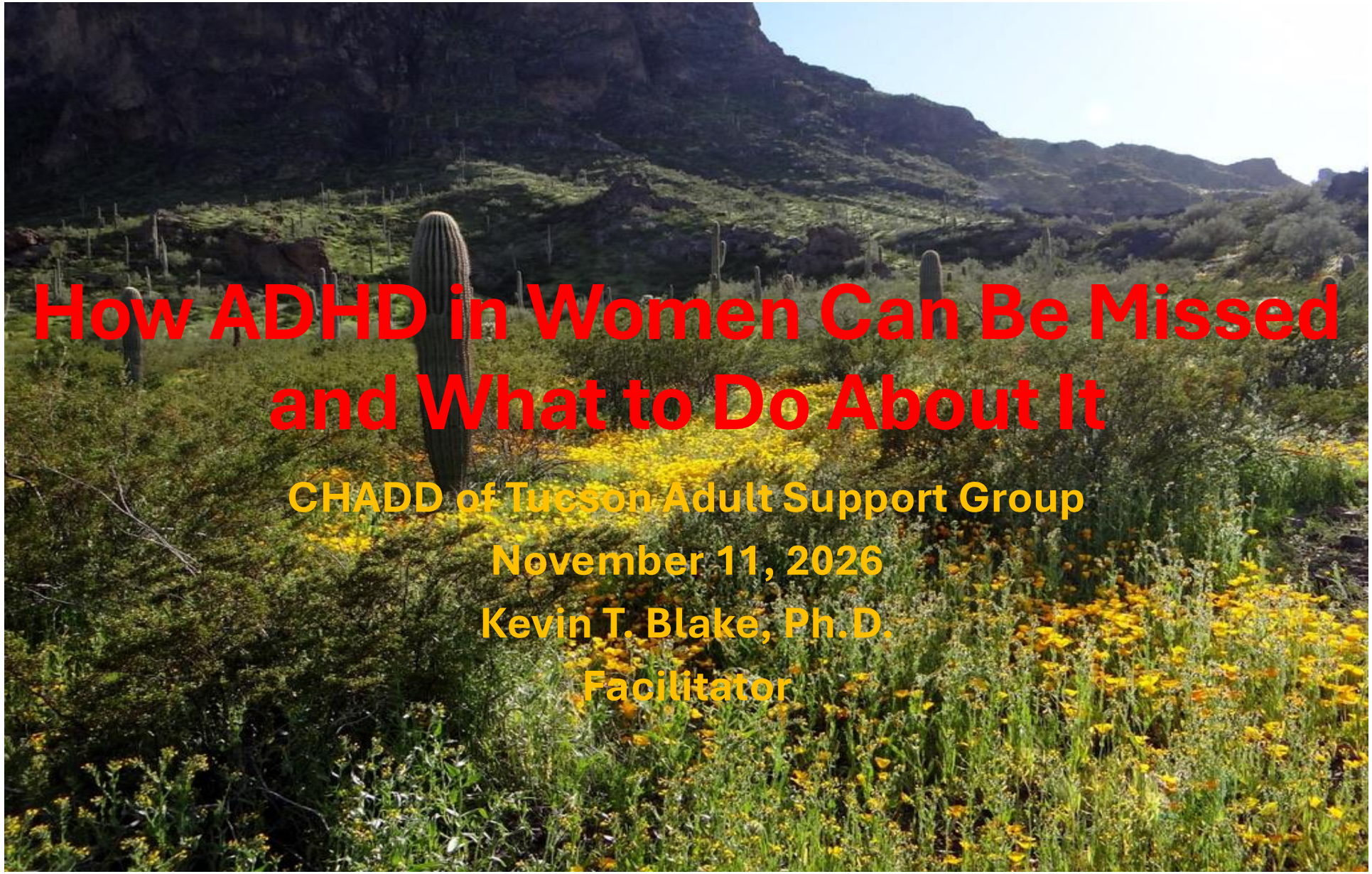
How ADHD in Women Can Be Missed and What to Do About It
CHADD of Tucson Adult Support Group
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The Difference Between ADHD Boys and Girls

- Young women often have difficulty with attention and executive function, but that is often overlooked.
- Although boy with ADHD have significant inattention and impulsivity /hyperactivity than non-ADHD boys, ADHD Girls have more significant difficulty with inattention and impulsivity/hyperactivity than non-ADHD girls.
- Boys also are more physically aggressive and girls are verbally aggressive.
- Boys tend to have more motor hyperactivity than girls.

The Difference Between ADHD Boys and Girls

- Girls who actually have ADHD get referred more for emotional problems more than boys.
  - They may have comorbid anxiety and depression along with ADHD.
  - This often results in being diagnosed later in life than boys with ADHD.
- There is a lack of knowledge about ADHD in girls and women compared to boys and men in research and clinical practice.

Undiagnosed Women with ADHD

- **Undiagnosed women with ADHD often have lower social and emotional well-being.**
  - **Low self-esteem**
  - **Difficulty with Social relations an emotional control.**
  - **Act out more**
  - **Feel a lack of control of their lives**
- **After diagnosis: They often feel,**
  - **Relief**
  - **More self-control**
- **Self-acceptance**
- **Young women often have difficulty with attention and executive function, but that is often overlooked.**

Undiagnosed Women with ADHD

- **Women with ADHD when compared to non-ADHD women are particularly vulnerable to:**
  - **Insomnia**
  - **chronic pain**
  - **suicidal ideation**
  - **childhood sexual abuse**
  - **generalized anxiety disorder**
  - **double the prevalence of substance abuse**
  - **current smoking depressive disorders**
  - **severe poverty**
  - **childhood physical abuse**

What To Do and Watch For

- Need to look at more than cisgender women.
- ADHD women appear to have a different developmental trajectory than males with ADHD in executive function, mental and physical health.
- Need to learn gender and sex specific mediation treatment adjusted to menstrual and cycle-hormonal treatments
- Need to learn about ADHD and premenstrual dysphoric disorder , postpartum depression, cardiovascular disease inflammation endometriosis and cognitive decline.
- Affects of puberty and menopause
- Better diagnostic tools to find ADHD in females.

What To Do and Watch For

Clinicians need to consider a patient's hormonal life phase and ask them whether they are aware of any associations between their ADHD symptoms or any co-existing mood symptoms that may fluctuate in association with changes in hormone levels (e.g., across the menstrual cycle, in perimenopause, in pregnancy, or following the introduction or cessation of hormonal therapies). This will help with premenstrual adjustment of psychostimulant dose, and/or use of hormonal therapies to for symptom stabilization.

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