



## **ADHD 101 Tips & Strategies for Coaches Fall 2008**

### **Types of Disorders**

1. Auditory Processing (APD): often do not recognize subtle differences between sounds in words, even though the sounds themselves are loud and clear. They also may have difficulty with the sequence of information. For example: "Tell me how a chair and a couch are alike" may sound like "Tell me how a couch and a chair are alike." Or even "Tell me how a cow and a hair are alike." Problems are more likely to occur in a noisy environment or when listening to complex information.
2. Attention Deficit Disorder:
  - a. Inattentive ADD (ADD): well behaved but takes a long time to finish tasks; wandering mind
  - b. Hyperactive ADD (ADHD): most common and most noticeable; impulsive and difficulty focusing
  - c. Combined type (both a and b)

Child should be diagnosed by a team of specialists:

- Audiologist (hearing/listening test)
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Psychologist

Is this curable? NO. But you can learn strategies that will help you manage.

### **Common Attributes**

- 3 step directions are difficult. They may be only hearing part of the message. May hear the first direction and not the second. May hear the second but not the first.
- HABIT and ROUTINE are IMPORTANT. They often cannot reorganize and process information. Organization skills are difficult to maintain.
- Asking them to repeat something doesn't mean they've absorbed the information and ingrained it into memory. The information is may be immediately lost after they've repeated it (if they even can repeat).

### **General Strategies**

- Behavior Therapy
- Memory strategies help with their filing system. The information needs to stick in their brains and must be stored in the right place.
- Integration- picturing it in their minds and committing to memory. Help them make it relate. (i.e. "remember that set we did Monday" vs. "remember that set we did where Johnny threw up in the gutter?").

## How to Effectively Coach- Strategies

1. Communicate with Parents
  - ✓ Treat this with kid gloves; parents can be extremely defensive
  - ✓ With divorced families, stress consistency since the slightest change may throw them off
2. Be clear and concise.
3. Give one step at a time; break it down into small increments.
4. Speak slowly.
5. Monitor your athlete. Look at them. Do they appear lost or confused?
  - ✓ Note that eye contact with Auditory Processing kids may not be good; too busy reading lips.
6. Visual aids are good- write it down on a white board- don't use too many words!
  - ✓ Access to workout prior helps them put the picture in their head, but again, if you're going to change the workout that you've posted, must state that you are making a change.
7. State that you are changing something.
8. Preferential Placement
  - ✓ Tap foot to get attention as an overt way. Don't single out.
9. Good catch phrases: "Look at me", "Look at the board", "Eyes and ears". Keep repeating until you have everyone's attention.
10. Get your athlete a swim buddy (they may never know what's going on, but they can at least follow someone's lead or ask what they are supposed to be doing)
11. Use all of their awareness (auditory, visual, and tactile). Most of these kids are visual and tactile and aren't good with auditory.
12. Have to try different combinations of strategies. Different things work with different kids.
13. Ask if you can email their SLP for advice, tips, communication, etc.
14. Give frequent and immediate consequences for a child's inappropriate behavior.
15. Use rewards for appropriate behavior.
16. Medication
  - ✓ Very controversial; important to describe your observations objectively
  - ✓ Changing medications may cause athletes to re-learn skills, instructions, drills, routine, etc.
17. Be Compassionate
  - ✓ It's similar to you sitting in on a lecture where the speaker is speaking a foreign language and you're expected to know exactly what's being said and what's going on.
  - ✓ Self-esteem typically really low even though they are pretty smart. They learn to function and cope in our society.
  - ✓ Talk to swimmer in private; not in front of other kids. They DO NOT like to be singled out.

Swimming appears to be GREAT for ADD kids. Something about the rhythmic movements and motions seem to help them.

**Youngsters with ADD or ADHD have many positive qualities and talents** (high energy, outgoing charm, creativity, and figuring out new ways of doing things). Although these traits may be valued in the adult work world, they may cause difficulties for these students, their parents

and teachers. Their high energy, if properly channeled, can be very productive. Typically, children with ADD inattentive tend to be quieter and present few, if any, discipline problems. When they become adults, children with attention deficits and auditory processing problems can be very successful. Having parents and teachers who believe in a child is essential for success!!!

**Medication Note for Swimmers:**

Many ADD/ADHD medications are prohibited in competition. Please call USADA at 1-800-233-0393 to determine protocol and requirements to apply for a Standard Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). Approval takes at least 30 days so this should be done well in advance of participation in National level competitions (Grand Prix, US Open, Nationals, Trials, etc).

A large portion of this information was taken from Jan Curley's ADHD presentation at this year's ASCA World Clinic. For more information or to contact Jan, you can email her directly at [jcurley@lhps.org](mailto:jcurley@lhps.org).