

ROCKING CLEVELAND

Highlights from CHADD's 21st Annual Conference on AD/HD

ATTENDEES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

gathered at the Cleveland Convention Center from October 7-10, 2009, to share the latest research on AD/HD and evidence-based strategies for coping with the disorder. The event, CHADD's 21st annual international conference on AD/HD, offered tracks geared toward parents, caregivers, healthcare professionals, educators, physicians, and adults affected by the disorder. Equally important to attendees as the wealth of information were the opportunities for personal contact with leading experts as well as with others facing similar challenges. "This is a family reunion of sorts," said Marie Paxson, president of CHADD. "We really enjoy staying connected and we anticipate our once-a-year get-together. This is clearly a community that values each other's company." To bring the event to members who were unable to attend, *Attention* asked a several contributors to report on the sessions and keynotes. With so many sessions and presenters, it was impossible to cover every presentation, but here are some of the highlights.

CONTRIBUTORS: Bryan Goodman, MA, is executive editor of *Attention*. Susan Buningh, MRE, is managing editor of *Attention*.

Phil Anderton, PhD, served as a police officer in the United Kingdom for over 27 years. Karen Sampson, MA, and Pamela Mercer are information specialists at CHADD's National Resource Center on AD/HD, where Bryan Jaffe is the writer/editor and Zuali Malsawma, MLS, is the librarian.



Pro-Wrestler Matt Morgan
Bryan Goodman

An appearance by professional wrestler Matt Morgan was one of the defining moments of this year's conference. Morgan, who climbs into the ring every week on national television, chatted with attendees and spent over two hours one night signing autographs and posing for photos with fans. He also spoke at one of the plenary sessions about his experience growing up with AD/HD.

"Matt's story is truly compelling," said CHADD CEO Clarke Ross. "I think his life story and his message were well received.

Parents saw that their children can overcome obstacles from AD/HD and go on to do positive things."

Morgan, who stands at almost seven feet tall and weighs over 300 pounds, recounted to the audience how he struggled with behavioral issues in school from an early age. His mother, being a resourceful parent in the early 1980s, before there were resources, reached out to researchers at Yale University. He was soon diagnosed with AD/HD. Morgan said he found that working with good teachers (including one who would allow him to shoot hoops in exchange for his willingness to do school work), classroom accommodations, and behavioral management were key to his success.

**FOR MORE INFO**Find more conference photos at chadd.org.

"I really started this journey, from when I first found out I had AD/HD, from taking the small bus to school, in first grade, keep in mind, to graduating college magna cum laude and getting honors in high school and middle school," Morgan explained to the audience

Not only did Morgan finish college with high honors, but he did it while starring on his school's basketball team. With his incredible size and athletic talent, Morgan later decided to pursue a career in sports entertainment. He has appeared on *American Gladiators* and as The Blueprint Matt Morgan on *Total Nonstop Action Wrestling* on Spike TV. Even in a field of big men, Morgan stands out and is widely seen as rising star in the industry.

Morgan recently partnered with CHADD in an effort to reach children, teens, and parents with factual information about AD/HD. He taped a PSA that is posted on YouTube and scheduled to soon begin airing on Spike TV. Morgan talks about the disorder in the PSA and reassures viewers that one can overcome many of the obstacles from living with the disorder.

"This is an example of someone who has worked very hard to overcome some significant challenges," said Ross. "And now he has achieved positive things and, rather than resting on his laurels, he's giving back in such a great way."

Morgan has neither asked for nor received payment for his work with CHADD, and TNA has donated thousands of dollars of its services to Morgan's efforts to get the word out about AD/HD. These efforts are sure to raise awareness about the importance of treatment and interventions. But perhaps the most important message that the pro-wrestler is communicating—one even big guys have to remember—is that an important component of success is just keeping your head held high.

"If you don't believe in yourself," Morgan told the audience. "No one else will."

Plenary Sessions

Susan Buningh, MRE

Bestselling author Barbara Coloroso, MA, delivered the opening keynote, transforming the hall into a dynamic workshop on good parenting. Her practical advice aimed to enable parents "to create a home environment in which children can become self-disciplined, compassionate, re-

sponsible, resourceful, resilient human beings who can act in their own best interest, stand up for themselves and exercise their own rights while respecting the rights and legitimate needs of others."

Good parenting requires that parents understand the difference between discipline and punishment—one works and the other only appears to work. "Children have a difficult time becoming responsible, resourceful, and resilient if they are controlled, manipulated, and made to mind, robbed of their autonomy and denied opportunities to make choices and mistakes," Coloroso said. "They cannot develop a sense of inner discipline if all of the control comes from the outside."

Coloroso described her philosophy as: "Kids are worth it. I won't treat them in a way I would not want to be treated. If it works and leaves both of our dignity intact, do it." She emphasized that children need to receive six critical life messages: "I believe in

you; I trust you; I know you can handle it; You are listened to; You are cared for; You are very important to me."

crossed the ideas in Robert Cloninger's *Feeling Good: The Science of Well Being* (2004) and Martin Seligman's *Authentic Happiness* (2002) at some length.

Sydney Zentall, PhD, professor of educational studies at Purdue University, delivered the closing keynote. "The level of children's physiological activation directs their performance and behavior," Zentall began. She contrasted the arousal levels of children affected by AD/HD or compulsive disorder (who tend to be underaroused) with children with anxiety, Asperger syndrome, or autism (who tend to be overaroused). The level of children's arousal also directs their goals: Their first goal is the need for stimulation and their second goal is the need for both academic and social competence.

Zentall identified the elements of optimal classroom and home settings that support children with AD/HD, presenting much useful information and many examples. A child with AD/HD needs an



Barbara Coloroso



Jefferson Prince



Sydney Zentall

active curriculum and an active home environment. Zentall described the kinds of motor and cognitive activities that would provide the stimulation such children need. To address the need for academic and social competence, Zentall described how to enrich tasks; when to add color to produce better handwriting, spelling, and art; when to avoid novelty or conversation; teacher style; selection of instructional groupings (student directed or cooperative groups), and so forth. As well, Zentall outlined strategies for dealing with impulsivity, hyperactivity, sustained attention, and selective inattention.

Encouraging attendees about the future of AD/HD treatment, Jefferson Prince, MD, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, summarized positive trends in his keynote address. After opening his talk by reviewing recent brain-imaging research on regions of interest, the role of pharmacogenomics, and a discussion of neurogenesis, Prince turned to a discussion of positive psychology, well-being, the happy personality, higher cognitive functions (mental self-government), and metacognition. He dis-

active curriculum and an active home environment. Zentall described the kinds of motor and cognitive activities that would provide the stimulation such children need. To address the need for academic and social competence, Zentall described how to enrich tasks; when to add color to produce better handwriting, spelling, and art; when to avoid novelty or conversation; teacher style; selection of instructional groupings (student directed or cooperative groups), and so forth. As well, Zentall outlined strategies for dealing with impulsivity, hyperactivity, sustained attention, and selective inattention.



Phil Anderton and Regina Bussing join a group of parents, attorneys, and police during a breakout discussion.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SESSIONS

AD/HD and Antisocial Behavior

Phil Anderton, PhD

Shortly before conference opened, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* ran an article describing the arrest of a young boy with AD/HD and stated that CHADD's conference would offer a full afternoon institute on AD/HD and its links to crime and juvenile justice. CHADD offered this session free of charge to police forces and law enforcement officials throughout the Cleveland area. Imagine our pleasure when members of the public, police chiefs, probation officers, and attorneys turned up for the four-hour presentation, many talking about the newspaper article and the need for change.

The room filled with cops, mums and dads and justice professionals, an eclectic mix that promised and delivered a challenging and effective training session. Regina Bussing, MD, professor of psychiatry at the University of Florida, coordinated and moderated the session. Steve Brown, a British police officer, Faye Gary, PhD, a professor at the University of Florida, and I delivered presentations. The session outlined the links between AD/HD and crime, elaborated the increased risks for young people affected by the disorder, and detailed what could be done to improve the outcomes for adolescents and young adults with AD/HD who are at risk.

Parents and police officers worked together during breakout sessions to explore the current state of policing AD/HD in Cleveland. This was an exciting session, in that police officers, police chiefs, and law enforcement officials were "getting it." At the end of the session, all the police chiefs

present spoke up and publicly declared that they would insist on proper training on the issues around AD/HD and law enforcement for their officers. Judging by the emotion and sincerity in their voices, they meant it.

So what's happened since the session?

- › The deputy commissioner of the Cleveland police has taken responsibility for producing (with Faye Gary) three videos and/or programs for recruits, roll call for serving officers, and for 'in service' training.
- › The Ohio Attorney General's office is setting up mental health courts in Cleveland, thus falling into line with the rest of the state (this was realized as an omission during the session).
- › The Ohio Attorney General's office is reviewing the basic training curriculum for the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy.



Steve Brown

The afternoon finished with a powerful set of slides set to music—"Proud" by M People—in which the question is asked, "What have you done today to make you feel proud?" As one delegate put it, "CHADD should be rightly proud about making this important breakthrough into the world of criminal justice and AD/HD in the United States—long may it continue and develop."

Relationships and AD/HD

Karen Sampson, MA

Author Gina Pera and psychologist Arthur Robin, PhD, conducted a seminar on how AD/HD can cause difficulties in romantic relationships. Using humor and role play, these two experts on relationships and AD/HD offered information and guidance on navigating some of the situations in which couples may find themselves due to AD/HD symptoms on the part of one or both partners.

They also discussed how the unaffected spouse or partner can help the other with medication and developing tools for memory management. They also shared some of the intimate challenges faced by couples due either to symptoms or medications. Most importantly, Pera and Robin modeled effective means of communication for couples, stressing the importance of solid communication in making a relationship affected by AD/HD work.



Gina Pera

AD/HD and Girls

Karen Sampson, MA

Psychologist Carol Ann Robbins, PhD, discussed the needs of girls as they mature. She stressed the need to teach girls to advocate for themselves, first in school and then later in life as young women and adults. Girls need to define themselves by their strengths, not their weaknesses, and they need their parents to help them develop their islands of competence. Parents can help their daughters to develop skills to help them compensate in areas that are difficult because of AD/HD, but they also need to help protect their self-esteem during the stages of their lives when it is most fragile. Parents also need to act as an external executive function until the girls learn how to prioritize and plan ahead on their own in later adolescence. Parents need to anticipate difficulties and prepare themselves and then their daughters for working through those challenges.

Girls struggle with school and peers most keenly during the middle school years, as they develop academic and social skills that seem to come more easily to their nonaffected peers. Also, many girls without hyperactivity are first diagnosed in middle school, and it is important to realize anxiety or depression at that age can be symptoms of AD/HD. Parents who make home a safe place, who take the time to listen, help their daughters cope with the disorder and with being a middle-school student.

High school has its own challenges related to AD/HD that parents need to be ready to help daughters navigate. Robbins reminded parents that this is when young people start defining themselves. For girls this can add struggles about friendships and relationships, especially when inattention or impulsivity are in the mix. Girls can have heightened levels of anxiety related to school and friends and can experience an increased risk of early

sexual activity, drug use, and school failure.

Parents can help their daughters by structuring routines, teaching them how to use calendars to plan ahead, encouraging physical fitness and a healthy diet, along with developing an effective treatment plan. As girls grow older, giving them greater roles in maintaining their treatment plan is an important part of teaching independence and readiness for adulthood.



Ari Tuckman

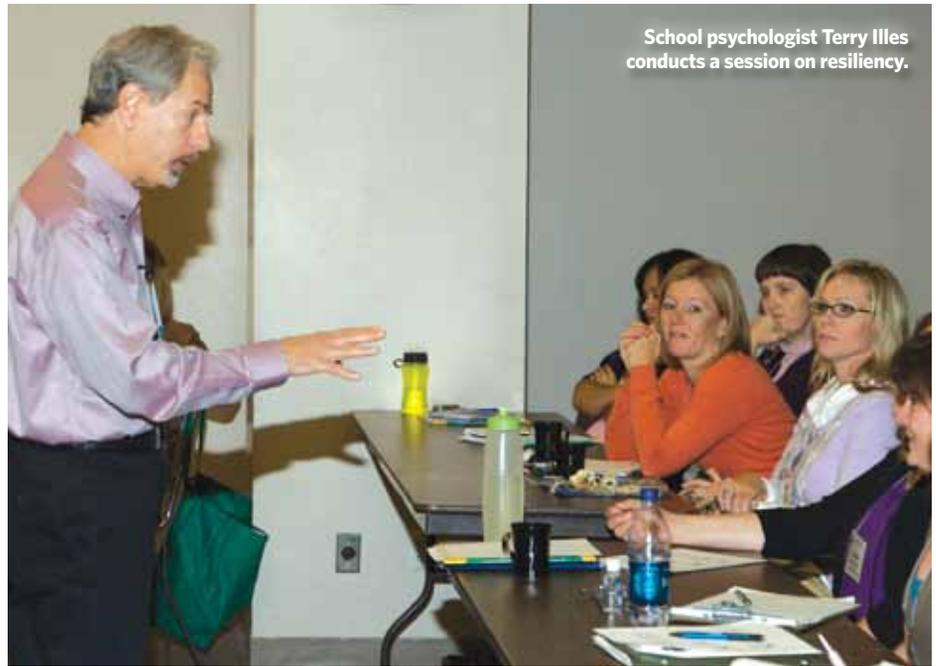
Faith, Spirituality, and AD/HD

Karen Sampson, MA

One innovative session brought together faith leaders from Muslim, Buddhist and Christian communities to discuss the role of religion and faith in helping children and adults cope with AD/HD. All the speakers stressed the importance of prayer and the simplicity of being as part of a person's natural support system in addressing AD/HD in his or her life.

Deborah Abdul-Rahim of the Council on American and Islamic Relations shared some of the challenges faced by Muslims affected by AD/HD. Stressing the importance of prayer across faith traditions, Abdul-Rahim added that healthcare professionals and spiritual leaders can be partners along with parents and adults in their treatment plans.

Ani Palmo, who follows and teaches the



School psychologist Terry Illes conducts a session on resiliency.



A panel discussion on masterful coaching includes Alan Graham, Jodi Sleeper-Triplett, Russell Colver, Daniel Pratt, and Nancy Ratey.

Buddhist tradition, spoke on meditation as a support in treatment of AD/HD. Meditation can help to lessen some symptoms, but more importantly helps people to develop the strength and resources to meet the challenges that AD/HD presents in their lives. Many people report that meditation has helped to increase their ability to pay attention, first in meditation and then into other areas of their lives.

Tim MacGeorge, MSW, director of CHADD's National Resource Center on AD/HD and a former Catholic priest, spoke about the community of faith as a place to draw strength and support. The openness of faith, he said, helps people to see things as they are and move toward solutions. It helps to support those who are suffering. He added that spirituality helps a person to see things or other people in a different and dignified way and to not judge and label others.

The Forgotten Sibling

Bryan Jaffe

In his session on siblings, presenter Sam Goldstein, PhD, a professor at the University of Utah School of Medicine, stepped out of his normal comfort zone of science-based information and into the realm of anecdotal stories and supposition. This is not to say that his opinions were not well thought out or grounded in science, but several times he lamented the lack of research into non-AD/HD siblings of children with AD/HD.

"It's not just AD/HD," Goldstein said early on, "it's really the impact of when one sibling suffers a chronic illness that takes time away from everyone else in the family or causes disruption in the family routine." He explained that difficulties arise often as a result of the child with AD/HD receiving an inordinate share of the attention, while the



Matt Cohen discusses special education law.

children without the disorder do not receive that attention. As a result, he explained, the siblings not receiving that attention may end up acting out in order to become the center of attention, or they may use that lack of attention to get away with behaviors for which they might otherwise get in trouble. Goldstein spoke of a family he worked with in his practice in which one sibling had AD/HD, and the other two did not. The two without the disorder took full advantage of him, using his difficulties to cast focus on him while avoiding scrutiny for bad grades and so forth.

When discussing the actual disorder, Goldstein addressed its hereditary and genetic nature. He said he suspects

that there are probably about a half a dozen different genes that increase the risk for a diagnosis of AD/HD, and that while one sibling may get all six, another sibling may only have three or four of those genes present. This would be enough, he believes, to cause that non-AD/HD sibling to live normally in most situations, but to display at least some symptoms of AD/HD under stressful circumstances.

Goldstein highlighted the importance of resilience for coping with this situation. He outlined a dozen characteristics of resilience, including humor, the ability of a child to entertain himself or herself, being easy going, learning to deal with mistakes, and possessing an instinctual optimism and an intrinsic motivation.

Overcoming Executive Function Weaknesses

Bryan Jaffe

Working from Russell Barkley's model of executive function and how it affects adults with AD/HD, Ari Tuckman, PsyD, focused on strategies for adults to help cope with executive deficits and function at a higher level. Tuckman led an informative discussion that outlined the importance of stopping to think and self-regulate, developing the ability to better remember things, learning better time management, and understanding why people with AD/HD have a difficult time with creating and executing a plan. With the room filled and an overflow group listening in the hallway, this was one of the most popular presentations at the conference.

AD/HD and Organizing

Bryan Jaffe

Holly H. Graff, CPO, discussed the 24/7 nature of the world today, acknowledging that the lack of downtime can overwhelm people with AD/HD. The time that once would have been used for tasks like cleaning and organizing is gone in the modern age. While this is challenging for many people, she said, those with AD/HD who already have a difficult time with organization were particularly hard-hit.

"The world is not AD/HD-friendly," Graff stated, paving the way for her

discussion. "I'm not going to tell you how to get organized, I'm going to show you some practical steps you can apply in your life."

Graff described the problems that can arise from disorganization and hoarding items, including a loss of living space and an inability to invite friends or even repairmen into the home. Her first big tip was,

"Get rid of that paper!" From newspapers to magazines to old and dated bills, Graff said that papers often make up the greatest part of a person's clutter. She advised taking a notebook and writing down the names of the newspaper and magazine articles a person wants to keep, and then finding them on the Internet. This frees up space and keeps the information at hand.

Two tips Graff reiterated throughout the session were to keep things simple and to find an organization system that works for the individual. She acknowledged that different people work in different ways, and a system that works for one person will not necessarily work for another. Another recommendation was to break tasks into small chunks in order to keep focused and get things done. Rather than cleaning an

entire room, focus only on a corner of the room or on part of a tabletop.

Graff reinforced the importance of making tasks manageable for people with AD/HD by sticking to these principles. By keeping things simple, breaking tasks into smaller chunks, and finding an individualized system that will work, she maintained that people with and without AD/HD will have more success at becoming and staying organized.

AD/HD and the Justice System

Pamela Mercer

The topic of AD/HD and the criminal justice system occupied several sessions, including one presented by Franklin J. Hickman, an attorney who practices elder and disability law in Cleveland. Hickman has spent decades representing those with mental disabilities both

2009 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

CHADD Hall of Fame



Larry Greenhill, MD

Legislative Advocate of the Year



Matthew Cohen, JD

Volunteer Leadership



Lisa Bardaran
Coordinator, Bluegrass
CHADD, Kentucky

Parent to Parent Teacher of the Year



Judy Marshall and the
Parent to Parent Teachers
of Northern California



Maria Teresa Hill, BEd

Educator of the Year



David Roth, MEd
Commonwealth Academy



Jamileh Mikati, PhD,
Coordinator, Leon County Chapter
of CHADD, Florida

CHADD Affiliates of the Year



Greater Baltimore CHADD



Rosemary Tannock, PhD

Young Scientist Research Fund Award



L. Cinnamon Bidwell, MA
Molly Nikolas, MA



Lynne Lampila
Coordinator, CHADD
of Lee County, Florida



CHADD of
Mercer County Satellite

Innovative Program of the Year



The Olweus Bullying
Prevention Program

Public Policy Award

to be presented at a later date.

George Miller (D-CA)
Sharon Lewis

CHADD'S ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

has been an occasion for the presentation of awards since its inception twenty-one years ago. People from many walks of life—researchers, educators, treatment professionals, parents, attorneys, volunteers—work tirelessly to improve the lives of people affected by AD/HD. The conference provides an ideal opportunity to give them recognition for their efforts. Visit chadd.org for more information.

as a private attorney and as a former member of the law reform unit of the Legal Aid Society. He said that a clash with the law can, in some cases, turn into a teachable moment that leads to treatment. Families, defendants, and their attorneys must seize the opportunity as early in the legal process as possible. In jurisdictions where such programs exist and depending upon the nature of the crime, defendants and their families, together and separately, can ask courts for leniency or request a mental health court or diversion program that emphasizes treatment over punishment. In other cases, AD/HD may be seen as a mitigating factor and the defendant may still be deemed punishable but receive a reduced sentence. There are no guarantees that courts will approve any requests for special consideration, Hickman said, particularly in the case of a serious offense in the adult system. Yet in other cases, especially in the juvenile courts, the result just may be a second chance.

Promoting Evidence-Based Care

Pamela Mercer

Many of those on the frontlines of AD/HD treatment are harried pediatricians who have been forced by healthcare organizations to limit the time spent with each patient. The equally put-upon parents who seek them out are often cut off from access to specialized care by virtue of geography or limited time and resources. Treating a lifespan disorder in sessions lasting

only minutes is challenging. What to do? Peter Jensen, MD, co-chair of the Division of Child Psychiatry and Psychology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, NY, and CEO of the REACH Institute, presented a workshop examining this very question. His message to doctors: be caring and sensitive to the concerns of the child's parents. Effective communication, for example, may eventually persuade a re-

calcitrant father to at least consider the possibility that his child has a disorder that must be treated.

Jensen laid out technical guidelines for treating AD/HD through medication management and the use of abbreviated parent/teacher rating scales to assess symptoms. Many of those attending were pediatricians and family doctors, but he also had a message for parents: As difficult as it may be to





have to travel a long distance or pour scarce resources into getting specialized care for a child who is developing serious behavioral problems, the alternative, doing nothing, could cause a situation to spiral out of control like a metastasized cancer.

**Research Symposia:
Lead Exposure and Drug
Diversion**

Zuali Malsawma, MLS

The first Research Symposium presented opportunities for further research in the ongoing National Children's Study (NCS). The presentation by Tanya Froehlich, MD, provided evidence for the effects of lead on executive functions and AD/HD-related behaviors. Research shows that even low levels of lead exposure causes shortening of dopamine neuron length in the brain and interferes with classroom behavior of children. Analysis of data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 1999-2002 suggest that lead exposure (measured by lead concen-

tration in the blood) accounts for 290,000 cases of AD/HD in U.S. children. Emerging evidence is showing that certain groups—such as boys and persons with certain genes—are more vulnerable to the detrimental effects of lead.

In the second Research Symposium, James Swanson, PhD, discussed the recent concerns about non-medical use of stimulant drugs by individuals who do not have AD/HD. Articles on the topic have appeared in both the scientific literature and in popular literature such as the October 2009 issue of *Scientific American*. Performance enhancement is suggested as a primary motive for non-medical use, especially among high school and college students, and also in the adult population. According to the Yerkes-Dodson law, which states that performance increases with physical and mental arousal up to a certain point but then decreases thereafter, stimulants would not help to enhance performance if one is operating at an optimal level already. **A**