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# THE WELLNESS LETTER

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## *Your Child and AD/HD*

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### **Take Care of Yourself**

There is no doubt that children with AD/HD require extra attention. This can be very stressful on parents. AD/HD is not just the child's problem. It affects the parents and family as well. There are many things you can do to make yourself able to work better with your child.

#### *Don't blame yourself*

Don't blame yourself, your spouse, your family, or your home environment for causing AD/HD. Scientists are not sure of the exact cause of AD/HD but there is little evidence that parenting or early childhood environments are the cause.

Do not blame yourself for the things you do to try to help your child that do not work. Be patient with yourself and your child. You, your child, and your whole family need to learn how to cope with AD/HD.

#### *Intervene early*

Problems your child may face, and the stress you experience in helping or solving the problems, will be less severe if you take an active role in resolving them. The earlier you intervene in a problem, the easier it will be to resolve it and the less stress you will have.

#### *Educate yourself*

Make a point to learn about AD/HD. There are many books and Internet sites that can help you learn about new medical treatments and behavioral techniques that may help your child. Parents of children with AD/HD often feel helpless. Learning about what treatments are available can help you feel more in control.

#### *Build a support network*

Make sure that you have someone to talk to when you meet with a problem. The mental health provider working with your child, a social worker,

school psychologist, or pediatrician who is familiar with AD/HD are all good people to talk to. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

You can also lessen your own frustration if the whole family is involved in taking care of one another. Talk to your spouse, significant other or older family members about your frustrations and successes. You can reduce stress and frustration by talking about problems. The people you talk to might have helpful suggestions about how to solve problems.

#### *Make time for yourself*

Time-outs are used to help your child when he or she is overwhelmed. It's also good for you to take small breaks in stressful situations. This will help you focus your thoughts and reduce stress. You can sit in a quiet place or do something that makes you feel good about yourself. Even a very short break can help you cool down and rethink a problem.

#### *Focus on the positive*

Working with a child who has AD/HD requires a lot of patience and care. Reward yourself for your successes. Never give up hope. It will be difficult at times but recognizing your successes and reminding yourself about the good experiences you have had with your child will help you stay motivated.

#### *Learn and practice stress reduction techniques*

There are many ways to relax and decrease your stress. These include eating and exercising regularly, and avoiding caffeine, alcohol, or other drugs. By following these suggestions, you will help keep yourself healthy and lessen your anxiety.

You can also learn relaxation techniques such as abdominal breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation. Information about these is available through doctors and other health care providers, bookstores, libraries, and on the Internet.

### *Practice asserting yourself*

Assertiveness training skills will help you communicate better with your child. Being firm and assertive will help you to express frustration and anger in healthy ways.

If you are comfortable being firm and asserting yourself, you will be able to express your feelings to your child more effectively. Your child will then have an easier time understanding how his or her actions affect you. By being firm and assertive, you will be able to help your child take responsibility for his or her own actions. Practice setting limits. Practice acting out situations in which you feel helpless and unable to communicate with your child.

### *Accept small successes*

Success comes in small steps. Learn to feel good about yourself and your child. Don't demand perfection from yourself or your child. Don't be hard on yourself and don't give up. Take care of yourself and focus on working with your child. Then you will almost always be able to find ways to break down a problem and find a new way to work it out. When you want to solve a problem, start with small steps. Small steps will eventually lead to larger ones. Along the way, the small improvements will give both you and your child the strength to accept the next challenge.

## Additional Resources

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For more information you may contact the following organizations:

CHADD – Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/  
Hyperactivity Disorder  
8181 Professional Place, Suite 201  
Landover, MD 20785  
(800) 233-4050 [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill  
Colonial Place Three  
2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201-3042  
NAMI HelpLine: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)  
TDD: (703)516-7227 [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

National Institute of Mental Health  
6001 Executive Boulevard, Rm. 8184,  
MSC 9663  
Bethesda, MD 20892-9663 U.S.A.  
(301) 443-4513 [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

## Accessing Your Behavioral Health Benefits

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Please call the number on the back of your insurance card for questions about benefits, obtaining referrals to treatment, and other behavioral health issues.

## This is Your Last Newsletter

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This newsletter is the last of the three newsletters. We hope we have answered some of your questions and eased some of your concerns about having a child with AD/HD. We hope that our suggestions have helped. We wish you and your child good luck.

## Help Us Help Others

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We would like your opinion on how helpful these newsletters have been. We have included a questionnaire and stamped envelope with this newsletter. Please take a few moments to fill out this questionnaire and send it back to us in the mail. Your anonymous answers will help us understand what needs to be improved.