

4th Annual Michael Golds Memorial AD/HD Conference

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Finding a career that works for you: Which way to go For individuals with AD/HD

Agenda

1. How do people with AD/HD (and by the way...what *is* it?) make career choices? What are the myths?
2. What are the **pieces of the puzzle**? How can we help?
 - Interests (professional & leisure)
 - Skills (mental, interpersonal and physical)
 - Personality (External-Internal, Detail-Overview, Decisions by head-Decisions by heart, Structured-Unstructured)
 - Values (work and leisure)
 - Aptitude (verbal, numerical, abstract reasoning, clerical speed and accuracy, mechanical, spatial, spelling, language)
 - Energy patterns
 - Workplace habits (what is optimal vs. how we measure up)
 - Completing a job history (extracting **valuable information**)
 - Information Interviews (how to open our eyes to reality, and “try the career on for size!”) **Most important for those with ADD, etc.**
 - READ
 - Talk
 - Observe
 - Special challenges (identifying them, deciding if they are workable or not, and then adapting to them to the marketable situation.
 - Decision-making: test it out! Try it on! Do it safely! ☺
 - Interviewing/disclosing
 - Strategies/Accommodations/Modifications

Signs of ADD in the workplace:

1. Distractibility
 2. Impulsivity
 3. Hyperactivity
 4. Memory issues
 5. Boredom
 6. Time management
 7. Procrastination
 8. Difficulty with long-term projects
 9. Paperwork/details
 10. Interpersonal issues
- Coaching

Adapted from the book, *Finding A Career That Works For You*, by W. Fellman, 2000, Specialty Press (Plantation, FL).

Reasonable Workplace Accommodations for Individuals with ADD

1. A private office or non-distracting work-space.
2. If space restrictions cannot allow for private office, then the provision of temporary quiet space for tasks which demand high concentration.
3. Allowing the employee to do some work at home.
4. Provision of flex time. Distractible individuals are more productive during “off-hours” when fewer co-workers are present.
5. Day-planners, computer software (or hard copy planners), to assist in organization and planning with visual and auditory alarms as reminders to improve time management.
6. Assistance in setting up organized filing systems.
7. Video or audio tape equipment to assist with auditory memory deficits.
8. Checklists to provide structure in multi-stage tasks.
9. Giving instructions slowly and clearly.
10. Allowing employees to tape record meetings.
11. Writing down instructions or communications so the employee has a written record.
12. Excusing the individual from non-essential tasks.
13. Job restructuring to better suit the individual’s strengths.
14. More frequent performance appraisals.

15. Reassignment to a vacant position which better matches the individual's strengths.
16. Extra clerical support.
17. Providing a manual or handbook in writing, with highlights to clearly outline rules, regulations and expectations.
18. Providing a bulletin board for announcements.
19. Providing set routines and schedules wherever possible.
20. Clearly defining lines of authority.
21. A supervisor who can serve as a "funnel" when task assignments come from multiple sources.
22. Clearly defining mechanisms for communication between employee and supervisor.
23. Repeat advance notice of changes in routine: whether it be holidays, pay schedules, or schedule of work hours.
24. Keeping written communication simple and clear.
25. Breaking down tasks into smaller units and providing prompts for transition from one step to the next.
26. Providing information in both the visual and auditory modes.
27. Using graphics to illustrate projects.
28. Using time-line charts to help the employee visualize the flow of a complicated multi-phase project.
29. Coaching! Coaching! Coaching!!

WRF/Adapted from Succeeding In The Workplace, Latham and Latham

Coaching

COACHING IN GENERAL

Coaching is a supportive, practical, concrete process in which the client and coach direct their attention toward areas in which change is desired. Together, they develop strategies, plan next action steps and pace the journey toward achieving goals. Coaching involves the *whole* person. Individuals choose a coach in order to better plan, strategize, over-come obstacles, obtain resources and be accountable for next action steps. Coaching issues and goals may encompass any and all of the following areas: work; home; finances; spiritual, creative and intellectual growth; relationships; optimal self-care need; and life-balance.

SPECIFIC LIFE TRANSITIONS BRING INDIVIDUALS TO COACHING

Certain issues often bring individuals to seek a coach. The desire to: find a job; finish a degree; write a book; make more money, save money; manage time, task and priorities at work in business or at school; improve career performance, be a better manager, CEO, doctor, entrepreneur, artist, student.

WHAT BRINGS INDIVIDUALS WITH ADD TO COACHING?

Individuals with ADD have the same issues and life challenges as the non-ADD population. *In addition*, they have ADD to manage and navigate. Clients with ADD need coaches who accept and truly understand ADD. They need coaches who understand different learning styles; the strengths and challenges of ADD; and tools to work with specific ADD challenges. ADD clients will likely need specific help with the following:

- organizational tools and strategies; planning; managing time, tasks, projects, people
- overview and management of sleep, eating, exercise, relaxation time, socializing
- tools and techniques for handling, paper, files, and the stuff of life,
- management of job or school requirements: de-stressing the environment; managing communication; deciding whether or not to inform the workplace of ADD, request accommodations; self-advocacy strategies
- record-keeping and overview of medication - titration, reactions, information to give the psychopharmacologist, therapist and related professionals
- resourcing and referral to appropriate services, web sites, reading material
- setting doable 'homework tasks' or next action steps
- building a network and creating a personal "magic bag of tricks"

HOW COACHES WORK WITH THEIR CLIENTS

Coaches may see clients in their own office setting or in offices connected with other service providers. However, there are many coaches who work by telephone talking with their clients at a weekly prearranged time. This can be once a week or more frequently depending on the kind of coaching the coach provides. There are coach training schools, (Coach U, Coach's Training Institute among them), which train coaches in general coaching skills. *The individual with ADD will likely benefit most from a coach who has specific ADD coach training.*

RESOURCES FOR LOCATING MORE INFORMATION ON ADD COACHES AND COACHING:

The National Attention Deficit Disorder Association	ADD.org
CHADD	CHADD.org
ADDitude Magazine	ADDitude.com
The Optimal Functioning Institute	addcoach.com
ADD Coach Academy	addcoachacademy.com
The American Coach Association	americoach.com

Adapted from: Linda Anderson, M.A. --- linda@gettingclear.com
161 Mechanics Street, Doylestown, PA 18901, 215-230-7315

References:

Bolles, Richard & Brown, Dale. *Job-Hunting for the So-Called Handicapped*
Bramer, J.S. *Succeeding in college with attention deficit disorders*
Brown, Dale. *Learning a living*
Fellman, W. *Finding a career that works for you*
Fellman, W. *The Other Me: Poetic thoughts on ADD for Adults, Kids and Parents*
Latham & Latham. *Succeeding in the workplace*
Nadeau, K.G. *Adventures in fast forward*
Nadeau, K.G. *ADD in the workplace*
Nadeau, K.G. *Understanding Women with AD/HD*
Novotni, M. *What does everybody else know that I don't know?*
Solden, S. *Women With ADD*
Weiss, L. *ADD on the job*

Related Web-sites:

National ADDA: add.org
National CHADD: chadd.org
Other: ADDitudemag.com