5 Therapies to Consider for Your ADHD Child

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Therapy for ADHD Children

First, you were seeking an explanation for the behaviors and impulses of your child. Then, when the professional said it was attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), you began your investigation. You delved into all that you could read about the condition, digging through information about the diagnosis.

Now, the focus needs to shift from what ADHD is and why your child is affected by it, to how to deal with it. Luckily, ADHD has been researched and understood for many years. Because of this, a variety of treatment options have been proven to work. Your task is to decide which option or options you are going to undertake.

ADHD treatments are unlike other mental health treatments because you are able to add interventions and types into the mix. This results in a treatment plan that covers all aspects of your child's life and targets all symptoms.

Do you want to seek the finest therapies to build the best treatment for you child with ADHD? Here's how:

Medication Therapies

For years, medication has been the frontline therapy for ADHD. The reason: they work. Unless you have serious objections to medication for ADHD that are founded and based in fact, do some research and consult with a prescriber. Just because you meet with a psychiatrist does not mean that you will be forced to follow the treatment recommendation – it is only a recommendation after all.

Medications benefit children with ADHD every day. Like with any medication, there are risks, but with proper screening and tracking, the risks for your child are minimal.

Medications for ADHD have transitioned greatly over the years. Previously, stimulants in the form of a pill were the main option for treatment, but the field has grown to include nonstimulants and patches with extended release to manage symptoms for longer amounts of time. As new medications arrive, they are able to improve the signs of ADHD with lower risk of unwanted effects.

Parent Training

Therapies that do not involve medications begin in an interesting place: the parents. Forget about the notion parents are responsible for the ADHD diagnosis of their children; this is simply not true. Parents do not cause ADHD, but it is your issue to live with on a daily basis. As a loving parent, you have a lot of power in reducing or increasing your child's symptoms.

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Parent Training

Parents can attend group or individual parent training to help their child. Often, the training is set up like a class focused on educating the parents and providing information related to proven psychological interventions to lower symptoms. The training may focus on types of conditioning and reinforcement schedules to increase the frequency of desired behaviors your child performs.

For example, if you child resists homework at all costs, the training would teach you how to provide incentives for improving homework behaviors. This may sound simple, but many parents fall into a trap of punishing the unwanted behaviors rather than rewarding the wanted.

Parents will yell louder and threaten to take away all toys, video games and privileges in an attempt to create change. Usually, the only outcome is the child becoming frustrated and angry with the parents. No one wins in this situation. Parent training is a way to gain some needed control of the situation.

School Modifications

Though not actually a type of therapy, changes made by the school can lead to noticeable differences quickly for a child with ADHD. If your child has been diagnosed, take the information to the school psychologist to request further testing and behaviors plans.

Depending on your child's level of need, the school may be required to have a formalized individualized education plan (IEP) or a less formal plan to be used by teachers in the classroom.

Either way, the plan will have suggested modifications like where the child sits in the classroom, how much time they have to complete tests and where the tests are completed. Some children are allowed to take home an extra set of books if homework is problematic. Other children are able to have a fidget device during class or leave their seat more regularly.

The point of these modifications is to put your child in a better place to be successful. With the school on board, these changes will assist your child and you.

Social Skills Training

Kids with ADHD have notoriously poor social skills. They often interrupt others, struggle to listen until the end of a conversation, and are often more interested in playing video games or watching TV than interacting with friends. This is usually due to the sustained attention and concentration needed to carry on friendships. Friendships are too valuable to ignore, though.

Social skills groups are therapy groups that help children with ADHD engage with one another in a safe, structured environment. The children are grouped by their age or abilities and complete activities with guidance from a therapist.

The therapist will model appropriate social skills and shape the child's social skills from inappropriate to appropriate. The therapists do this through a series of reinforcements in the form of a reward point system or actual rewards to give out when a child displays desired behaviors.

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Social Skills Training

Unwanted behaviors are ignored so that they receive no reinforcement. Ignoring bad behaviors is one of the best ways to extinguish them. Many people are misled when they try to punish a child with ADHD, because it gives the

child attention for his or her actions. People, especially kids with ADHD, love attention and are willing to accept negative attention if no positive attention is available. Professionals know the importance of ignoring in social skills groups.

Social skills groups are a very effective means to improve an ADHD child's relationships and symptoms of ADHD overall. Social groups are available as after school and summer camp programs. These programs work to incorporate aspects of education and socialization into one resource. Check your area to see what programs are available.

Behavioral Therapy for the Child

The final therapy option includes only the child and a therapist. A behavioral or cognitive behavioral therapist will work with the child to understand the triggers and consequences of ADHD symptoms. They will take this information back to the parent so that adjustments can be made at home to improve the situation. Along the way, they will provide parent training to better prepare parents for the unexpected situations that may arise.

A therapist will also work to build the child's ability to focus, pay attention and concentrate by engaging the child in a series of games and other tasks during the session. They do this by allowing the child to play with games, puzzles and art supplies during a session and study their patterns.

If a child's inclination is to move from activity to activity quickly, the therapist will praise for longer periods of time spent on one task to extend the time. If the child starts many games without finishing or has poor adherence to the rules, the therapist will bring this to his attention and describe the drawbacks of this approach.

Over time, children with ADHD can respond well to this kind of treatment. It does take time for individual therapy to beginning shifting the behaviors of your child. Before you enter into this commitment, you must work to improve your own patience as a parent. As with any therapy, be sure to communicate your concerns and goals to the therapist. This will help the treatment be as successful as possible.

Conclusion

Negotiating the world of therapy for ADHD children can be unnerving, but don't be too timid. Consider all of the above options and experiment with services in your community. Ask friends for recommendations of the best facilities, therapist and prescribers to receive the most trusted treatment.

If one treatment is not yielding the desired results, add a new one or combine treatments to receive the best response. When it comes to ADHD therapy, more is usually better.