

ADD Suggestions Before You Snap

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The following tips are useful with helping persons of all ages who struggle with the dynamics of ADD, but are especially applicable to yourself, a spouse, friend, or colleague.

1. Set up specific time periods for waking, sleeping, housekeeping, leisure activities, TV, dinner, etc. Changes in schedule are disturbing to persons with ADD, so be as consistent as possible.
2. Set up clear and concise rules for the entire family. Since ADD tends to run in families, rules, consequences, and rewards can be posted in a prominent place.
3. Give instructions as simply and clearly as possible. Ask the person with ADD to repeat them back to you. Do not give more than one or two instructions at a time. If a task is difficult or complex, break it into smaller parts and give one or two parts at a time.
4. Provide the person with ADD a quiet spot without distractions, in which to work. Face the desk towards a blank wall; avoid clutter and bright or distracting decor.
5. Try to keep the person's stimulation level as low as possible. Do one activity at a time. Remove needless background noise such as radio or TV, put away unused tools, projects, games, etc.
6. Repeated messages, directions, requests, etc. ("nagging") are inefficient and create a variety of unpleasant side effects, including oppositional behavior and increased "tuning out" of spouse, parent or boss. Say what you need to say, but say it once - briefly - firmly -

completely - calmly.

7. A person with ADD has behavior that is irritating. However, should you become excessively angry, your effectiveness will be greatly reduced. Anger is normal, but keep your voice quiet and your manner calm.
8. Seek out avenues of self-expression.
9. Try using a timer with small chores in order to provide a sense of the passing of time.
10. Separate behavior from your overall assessment of the person, as in "I don't like it when you leave papers all over the office," rather than "How did you get to be such a slob?" Bad behavior does not equal a bad person.

Although persons with ADD may need extra help adapting to the demands of home, work, or school, generally they want to fit in. With patience and understanding, much can be done to help the person with ADD to be successful, happy, and well-adjusted.