



# Parent Information Session

Understanding and managing  
challenging behaviour in Autism and  
ADHD

***Presenter Jenny Wilson- Psychologist***

# **Welcome to Holland**

## **By Emily Perl Kingsley**

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."



But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say

"Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away...because the loss of that dream is a very, very significant loss.

But...if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things... about Holland.

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# What now?

**What is the first thing we do when embarking on a new journey that is different to what we expected?**

- Acceptance
- Gain as much knowledge as possible about the place (diagnosis)
- Learn new ways of doing things
- Enjoy the unique new experiences.

You have little person who is trying to navigate themselves through the challenges of a neurotypical world- they have no idea that this is not what you expected- **STAND IN THEIR SHOES**

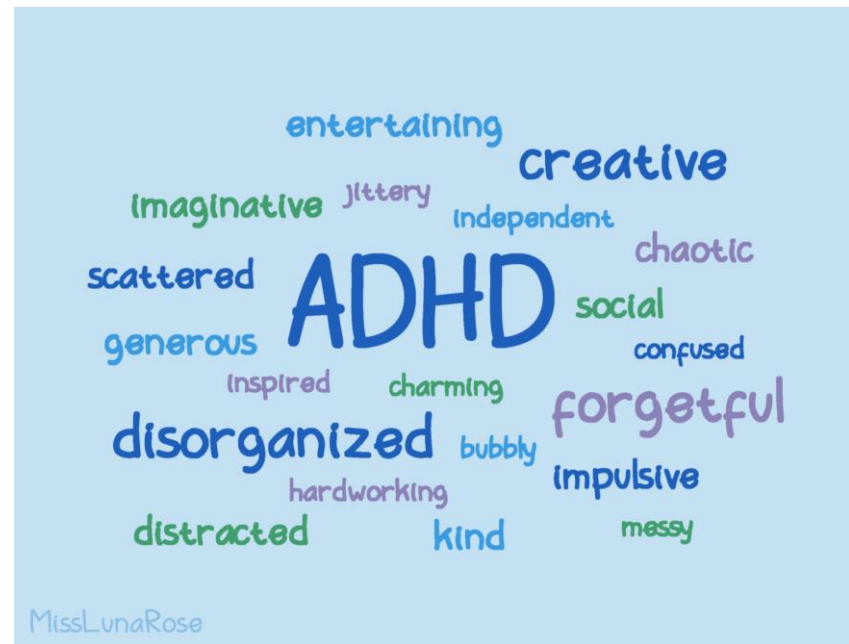
Let's learn together !!!

# What is ADHD?

ADHD is a developmental disorder of self control

## Key features

- Inattention
- Hyperactivity
- Poor concentration
- Impulsivity



# What is Autism?

ASC is a lifelong developmental disorder caused by a neurological dysfunction that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them.

## Differentness in:

- Communication
- Flexible thinking/Imagination
- Social Interaction/relating
- Sensory Integration





# Single or Dual Diagnosis



- Your child may have a single diagnosis of Autism or ADHD
- They may have a dual diagnosis of both

Therefore, your child will need a specific style of behaviour management and parenting, taking into account all of the presentations that come with each diagnosis.

The techniques covered today are transferable to most neurodiversity's.

**Remember, One size does not fit all**

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# Behaviour Problems

Children with Autism and ADHD can display difficult behaviours

- Difficulties understanding social interaction, leading to frustration, anxiety and behaviours aimed at avoiding the situation
- Repetitive behaviour
- Defiance escalating to violence
- Rigid thinking
- Hyperactivity, Impulsivity, Inattention and Poor Concentration
- Social and communication difficulties may underpin challenging behaviours (Carr & Durand, 1985)



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# Challenging for who??

- The person working on a time schedule
- The person who is exhausted
- The person who has different expectations of the child's ability / not understanding the condition
- The person who doesn't have the tools to manage- therefore using a parenting style that escalates the problem behaviour
- The person with similar difficulties to the child

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# Behaviour Management

Before choosing a management approach it is necessary to assess:

- Functionality of the behaviour
- Observe where, when and frequency of the behaviour
- Check if the environment is maintaining the behaviour
- Does it need eliminating or modifying?

**These results will dictate the behaviour management approach.**

# Why are they doing that?

There are always good reasons for the behaviour...the challenge for us is understanding what that is.

# ICEBERG METAPHOR



We see the tip of the Iceberg (Behaviour)....  
but what is underneath???



# Is it the child or the environment that needs changing

- We need to go through the process of looking at the relationship between behaviour and the environment.
- Does your child's condition impact on how they experience the environment?
- Can they effectively and safely communicate how they feel?
- Check sensory overloads, physical causes and masking

***That is, to understand how the environment in which the individual lives, works or recreates can influence the individuals behaviour.***

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# Stimulus Control

- Using 'traffic light system'
- Deep breathing.
- Discrete hand movements as cues in public.
- Self reinforcement – “I shall be ok”, “This is right”
- Scaling chart/thermometer
- Distraction
- Time limited special interest

# Teach self management

E.g. – can't do two things at the same time

- Slap own face.....sit on hands
- Punching people...hands in pocket
- Kicking people.....Feet grounding
- Saliva playing .....plays with water

**Every time you are urged to say, don't do that, tell them what to do instead.**

**Review and reward successful use.**

# Reinforcement

Definition - Reinforcement is a ***consequence which, when it follows by a specific behaviour,*** results in an ***increase*** in the rate of that behaviour

**The reward feels good, I want to feel good, so I will repeat that behaviour**



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# Is it bribery or blackmail?

It is an aged old technique of behavioural modification.  
Our primal instincts urge us to seek things that feel  
good and avoid things that feel bad *(BF Skinner 1984)*



# Why do usual methods not work with ADHD



For a behaviour programme to be effective, a child needs to be able to:

- Listen
- Plan ahead
- Remember
- Consider before they act
- Be motivated by rewards

These are all weaknesses of ADHD.

The ADHD child hears half the instruction and forgets the rest.

Tweak to suit their needs.

Consider visual prompts and experiential learning

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# A few guidelines

- Keep Routine, Structure and Consistency
- Get their attention before correcting behaviour- get eye contact or use physical touch before speaking
- Ignore the unimportant
- Know what their triggers are and help them to name it
- Avoid in between times (what can they do in gaps between tasks)
- Make the rules and behavioural expectations clear- comment when you see it
- Don't escalate – stay calm
- Once finished, let the matter drop – Communicate how 'the post event' feels

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**Positive Programming** – Changes the persons repertoire to deal better with the environment

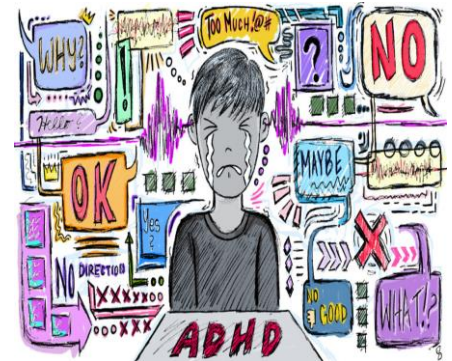
- “skill teaching”
- *Teaches the individual more effective and socially acceptable ways of getting their needs met and coping with daily stresses.*

# Improving communication in an effective way and making clear the social expectation

Often, communication, not understanding the social rules or not stopping to recognise how their behaviour will impact on others / the situation underpins challenging behaviour

## A Social Story

- Understand the principles and rationale of 'Social Stories'
- Gain an understanding of how to write a 'Social Story'



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# What are social stories?

‘Social Stories are an excellent educational tool that enables a child, adolescent or adult with ADHD and Autism spectrum conditions (ASCs) to share information meaningfully and accurately about a variety of concepts, interactions and situations’

*Carol Gray states (2005)*

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# Social Stories™

## Principles and Rationale

- Gather information
- Provide missing information – ‘Revealing the Hidden Social Code’
- Highlight relevant and important social cues
- Identify perspectives of others
- Indicate appropriate (social) behaviour



Joe is kind





# This is what being kind looks like



# This is being kind



# Mrs Smith and the other children like it when Joe is being kind



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# Once used, remember to reassess the situation and individual needs:

Did it fit their .....

- Developmental age
- Cognitive ability
- Reading comprehension
- Language
- Attention span
- Learning style
- Interests

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# Increasing Effectiveness

- ***Involve social partners:***

- Peers
- Siblings
- Adults at school
- Adults at home

- ***Combine strategies and incorporate into current systems and structures:***

- Visual timetable
- Work system
- Visual support

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# Positive Programming

changes the persons repertoire to deal better with the environment.

- “skill teaching”- Mindfulness / Grounding
- *Teaches the individual more effective and socially acceptable ways of getting their needs met and coping with daily stresses.*



# Remember people with Autism & ADHD are:



- All different and should be treated as individuals
- Be given the opportunity to succeed at school by working to their strengths, helping them with their weaknesses and understanding their differences



# Resources

**You are the expert on your child and know them better than any healthcare professional. With the right resources, you can help them to manage the emotions that come with their diagnosis.**

- Young Minds parents helpline on [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Parents Action for Children [www.parents.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.parents.actionforchildren.org.uk)
- Mind general parent's mental health support for their child- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- National Autistic society (NAS) [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) – Not just for people with Autism- The website has useful resources on managing anxiety and Neurodiversity
- Ambitious about Autism –parents toolkit [www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)
- Jessica Kingsley Publishers- Largest UK publishers for books, DVD's and SEN friendly resources



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# Useful Reading

- Understanding ADHD- The parents guide – Dr Christopher Green
- CHAAD Parenting a child with ADHD <https://chadd.org>
- BBC Bitesize parents guide to ADHD ([bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk))
- Social stories and comic strip conversations – Carol Gray

# Thank you for attending

Please go ahead and share your knowledge with other parents who are also on this journey

