

## **Mentoring & ADHD**

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the newest label to emerge concerning a disorder among children that has been around for hundreds of years. Though the definition of ADD and ADHD has only recently been identified, it strikes approximately 2 million U.S. children each year. Estimates cite the statistics of 3% to 5% of the population, and some even go as high as 10%. Characteristics of ADD and ADHD children include: hyperactivity, unexpected action, short attention span, lack of social skills, disruptive behavior, learning difficulties, loss of personal items, failure to finish assigned task, and failure to listen in class. (McFarland, Kolstad, & Briggs, 1995).

Medication, behavior therapy and, a combination of both are employed by physicians and parents to control the effects of ADD and ADHD. McFarland, Kolstad, & Briggs(1995) offer advice to teachers and tutors working with students who have ADD/ADHD. There are also many online resources for parents, teachers, and tutors working with students with ADD/ADHD.

### **Mentoring Tips**

- Become informed about ADD and ADHD in order to better understand the mentee and his/her needs.
- If possible, develop a working relationship with the mentee's parents and teachers.
- Help to develop self esteem in the mentee through hugs, smiles, recognition, encouragement, and praise.
- Avoid blaming the mentee for "misbehaving." Understand that a young person with ADD/ADHD may not be able to control the way this disease affects him/her.
- Be patient. Be positive!

### **Tutoring Tips**

- Give simple, effective step-by-step instructions. Simplify complex instructions; avoid multiple commands. Maintain eye contact to make certain the student comprehends what you are saying. Get students attention by gently touching his/her arm.
- Announce schedule changes well in advance.
- Limit the number of choices the ADD/ADHD student has to a few specific options.
- Make responses to behavior relatively quick in a positive manner.
  - Have immediate rewards.
  - Have immediate, firm punishments.
- Use positive directions, ex. "Please complete the worksheet." rather than, "Don't look out the window." (Weber, 1994)
- Maintain the student's attention through project-based learning (Weaver, 1990).
  - Allow them to do presentations, dramas, and art work.
- Written material is more memorable when in color. Try using markers, colored pens or pencils for written work when possible (Cuseo-Ott, 1996). Experiment with different combinations to see which is more effective.
- Work in a quiet place facing a wall to minimize competing stimuli (Cuseo-Ott, 1996).

## ADHD References and Resources

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Weaver, C. (1994). Eight tips for teachers with ADHD students. *Instructor, 103*, 43.

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