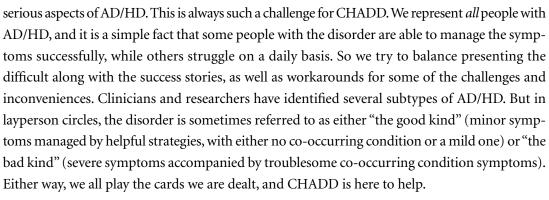
## The Importance of Individualized Treatment

by Marie S. Paxson







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When I do presentations for parents, I point out the statistics behind the dark side of AD/HD. I don't do this to be a killjoy or to bring people down, but to show how high the stakes are for those with AD/HD. Such information shows the importance of proper diagnosis and individualized treatment. Other people may criticize your parenting, say things like "boys will be boys," call you a "helicopter parent," or comment that you "need to relax." But when you're raising a child with AD/HD, the potential for a negative outcome is very real. That is why you need AD/HD-specific parenting techniques and may have to ignore the opinions of others who only have ex-

perience with children who don't have the disorder.

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When my children were growing up, one TV network had a short parenting segment called *The More You Know*. Television stars gave advice such as involving your children in Scouts, getting them a library card, or establishing a bedtime ritual. The inferred message was

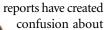
effect and guarantee children a successful future. While these are certainly good tips, keep in mind that "the brain is the boss." Standard parenting advice did not help my children avoid some pitfalls. Families affected by AD/HD need much more specialized help.

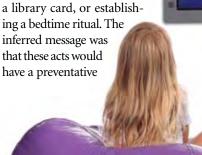
So whether you are reading "Know the Tipping Points" by Phil Anderton and Steve Brown for insights you need today, or hoping that you never need it, I think you will find some meaningful insights into handling AD/HD-related legal troubles.

I'm especially pleased that this issue contains an article on AD/HD within the family of James Carville and Mary Matalin. James Carville was able to take the

traits of AD/HD and make them work for him, rather than against him. His success with AD/HD is due to finding what works for him and using individualized strategies. Be sure to read Part Two in this series, in which Mary Matalin shares their daughter's story, in the next issue of *Attention*.

Speaking of individualized strategies, recent news





treatment for AD/HD. The mainstream media do a fine job of bringing issues to the forefront. But they aren't so great at helping their audience understand the layers and details that accompany these issues. As readers and consumers, we have to accept some of the blame for this phenomenon. If I click on a link and it takes too long to load, I move on to something else... so I really can't get too annoyed when I receive news in sound bytes. Read this month's "Ask the Expert" column to learn more about the MTA study findings. Journalists not in the AD/HD community may be giving you their opinion without knowledge of the finer points of these studies. Learning what is behind the research can be empowering and helps us not to operate out of fear.

When I read the reader comments at the end of a news article about the MTA study findings, I was once again disheartened by the number of negative comments from the general public. In the game of my problems are worse than your problems, there are no winners. I have to admit I find it puzzling that when our older relatives become forgetful and disorganized, people get upset and

galvanize efforts to help. Research is called for, walkathons are organized, information is available from multiple sources, and hands-on support is readily available. But when a segment of our population struggles with memory and organizational issues from the get-go, it is still blame the parent and criticize the individual.

There is so much work to be done. And we are geared up to do it. In addition to the information in Attention and on chadd.org, there are monthly meetings in over 200 communities nationwide. We are working on Capitol Hill to make sure your voice is considered and represented.

I'm really excited that our annual conference will take place in Cleveland this October. Many Attention authors will be in attendance, and you can speak with them directly. Our conference sessions allot generous question-and-answer periods, and our experts are pretty accessible. You will be in the company of others who understand firsthand what we all go through. I hope you will consider attending the conference—it would be wonderful to get a chance to meet you personally!

Marie S. Papson

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