

# The Counselor's Corner

"a place for healing and growth..."

## Discipline Strategies for Children with ADHD

Rashida Amra Williams, LCSW

### Step One

Name a single goal for which you can easily measure progress. If your goals are too diverse (going to bed at a certain time, being dressed by 8 AM, doing homework immediately after school), you likely won't be able to observe and keep track of your child's accomplishments. You may also overwhelm your child and set him up for disappointment if he slips on one or more goals.

### Step Two

Create a chart or other visual reminder that outlines exactly what is expected of your child, and how their behavior will be assessed. Post the chart or checklist where your child will see it — this serves as a reminder and cuts down on dreaded parental nagging.

### Step Three

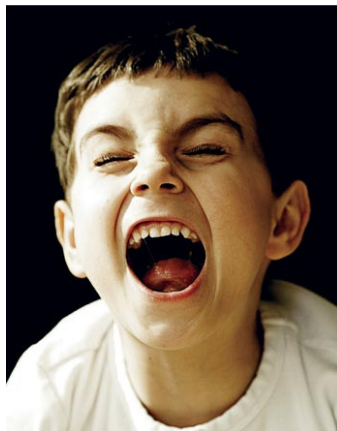
Reward your child quickly and effusively each time she achieves the desired behavior. Place stars on the child's reminder chart, and extend a special privilege like 15 minutes of additional playtime after dinner. The rewards need not be expensive, but they should be

meaningful to your child — and worth working for.

Experts often advise parents to discourage negative behavior by ignoring it because children may act up to get attention. If the negative behavior is too serious to ignore, take away a privilege — for example, 15 minutes of television time lost. At the same time, parents should keep an eye out for the negative triggers that encourage this bad behavior and do their best to alleviate them.

### Step Four

Speak to your child's teacher about the behavior therapy tactics you're using at home, and work with her to devise a way for her to keep track of and reward desired behavior at school as well. You might employ a daily report card or regular journal entries to keep track.



## Steer Clear of These Common Mistakes:

- **Murky rules:** State your expectations clearly and post them around the house
- **Unclear commands:** Spell out your desires in detail, not generalities
- **Dwelling on the negative:** Praise your child for doing something well at least five times as often as you criticize bad behavior
- **Little patience:** Keep in mind that children with ADHD often struggle to transfer what they've learned from setting to setting, so be prepared to maintain a role as your child's advocate for a long time

Adapted from [additude magazine](#)

**Rashida Amra Williams, LCSW**, is a NYS Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has worked primarily in the non profit sector with multi-risk individuals, families, and groups of all ages and walks of life. Over the past several years she has had a general private practice where she sees individuals and families with specializations that include: addictions, mood disorders, trauma, parental concerns, marital counseling, eating disorders, DBT for Borderline Personality Disorder, bilingual/bicultural (Spanish). Rashida can be reached at our office 204-5552 extension 434.

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## Seriously... Take care of yourself!

Lorie Ann Hildreth, PhD

We all know that we should take care of ourselves but how many of us really do it? Now is the time. The holidays are over and why not be healthy and well rested for the upcoming summer months? Here are some helpful tips for seriously taking care of yourself.

### 1) Recognizing when you are doing too much.

Often we get so busy we don't even realize how busy we are. Learn to recognize the signs when you are doing too much. Are you procrastinating? Do you make promises that you are having a hard time keeping? Is your work piling up without the ability to keep up? The work and tasks will keep coming. You are the only one who can recognize when it is too much and the only one who can tell people that you cannot take on anymore.

### 2) Delegate tasks to other people.

"Take charge" kind of people usually are in a leadership role in their family, their career and/or their community. Often we love helping out and being in charge but we cannot always be that active. Sometimes we must ask others to perform the tasks that we do. The benefit of this is two-

fold. First, we can feel what it is like not to be responsible for every single task and second, it gives others a chance to try on their leadership skills. You are actually doing other people a favor by delegating tasks.

### 3) Shorten your priority list in half or thirds.

For those of you who make lists made for the Bionic man or woman, cut that list down! No "overlisting" allowed! There is no way you will accomplish the entire list and often you end up feeling overwhelmed and inadequate if the list is not accomplished. Take a realistic look at the list. Mark only three priorities per day. Decide how long it will take you to complete those priorities (i.e. 20 minutes per each) and then move on to the next three ONLY when you've completed the first three.

### 4) Plan for relaxation and rejuvenation for yourself.

Forget about the common clique when you think of this as this has become too much a part of popular psychology that in the general public we just ignore this. Instead look at this with brand new eyes. Ask yourself, "What makes ME feel rejuvenated." Try not to think of what "other" people do or what you feel you "should" do or what some self-help book tells you to do. Do what rejuvenates you! Is it playing in

the dirt in your garden? Is it quietly reading a book? Is it watching daytime soaps? Use these times in moderation but frequently throughout the week for positively reinforcing all the hard work you do.

### 5) Get enough sleep.

The rejuvenating benefits of sleep have long been researched. It may not seem as though losing one or two hours here or there will make a difference but it does. Long term loss of sleep can disturb your cognitive, emotional, and physical functioning. Your body must have enough sleep or it will not function properly. If you are not getting enough sleep or always feel fatigued, tell your medical doctor immediately.

### 6) Eat nutritiously and with purpose.

Our biggest mistake as Americans is that we only think about nutrition when we are eating poorly and need to diet. Ask your doctor to refer you to a nutritionist so that you can learn to eat nutritiously rather than "for a diet." Avoid fast foods. Fast foods are just that. We order them fast; they are served fast, we eat them down quickly and soon (within 10 minutes of ordering) they are gone. Learn to be "in the moment" with your food. Think about what are you cooking; what dishes will you put the food on;

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how does the food taste; who you are eating with and make the experience last.

## 7) Plan one hour at the beginning of the day to "start up."

Sometimes we forget that we need time to "get going" in the morning. Even for those of you that do not need much time, you still do need some time. Are you forgetting you lunch, your car keys, your briefcase? Do you leave time to shower, get breakfast and ease into the day or are you chaotically rushing out of the house? Think of yourself as having two very important sides to your life; the public and the personal. The public self and has everything together and is fully functioning in your life and career. The personal self is the one who is sitting in your PJ's drinking that last cup of coffee or tea before you get going in the morning. If you do not allow your personal self to have the time you need, it spills over into your professional self.

## 8) Plan one hour at the end of the day to "wind down."

Conversely, we also forget to leave that professional self at the office. If we bring work home we are in work mode. This creates a 24 hour/7 day a week feeling to your life that is probably not realistic. In today's world bringing work home is often needed, but it does not

have to control that down time meant for home. Decide in advance to only spend a fraction of time on the work and allow one hour before bed to wind down and begin relaxing for the next day. Think of an old fashioned clock; if you keep winding it up and stressing the coils of the clock will be under too much stress.

## 9) Plan family time to connect with loved ones.

We often take for granted the very people we love the most. Make it a point to spend time with the loved ones underneath your own roof. Play a video game with the kids, listen to how your partner's day went, call your parents on the phone to say hello. By giving time to others in your family, you can often learn more about them than by guessing what they are up to as you fly from one event to another.

## 10) Plan social time to connect with friends.

Friends are the key to many important life milestones. Our friends can be more objective than family sometimes as we either chat with them or just spend time with them playing a sport. Both men and women need friends to spend time with. Friends often balance that reality for us and remind us who we are, where we've come from, and where we want to go.

"Easy for you to say, Dr. Hildreth!" you might think. Sometimes you may feel as though you are spinning your wheels. You say to yourself, "I can't take care of myself because....(fill in the blank)" .....or , "My friends and family have all heard this before....." If you find that you are having a difficult time taking care of yourself and do not know how, seeing a professional counselor may be the right path for you. I am always honored when a client comes to me for an objective perspective on their life. I work with very busy people with complicated lives and know how to help.

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