

The Management of ADHD in Children and Young People



Edited by
Val Harpin

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Foreword

As a training psychiatrist in the early 1990s, then as a Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist and finally a Clinical Director in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, I have seen how the recognition, diagnosis and treatment of ADHD has been changing the shape of child mental health and paediatric services over the last 20 years. It has challenged clinicians' understanding of behavioural difficulties and their perception of neurodevelopmental disorders. It has required education services to rethink how they manage children and young people with ADHD who are struggling in school.

ADHD is a disorder surrounded in controversy and debate, in both the clinical setting and the wider community. Medicines are viewed as transforming by some, but as chemical restraint by others. Despite extensive research into the condition the world appears to be no closer to an agreement on the nature of the disorder and how best to treat it. While the arguments persist the children, young people and, more recently, adults continue to seek help for the problems that develop from the disorder, such as remaining focused or regulating their behavior.

There is a wide range of books associated with the science or clinical management of ADHD. Some are purely neuroscience and focus on the current state of knowledge. But in this field the science is moving on so rapidly that by the time of publication these books are always slightly behind the cutting-edge research in on the subject. Others are self-help books for assisting families or individuals who are affected by the condition.

The Management of ADHD in Children and Young People is written by clinicians and for clinicians and as a consequence it reflects the knowledge and needs of those providing care for those with ADHD. The authors have taken a practical approach to the disorder. They have not only referenced the most up-to-date literature but have also used their extensive clinical experience to describe what ADHD is, how to recognise it, what to

do when you see it, and how to treat it and its coexisting difficulties. They give insights into the history of the condition and then using the UK as an example they have built a profile of how ADHD presents in the modern world and the challenges it now presents to clinicians.

‘Every child with ADHD is different’ is a phrase used by clinicians to reassure parents that the understanding of their child and the treatment offered is being tailored to their individual needs. Although this is true, there is much that can be learnt from clinical examples that highlight the frequently occurring problems associated with the condition and its treatment. This is reflected in this volume. The authors’ use of clinical vignettes throughout the chapters brings a reality to the condition that makes the book relevant to clinicians working with individuals with ADHD. It provides practical suggestions on how to approach the condition or how to develop services to meet the needs of the ever increasing number of people seeking help.

The topics covered in this book reflect the questions clinicians working in the specialities of child and adolescent psychiatry or paediatrics frequently want answered and so would be ideal for training grade clinicians. The authors have used their experience of delivering teaching to ensure that their content is clear and understandable to all. This book is not a simple introduction to the subject; clinicians from all backgrounds in children’s services, and at all levels of seniority will find something of value or interest, whether it be seeking validation for their current clinical practice or new insights into how to approach clinical challenges. As the science basis expands, our understanding of the neurobiology of this condition will increase; however, the need for access to the experience of clinicians who have been delivering care to this group of children and young people will remain irreplaceable. This book thoroughly fulfills that need.

Dr Duncan Manders
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Preface

I didn't choose ADHD. It chose me. I am so pleased it did.

I started to work with children and young people with ADHD and their families in the early 1990's, just as awareness was increasing in the UK and the rest of Europe. We had little to offer at that time: some behavioural management and short acting methylphenidate as the only available medication, but at least ADHD was being recognised.

So much has changed in the last 25 years. In that time, we have all realised how complex ADHD is and how important thorough assessment and optimal treatment is to improved outcomes. We also have many more treatment options.

My fascination for the topic has grown and grown and I have been fortunate to learn so much from the children, young people and their families and from teachers and colleagues.

The aim of this book is to share sound, practical management advice built on a strong evidence base and many years of practical experience. The management of ADHD needs input from a strong multidisciplinary team to offer children and young people and their families the services they need.

Our book starts with the viewpoint of David Tompkinson, a young man who has grown up with ADHD. He describes some of his experiences and how he now celebrates his ADHD and succeeds. I am very grateful to David for sharing this with us.

The chapter authors come from a variety of multidisciplinary backgrounds, with contributions from paediatrics, child and adolescent psychiatry, psychology, specialist nursing, teaching and adult psychiatry, each sharing their expertise and advice on a particular aspect of ADHD management. The result is a comprehensive overview

of issues we face as clinicians involved in the management of ADHD and its many comorbid conditions.

Although the services described are based on UK school and health systems, the principles involved and the practical management advice offered are international: ADHD is universal.

I would like to thank all of the authors for their excellent input, for freely giving their valuable time and for their ongoing support throughout the process.

My thanks also to the team at Mac Keith, especially Udoka Oluonu, who has been throughout a calm and positive guide and to Lisa Trueman for patience and thoroughness as the book became 'real'.

Thank you, of course, to all the children, young people and families I have had the pleasure of working with at the Ryegate Centre in Sheffield and to the fantastic staff Team I have been privileged to work with over the years.

Lastly, special thanks to my wonderful family, Martin, Briony, Nick and Krystina.

Val Harpin
September 2016

Prologue: ADHD and proud

When Doctor Harpin asked me to write this piece for this very important and much needed book, I jumped at the chance. Of course I did. Without thinking. No hesitation. I said yes. That's what life with ADHD is like. But whilst so much of ADHD is given a bad reputation, I'm here to let you into a little secret: it can be used to a person's advantage.

I can 100% say, even when I stop for a moment and think (a rare occasion indeed), that I am so proud to have ADHD. Of course it can be a struggle, and my journey with ADHD has had an abundance of them. But with the right help and the right support it can be channelled into success.

Before I digress further, and please do bare with me if I do this, I don't always mean to it's just that..... whoops. There I go again.

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is David Tompkinson, and I have ADHD. I want to tell what I think is a very positive story about a condition that I have struggled with, wrestled with, grown up with and eventually tamed.

I came to Dr Harpin when I was a 6-year-old. I was not fascinated with the lady who has now come very close to my heart, but instead with the Mr Potato toy in her office. (I never had the heart to tell her I once 'liberated' his left shoe).

I was referred to Dr Harpin because essentially I was a problem; a problem for my parents, teachers, brother and pretty much anyone who I was with for a long period of time. I couldn't sit still. I was very hyperactive. I was impulsive. I was so ADHD.

At the time (and do note when I say, at the time) this was a problem because I was trouble at school and simply didn't engage with any of my learning or teachers. But also, school didn't engage with me. I was labelled a 'hopeless' case and a drain on the teachers' time and efforts.

In Infant school and Junior school, I was outside of the class more times than I was in it. Thankfully, the days of making children wait in corridors has long gone.

My parents used to have countless messages from my school on the answer phone when they got home; 'David's done this, David's done that.' My father being the diligent organiser he is (a trait I never picked up), kept all the letters and exchanges between the schools and reading them back now, I can see it was just a constant battle for them. I once shed a tear reading the ending to one of my Dad's letters to school which read: 'Whatever people think about our son, he is incredibly special to us and we will always look to see the beauty in a boy that my wife and I love endlessly'.

My parents have been my rock throughout my journey with ADHD and have kept me on the straight path so many times. Without their support I wouldn't be where I am today. That's my first massive avocation, supportive parents. At times it must have been so hard for my parents to put on a brave face, but they believed in me and never lost hope. Unconditional love as my Mother always puts it.

As I grew older I started to manage the condition a little better. I discovered a love of history, politics, thought and debate- much to my brother's annoyance. But he was, and still, is an incredibly intelligent man. I started to engage with him and talk to him about all the things I was interested in. He developed my love of learning and ignited passions for things I never really thought I could bring to the surface.

GCSE's were a battle and a struggle. I had lost so much of my early years in learning, and the foundations were not there. Especially in mathematics and getting a C in maths is up there with my greatest achievements, gaining me entry to Sixth form where I could study the subjects I loved. Was University in sight for a boy who was deemed a failure and a 'no hoper'?

June 6th 2012 was one of the happiest days of my life. I sat stunned, looking at a computer screen that was telling me I had been accepted at the University of Durham. My Mother was in floods of tears, unable to speak for pride. That was their day; 21 years of sleepless nights, worry, phone calls, backhanded comments from other parents. That was their moment.

On the day I graduated I handed Dad my robes to try on, and I said: 'I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for you Dad.'

I am currently training to be a primary school teacher (ironic huh?) having just graduated from Durham University with a First Class Honours degree. This is the boy who couldn't sit still (and still can't really) for longer than 30 seconds. This is the boy who was told by a teacher he 'would go nowhere in life' because he's 'stupid'.

Life with ADHD is truly a rollercoaster. I still can't sit still. I still can't really concentrate. But I have found a way to make life work for me.

There is hope. Just believe in the ADHD child. Give them the right support in the right places and they will go so far.

I have an abundance of people to thank in my journey with ADHD. My Mother who is my rock and still to this day puts me on the right path. My Father who taught me hard work and graft- and still does to this day; my brother who cultivated my very strange yet beautiful mind (sit still no, but boy, I am as sharp as a razor sometimes); my Grandparents and my Uncle Philip.

But last and not least my wonderful partner in crime, Becky- who I need to thank for being brash enough to say yes to me all that time ago. For being foolish enough to stay with me, and for loving me in a way I never thought I could be loved.

I hope you have enjoyed reading my story as much as I have writing it.

I have no doubt this publication will be a massive success. Dr Harpin is a lady I have no superlatives for. Her advice is impeccable. Her understanding immense and her dedication to the field of ADHD, long before I was born, amazing.

Remember, believe and have the faith that the light at the end of the tunnel is not just a silly phrase but an incredible possibility.

David Tompkinson