their ADHD symptoms are often not as overt as those in ADHD males.
- Girls and women with ADHD are at higher risk of unwanted pregnancies and comorbid psychopathology than their typically developing peers.

Hinshaw, S.W. et al. (July 6, 2021). Annual Research Review: Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in girls and women: underrepresentation, longitudinal processes, and key directions. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. DOI: [10.1111/jcpp.13574](https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13574).

