

# *Supporting Your Child with ADHD*

## Understanding neurodiversity

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Source (Lizzy Lee, 2017)

# Reaction, experience and meaning?

What comes to mind when you think ADHD?

What is the experience of having ADHD?

What is it like to live alongside someone with ADHD?  
Parent someone with ADHD? Be in a relationship  
with someone with ADHD?

What becomes the socially constructed meaning of  
"ADHD"?

# Seeing Difference as Strength

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Judy Singer on the term **Neurodiversity**, 1997

*"I knew what I was doing," she tells me. "'Neuro' was a reference to the rise of neuroscience. 'Diversity' is a political term; it originated with the black American civil rights movement. 'Biodiversity' is really a political term, too. As a word, 'neurodiversity' describes the whole of humanity. But the neurodiversity movement is a political movement for people who want their human rights."*

*Source: The Guardian, The Mother of Neurodiversity: How Judy Singer Changed the World by John Harris, July 5, 2023*



LEARNING CHALLENGES

# What Does Twice Exceptional Mean? Identifying and Nurturing Gifted Children with ADHD

The intellectual potential of twice exceptional youth is great but sometimes difficult to recognize and cultivate due to a co-existing condition like ADHD, a learning disability, sensory issues, or other conditions that complicate learning — and teaching.







| By [Michael Postma, Ph.D., Ed.D.](#) | ✓ [Verified](#) | Updated on December 20, 2023

ADDitude magazine

Criteria for diagnosis of ADHD

### Diagnostic Criteria of ADHD

Before arriving at an official diagnosis, symptoms must:

-  **Be present before age 12**
-  **Be present in multiple settings (home, school, work)**
-  **Interfere with or reduce daily functioning**
-  **Not be better explained by another mental health condition**

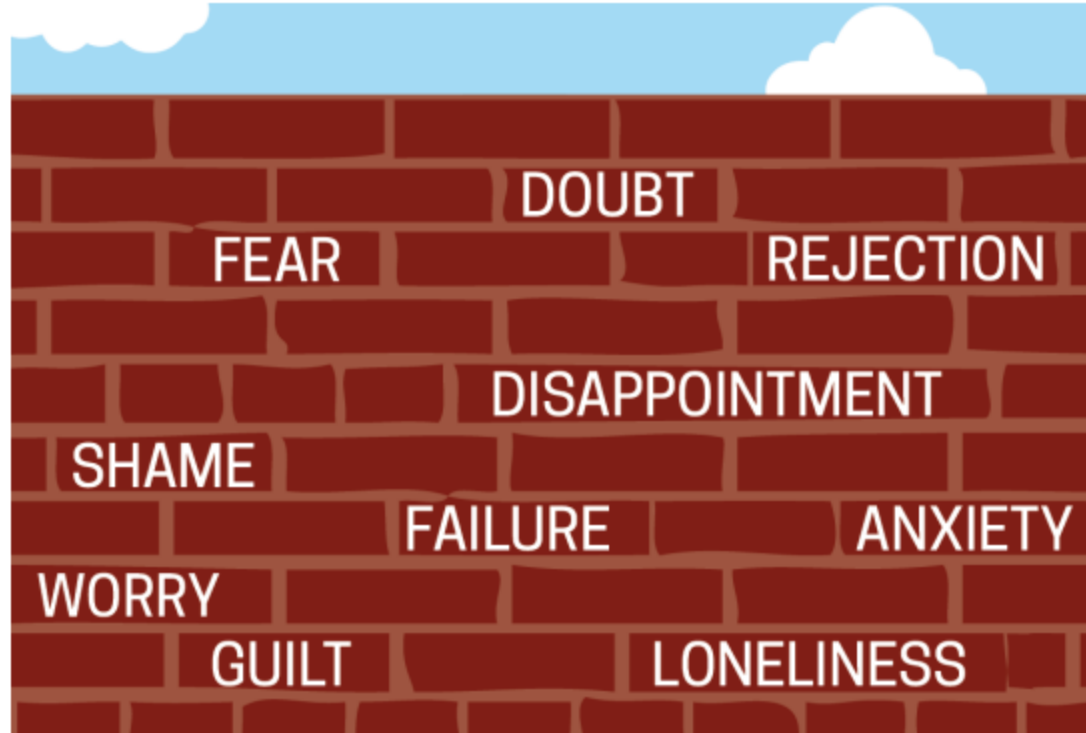
verywell

# Risk with ADHD

It's not too much of a stretch to assume that such a child might receive a negative or corrective comment from the teacher, say, three times an hour "Pay attention!" "Sit still!" "Get back on task!" Let's say the child is in class 6 hours a day for 180 days of school each year. That's more than 3,200 nonpositive comments directed at a child each year and does not include a single annoyed comment from a coach or an angry scolding from a parent.

- <https://www.mdedge.com/psychiatry/article/23971/pediatrics/dont-let-adhd-crush-childrens-self-esteem>
- 2010 Psychiatry Article

# ADHD and sense of self - "Wall of Awful"

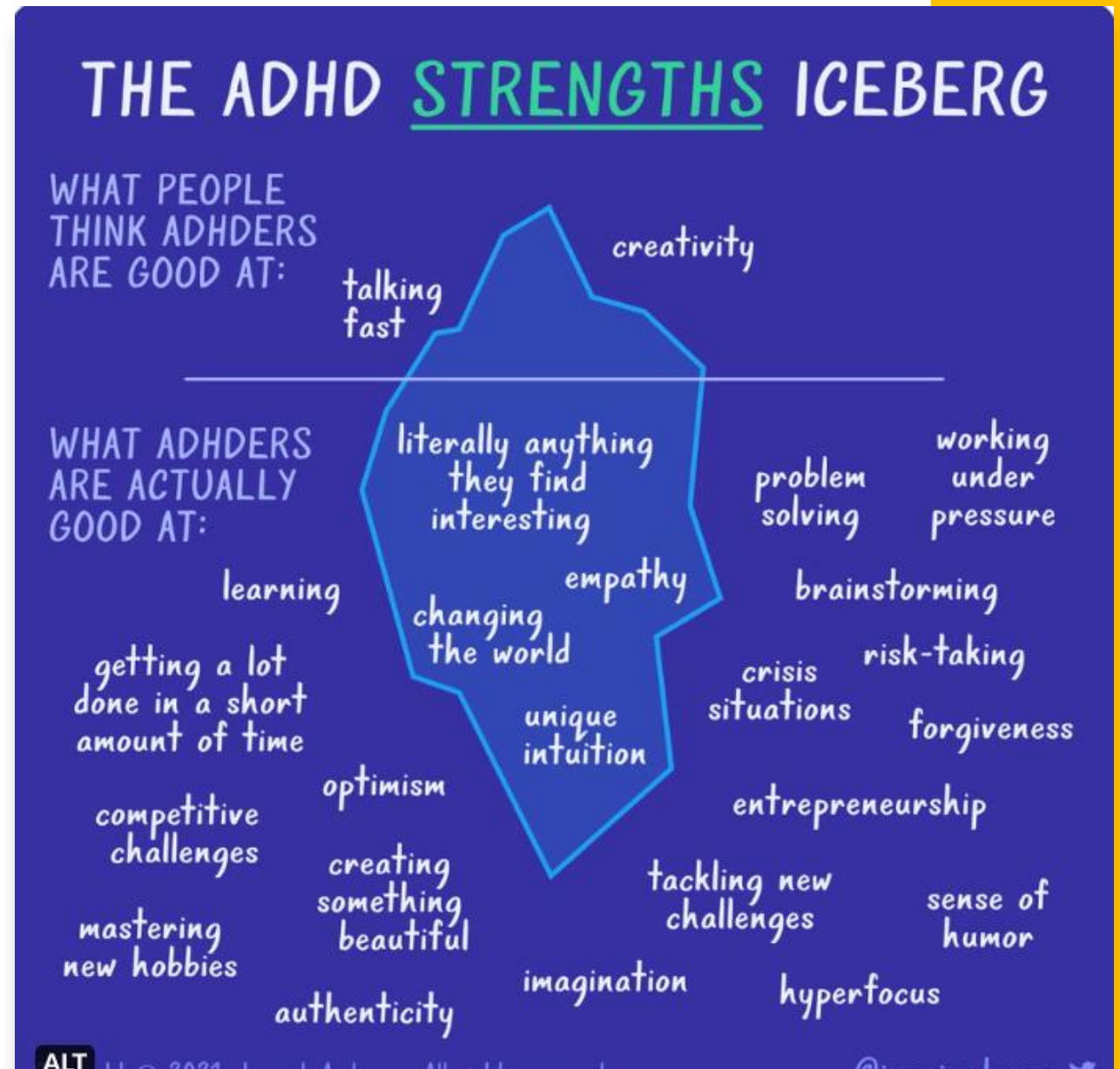


Source: Brendan Mahan

<https://www.adhdessentials.com/essentials/#wall-of-awful>

# ADHD and strengths

- Powerful strategy and stance in parenting
- Value in neurodiversity
- Spontaneity
- Energy
- Drive
- Passion



Source:  Jesse J. Anderson • ADHD Creative  
@jessejanderson





# Multi-modal treatment

<https://adhd-institute.com/disease-management/optimal-management-of-adhd/>

## EF Skills Involved With Thinking:

- working memory
- planning and prioritizing
- organization
- time management
- metacognition

## EF Skills Involved with Behaviour:

- response inhibition
- task initiation
- emotional control
- sustained attention
- goal-directed persistence
- flexibility



# What to do to support?

Protect sense of self – 5:1 ratio

Scaffolding

Break it down into smaller tasks

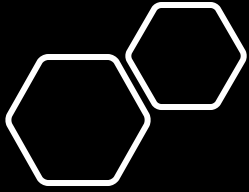
Coaching role

Keep trying to pass on the baton



## Holding it all together

- Being at school can create a significant cognitive and emotional load.
- Children who hold themselves together at school will need a soft landing at home.
- Emotional impact may show up as avoidance.



# Strategies to support

Begin with your relationship

and choose collaboratively



Start the day in a calm way



Practice problem-solving



Build a strong relationship



Use planners and calendars



Teach EF skills explicitly



Teach study skills and habits



Give clear and concise instructions



Give think time for processing



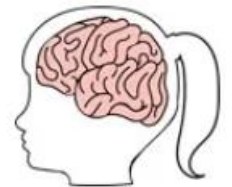
Use checklists



Establish routines



Incorporate movement



Model "think alouds"

# Guarding child's sense of self – 5:1 ratio

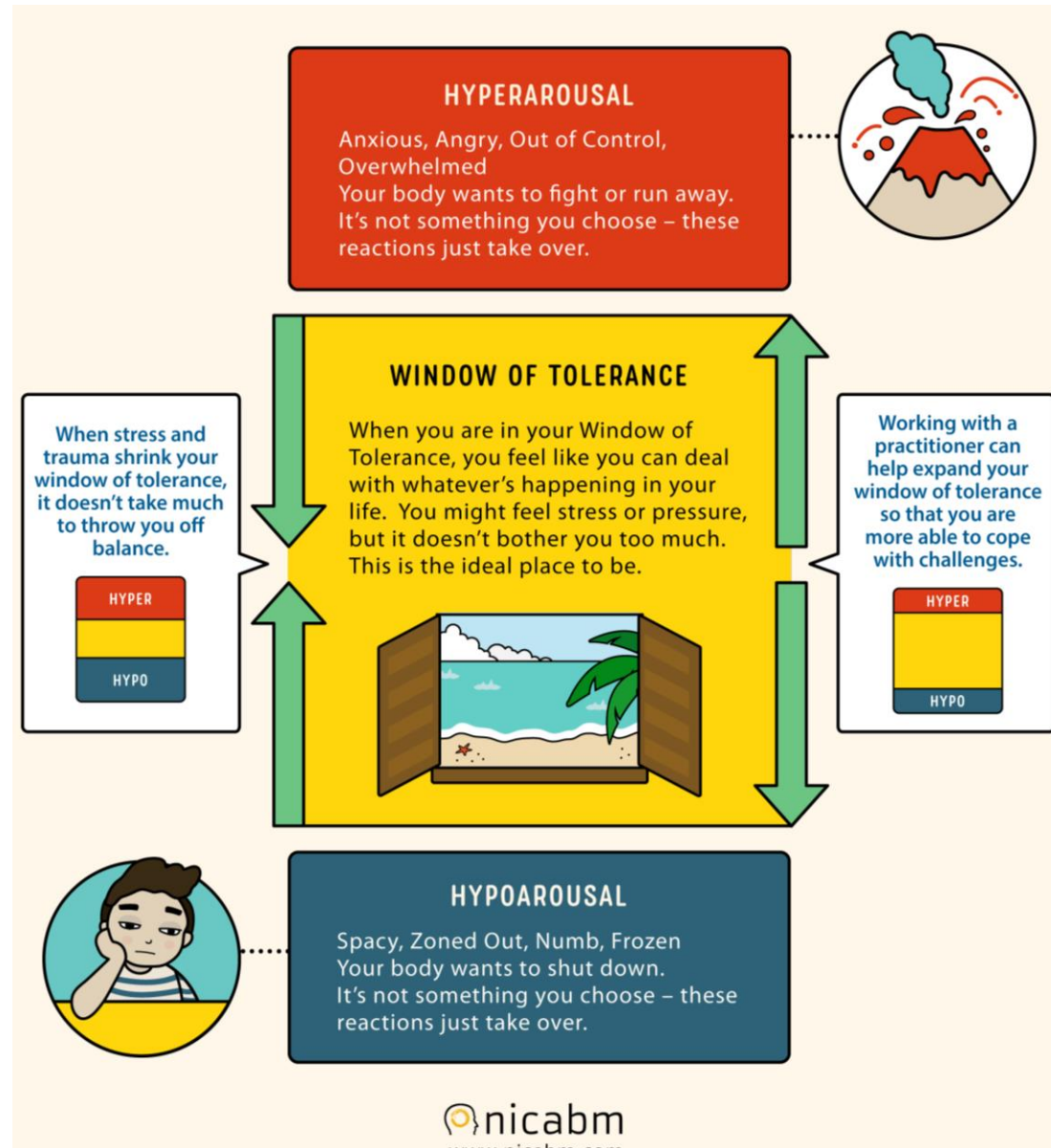
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Our brains are "velcro for negative and teflon for positive"

Negativity bias



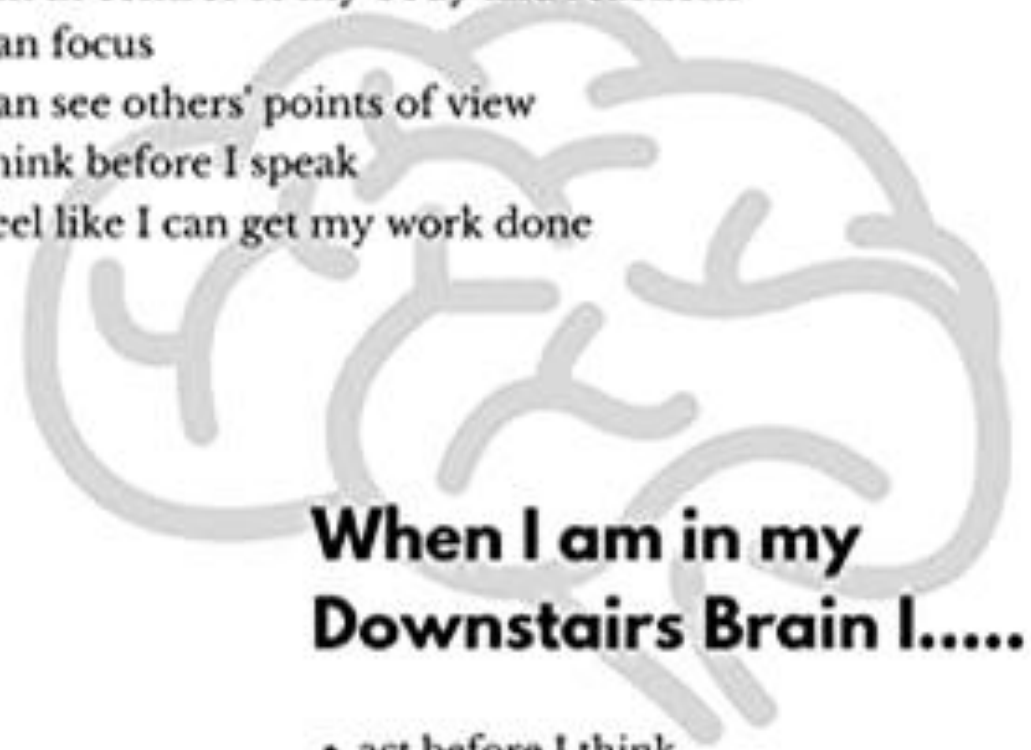
# Window of Tolerance



# Brain Based Thinking

## When I am in my Upstairs Brain I.....

- think before I act
- am in control of my body and reactions
- can focus
- can see others' points of view
- think before I speak
- feel like I can get my work done



## When I am in my Downstairs Brain I.....

- act before I think
- am not in control of my body and reactions
- feel too tired or stressed to focus
- yell, scream, argue, or run away
- only see a problem from my point of view
- feel like I cannot get anything done





# Scaffolding

- Scaffolding is strategy where you provide temporary support
- Effectiveness of scaffolding depends on the contingency rule: with struggles, the adult should increase the level of support With success, the adult should gradually decrease the level of support
- Keep trying to pass the baton



# Clear Expectations

- Clear, achievable tasks reduce anxiety
- Provide a framework to practice in
- Write things down
- Setting time-limits, make time external
- Make a checklist



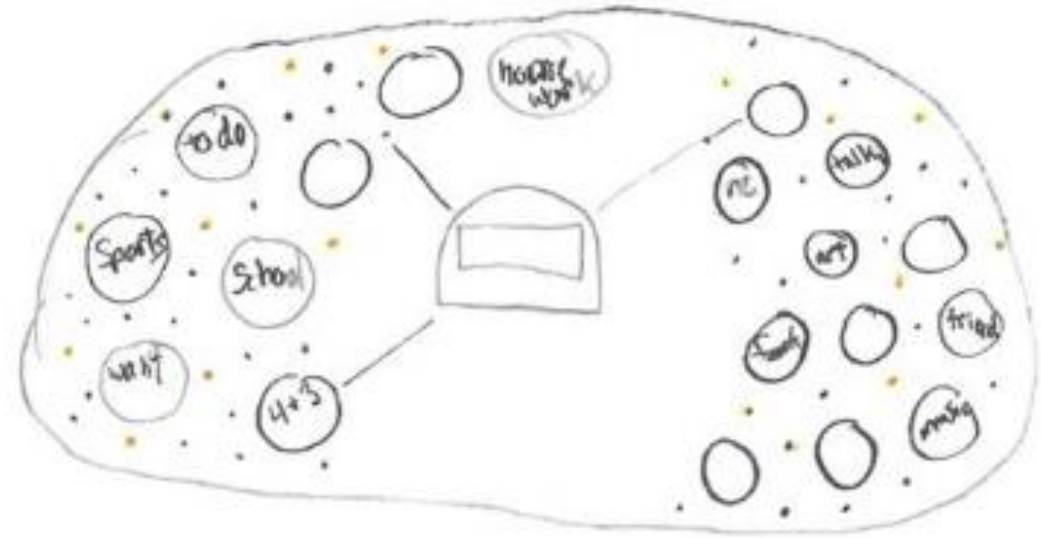
Think of coaching - make tasks smaller




- Provide rationale for decisions
- Providing rewards - external rewards can provide necessary motivation (dopamine)
- Be compassionate and understanding
- Take breaks
- Encourage responsibility

# Building Metacognition

- Before I begin:
  - What do I need before I start my task?
- Challenges:
  - If things get too hard or I get stuck, what can I do?
- End Evaluation:
  - How did my plan go? (older children)
  - When can I use my plans again?



My Thinking about  
Thinking



My top 5 ideas  
about  
supporting  
your child with  
ADHD

- It is a real difference aka neurodiversity (not intentional behaviour).
- Discipline won't "fix" executive function challenges, it is a lagging skill.
- Impairment is often dependent on the environment.
- Emotional regulation is a complex skill that requires practice, co-regulating can help.
- **Most important is to protect child's sense of self. Catch them being good.**

# Other Resources and Books

