

# How an ADHD Romantic Partner Can Help Keep The Peace at Home

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# Romantic Relationships and AD/HD

**American scientists found those with AD/HD had significantly more difficulty with romantic relationships than their non-impaired peers. Inattentive symptoms were related to seeking new relationships (wandering eye) and less constructive behavior during arguments. Hyperactivity and impulsivity was related to poor arguing behavior also.**

**VanderDrift, L.E. et al. (May 10, 2017). Inattention and Hyperactivity-Impulsivity: Their Detrimental Effect on Romantic Relationship Maintenance. Journal of Attention Disorders. DOI: 10.1177/1087054717707043.**

# Social Interaction Difficulties

## Social Interaction Difficulties:

- Incessant talking and talking in circles
- Poor listening
- Little pragmatics, if any
- No mental filter; in the brain out the mouth
- Etiquette failures

Kuehle, H.J., Hoch, C and Jansen, F. (2002). Video Assisted Observation of Visual Attention, Facial Expression of the Individual Stimulant Dosage and Motor Behavior for the Diagnosis and for the Determination in Children with AD/HD. Obtained from: Kuehle, H. (October 17, 2002). Video Assisted Observation of Visual Attention and Motor Behavior for the Diagnosis and Determination of the Individual Stimulant Dosage in Children with AD/HD. Research Poster Session, 14th Annual CHADD International Conference, Miami Beach,

FL.

## Problems reading and making facial expressions accurately:

- Problems making and reading body language accurately
- Poor perception of verbal tone
- Quick to anger

Barkley, R.A. (2010). Taking Charge of Adult AD/HD. New York, NY: Guilford.

Kuhle, H.J., Hoch, C., Rautzenberg, P. and Jansen, F. (2001).

Short-Term Video-Based Observation of Behavior with Special Reference to Eye-Contact, Facial Expression and Motor Activity

in Diagnosis and Therapy of Attention Deficiency/Hyperactivity Syndrome (ADHS). (First Published in): Praxis der Kinderpsychologie und Kinderpsychiatrie 50: 607-621. Obtained from: Kuehle, H. (October 17, 2002). Video Assisted Observation of Visual Attention and Motor Behavior for the Diagnosis and Determination of the Individual Stimulant Dosage in Children with AD/HD. Research Poster Session, 14<sup>th</sup> Annual CHADD International Conference, Miami Beach, FL.

# Intimate Relationships and AD/HD

## Problems Often Caused by AD/HD:

- 4 to 5 times more likely to have poor dating relationships
- Twice as often have poor marital relationships
- Extramarital affairs
- Dominating conversations
- No give and take in conversations
- Not listening
- Tactless
- Fail simple social etiquette

- Lack persistence
- Impulsive
- Avoid multi-step task-can look
- Selfish
- Reliably unreliable
- Poor reading of body language and/or facial expressions

Barkley, R.A. (2010). Taking Charge of Adult ADHD. New York, NY: Guilford.

# Helpful Solutions

**Do your share of chores**

- **Listen: Learn active listening skills\***
- **Remember important dates and appointments**
- **Be you “Best Self”**
- **Remember what is hurtful and helpful**
- **Count to 10**
- **Be courteous and use manners**

**Barkley, R.A. (2010). Taking Charge of Adult ADHD. New York, NY: Guilford.**

**5 Factors to address in marital therapy:**

- 1. Family of origin issues**
- 2. Skills deficits**
- 3. Amount of impairment**
- 4. Cognitive distortions**
- 5. Comorbidity**

**\*Intimacy?**

**Pera, G. (2014). Counseling Couples Affected by Adult ADHD. In R.A. Barkley (Ed.), Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Fourth Edition, 795-825**

# Helpful Suggestions

- **Don't violate the relationship.**
  - **Work for forgiveness and avoid relapse.**
- **Work to build partner's self-esteem.**
- **Be proactive-correct yourself; don't blame partner.**
- **Look for new way out of rut/boredom.**
- **Make sure you understand what was communicated before you respond.**
- **Learn how to put yourself in partner's shoes; empathy.**
- **Learn how to argue kindly.**
- **Make time for the relationship.**
- **Put effort into the relationship; don't take it for granted.**

# Reference

**Amen, A and Johnson S. (April 8, 2024). 10 Ways to Ruin a Good Relationship. ADDitude. From website: <https://www.additudemag.com/adhd-and-romantic-relationships/>.**