

Your Creative Spirit, LLC

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL
COACHING FOR ADHD/LD, EXECUTIVE
FUNCTIONS &
CREATIVITY



Mindful Coaching to Help You:

Get Calmer
Stay Focused
Fulfill Your Potential



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ADHD COACHES ORGANIZATION
promoting adhd coaches & coaching

Introduction

I'm Julianne Davidow, a Professional Certified Coach, teacher, and author. As a teacher of English and writing for more than 20 years, I have worked with many people of all ages and various nationalities. Through my teaching work, I witnessed first hand how bright and creative individuals often struggle with such issues as attention, concentration, focus, organization, and working memory.

I have also spent my life studying various healing and mind training methods, especially mindfulness, yoga, and breath work. I have seen how these mind--body methods can be life--changing.

I am excited to be able to put all of my studies and experience to use in helping students and working professionals get calmer, stay focused, and fulfill their potential.

Scientific research shows that mindfulness skills and other focusing techniques do influence the processes of the brain, and can actually change the very structure of the brain itself. Practicing mindfulness and other methods helped me, and I know they can help others.

Many brilliant and talented people have been known to have what I like to call "learning differences." The list includes Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Mark Twain, Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, Thomas Edison, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Salvador Dali, Ernest Hemingway, Ted Turner, and Leonardo da Vinci, to name a few.

We are all unique. Those with ADHD traits may be even *more* talented and creative, but also more complex than others, and need more time to develop strengths. There are many creative, intelligent children and adults who do not do well in traditional school and work settings, but who thrive when they are given one--to--one attention and are able to do the things they love.

I am the author of the book ***Outer Beauty, Inner Joy: Contemplating the Soul of the Renaissance***, and an important part of Renaissance philosophy had to do with connecting with our deepest desires and creative impulses. I like to bring this spirit into my work, and **I look forward to encouraging my clients to explore and find fulfillment in using their own unique talents and sources of inspiration.**

ADD/ADHD

ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is the term used by the American Psychiatric Association for a group of core symptoms or traits. These are: Inattention, Hyperactivity or Restlessness, and Impulsivity. There are three main types: 1. Predominantly Inattentive, 2. Predominantly Hyperactive or Impulsive, and 3. Combined. There are many other traits that fall under these general categories.

ADHD used to be called ADD/ADHD, because some people do not experience hyperactivity. **Today, doctors use the term ADHD, whether hyperactivity is present or not. But ADHD is still often referred to as ADD.**

ADHD is not like other medical disorders, because there is no biological or medical test for it. Instead, ADD or ADHD is diagnosed by taking a family history, asking a number of questions to see how many symptoms you or your child have, and finding out how these symptoms manifest in different situations.

Many other problems, such as anxiety, depression, and some other learning disabilities can have similar symptoms to ADHD, so this makes ADHD difficult to diagnose.

People with ADHD traits have problems with what are called **executive functions: planning, organizing, starting and stopping activity, managing behavior, persisting on tasks, problem solving, and working memory.**

ADHD traits begin in childhood and can last in one form or another throughout life. But these traits are not 'fixed' and we do have some power to change them.

Just as there is no one kind of ADHD, there is also no single type of treatment that is effective for everyone. Rather, a variety of methods can be used, depending on the individual's wants and needs.

🧠 If you, or your child, have been diagnosed, or feel that attention issues are interfering with school, work, and day-to-day life, there are many holistic ADHD treatment options other than (or in addition to) medication to consider, such as: counseling, coaching, nutrition, supplements, exercise, lifestyle changes, working with talents and interests, yoga, meditation, and breathing techniques. These treatments have been shown to be very effective for many people.

Executive Functions

🧠 *The executive functions are a set of processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. It is an umbrella term for the neurologically--based skills involving mental control and self--regulation.*

These are the skills we use to manage our own learning. Executive functions skills continue to mature and develop well into adulthood. So, this means that they are not fully matured until the late 20s.

Those with ADD/ADHD often have difficulty with executive functions, and these functions are vital to success in all areas of school and life. Struggle with executive functions can also lead to poor self--esteem. This means students can become so frustrated that they turn away and give up on pursuing dreams and passions.

Executive functions require the use of the following skills:

- 🧠 **Inhibition:** Having the ability to control impulses and know what behavior and actions are appropriate and necessary at any given time.
- 🧠 **Emotional Modulation:** Having the ability to control emotional responses. If a student becomes overly reactive, frustrated, or angry, he or she can lose the ability to concentrate and persist. She may also have difficulty in social situations.
- 🧠 **Initiation:** Having the ability to start a task or activity, or come up with ideas or responses and problem-solving strategies.
- 🧠 **Shifting:** Having the ability to move from one activity to another, change focus, and make transitions.
- 🧠 **Working memory:** Having the ability to hold information in the mind for a period of time while completing a task or assignment, or follow directions.
- 🧠 **Planning:** Anticipating events, setting goals, or visioning the overall scheme of a task.
- 🧠 **Organizing:** Breaking down goals into effective steps to accomplish the goal.
- 🧠 **Managing materials:** Organizing workspaces, materials, and possessions.
- 🧠 **Time management:** Allowing sufficient time and estimating how long it will take to complete a given task.
- 🧠 **Self--checking:** Checking work for errors, editing, and making sure one is proceeding in a rational way.
- 🧠 **Self--awareness:** Monitoring one's reactions and the impact of one's behavior on others.
- 🧠 **Self--advocacy:** Identifying needs, seeking out support, and communicating with those who can be of help.

Coaching

What is coaching?

Coaching is a supportive relationship designed to forward the client's agenda. The process is suited not only for students with ADHD, but for any student who is struggling in school as a result of ADHD, executive skills weaknesses, and other learning challenges.

What do coaches do?

Coaches help young people identify their own goals, dreams, and visions for the future. Coaching supports young clients by providing structure, skills, and strategies for success. In coaching the client is being empowered to make decisions, ask questions, and ponder the consequences.

Coaching can also be helpful for parents and supports them in working with their children's challenges as well as their own.

What are some of the important things coaching does?

Coaching can help with all the executive functions skills. It helps students develop habits that will enable them to build these skills at a time when the brain is developing.

A critical part of coaching is goal setting. Goals direct behavior, they energize, and they motivate the individual to develop strategies for attaining them. As well as being helpful for setting goals, coaching enables the client to devise strategies and action plans for attaining them.

A necessary goal that coaching can encompass is that of regulating emotions and becoming more self-sufficient as time goes on. Self-regulation has to do with self-control and self-direction. Self-regulated learners can use a variety of cognitive strategies to stay motivated, maintain focus and attention, and accomplish academic tasks.

How is a coach trained?

Many people call themselves coaches, but may not be certified. There are several organizations that certify coaches. The oldest and largest is the International Coach Federation. It certifies coaches based on rigorous training, supervision, and exams.

Coaching

How do coaching sessions work?

Coaching can take place in person, on the telephone, or via Zoom or another online platform, and frequency of sessions is usually from two to four times per month. Length of sessions can also vary, usually from half an hour to an hour. In between sessions, clients can keep in touch with coaches with short phone calls and emails.

Is a coach a therapist?

No, a coach is not a therapist. But both therapy and coaching are built on regular conversations between client and professional and both endeavor to help people enact their best lives.

Which service is best for the client will depend on things like the client's current mindset, emotional stability, and mental health status, as well as the nature of the client's goals, personality, learning style, and life circumstances.

When a client is struggling to function adequately due to a mental health issue, this is the realm of therapeutic intervention. For some clients, it is helpful to have both a therapist and a coach.

Research on the Efficacy of Coaching

A recent examination of studies on student support services conducted by the Community College Research Center at **Columbia University Teachers College** showed that students given individual coaches for two semesters or more—coaches who actively helped them address various challenges in their lives while keeping watch on their academic performance—were more likely to remain in college and finish.

New York Times, Sunday, October 5, 2014

Student coaching significantly increases the likelihood that college students will stay in school and graduate, according to a study by researchers at **Stanford University School of Education** reviewed the academic records of more than 13,500 students from eight colleges and universities across the 2003--4 and 2007--8 academic years. The researchers compared randomly selected, demographically balanced groups of coached vs. non-coached students, and found a 10 --to 15--percent increase in retention and graduation rates among those in the coached group.

<https://ed.stanford.edu/spotlight/stanford--study--shows--college--student--coaching--improves--retention--and--graduation--rates>

The Edge Foundation's two-year ADHD coaching study research demonstrates that ADHD students significantly benefit from receiving coaching using the JST ADHD coaching model used by Edge Foundation. [*note: one--half hour of coaching once per week*]

ADHD Coaching Research Study Results

- Students who received Edge coaching, based on the JST Coaching model for ADHD youth, showed substantial gains in their overall approach to learning.
- The study showed that students who received Edge coaching services showed significant improvement in their ability to organize, direct and manage cognitive activities, emotional responses and overt behaviors.
- They were able to formulate goals more realistically and consistently work toward achieving them, manage their time more effectively, and stick with tasks even when they found them challenging.

<http://edgefoundation.org/>

Holistic ADHD Treatment

There are many natural methods that are effective for dealing with attention and hyperactivity issues.

Mindfulness meditation has been shown to lessen all of the symptoms associated with ADHD, and to make actual changes in the brain over time.

Physical exercise creates new brain cells and cognitive flexibility is enhanced. Exercising helps with all of the executive functions: working memory, sense of time, emotional self-control, starting and stopping activities, organizing, planning, and problem solving.

Dietary habits contribute to overall body chemistry and health. The more balanced and healthy the diet, the better the brain will function. Sufficient protein is important, as well as eating few complex carbohydrates, eating more complex carbohydrates, and more omega-3 fatty acids. Certain supplements can also be useful.

Supplements: Many naturally growing plants have similar stimulating effects as prescription medication, but without the side effects. Scientific studies have shown the efficacy of certain plants for attention and learning.

Sleep habits and attention issues often have similar symptoms, and sleep hygiene is extremely important. Does ADHD cause difficulty sleeping or does difficulty sleeping contribute to ADHD? Vatsal Thakkar, M.D., clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at NYU Langone Medical Center, points out that it is often difficult to separate the two diagnoses.

Yoga and breathwork can be very helpful in dealing with attention issues. Hatha yoga calms the nervous system and helps focus the mind. Breathing techniques from yoga and other traditions can be used to quiet distracting thoughts, focus attention, reduce anxiety, and improve memory.

Coaching creates a support system for the client. A coach is an 'active guide' who uses inquiry, structure, strategic planning, encouragement, and constructive feedback to help the client respond to challenges and opportunities.

Coaches can enhance the parent-child relationship by shifting the accountability for the young person to the coaching process. Coaching offers a unique bridge from youth to adulthood, giving the parent space to step further back and the young person room to ponder, practice, and acquire the skills and strategies needed to be ready for life's challenges.

Mindfulness for ADHD

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is basically bringing attention to our moment--to--moment experience with openness and clarity. A meditation practice that comes from the Buddhist tradition, mindfulness is now being used by Western psychologists to help patients become more focused and relaxed, and to build skills to lower stress and well--being.

People with ADHD often have more difficulty than others with self--regulation and self--control. **Learning to become more mindful can help to retrain the brain, and enable you to better focus your attention over time.** Scientists have discovered that the brain has plasticity throughout life. This means that the connections of the brain can be strengthened and new connections can be created.

Since mindfulness helps strengthen the connections in the prefrontal cortex, the same part of the brain that controls the development of **executive functions skills**, mindfulness practice can make a big difference in strengthening these skills.

There have been, and continue to be, many research studies on mindfulness and other mind--body methods in the treatment of ADHD and other learning differences. Mindfulness practice can help with all the symptoms of ADHD and bring about improvement in such areas as focus, concentration, memory, and emotional regulation.

In one study (*Mindfulness Meditation Training in Adults and Adolescents With ADHD: A Feasibility Study [Journal of Attention Disorders [PubMed], November 19, 2007]*) it was found that:

“Seventy--eight percent of participants reported a reduction in total ADHD symptoms, with 30% reporting at least a 30% symptom reduction (a 30% reduction in symptoms is often used to identify clinically significant improvement in ADHD medication trials).

Because the majority of participants were receiving medication treatment, for many these declines represent improvement above and beyond what benefits were already being provided by medica

Selected Resources

Attention Deficit Disorder Association

<http://www.add.org/>

Attitude Magazine

<http://www.additudemag.com/>

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder/Hyperactivity Disorder

<http://www.chadd.org/>

Mindful Magazine

<http://www.mindful.org/mindful-magazine>

National Center for Learning Disabilities

<http://www.nclld.org/>

National Institute of Mental Health

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Natural ADHD Treatment Methods

<http://www.add-treatment.com/>

Understood: For Learning and Attention Issues

<http://www.un@derstood.org/en>



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