

# Joining the Dots: Inter-Generational ADHD & The coaching model

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## Why 'Joining the Dots'?

The normal coaching model is usually one coach with one client, or a small group of clients. In ADHD coaching, groups are often self-selected - for example I have a group for women over 35, a group for newly diagnosed adults who are keen to try implementing mindfulness adapted for ADHD etc.

What I haven't seen widely is 'family coaching' that looks at the whole family context - although ADDCA 'Fundamentals of Family' absolutely teaches this as the best practice and it's what I offer clients.

Looking at research on the relationships within families - specifically mothers and ADHD children - I realised that these studies often missed the connection: these mothers are not being screened for ADHD themselves.

For example: the study on rates of obesity in mothers of ADHD children did not screen them, when we know that undiagnosed, untreated adults with ADHD are at a significant rate more likely to have eating disorders, most commonly binge eating disorder (BED).

In this presentation, I look at context:

firstly, the current context of ADHD Coaching particularly in the UK, where a government funded scheme has led to a rapid rise in 'ADHD' work coaches as well as the confusion around what 'coaching' means;

Secondly, the family context of ADHD that our clients learn and live in, with some statistical data that highlights the serious nature of untreated or undiagnosed ADHD on all aspects of life, before considering the generational nature of ADHD - the cascade of coping, rather than thriving and how each stage of life can lead to the communication between generations being affected by undiagnosed ADHD.

Then, we look at the powerful impact of coaching on families with ADHD.

Initially contrasting the difference between programs like 'The Incredible Years' with Caroline Maguire's 'Why Will No One Play with Me?' or Dr Ross Greene's 'Collaborative Problem Solving', I then ask how we can put ADHD within the context of possibility - rather than focusing so powerfully on the negative challenges while not diminishing them.

I discuss how technology can be a useful tool (with some evidence) and how we must include our growing cohort of over 50 ADHDers, especially as family ADHD coaches.

Finally, I introduce a proposed model of coaching for generational family groups: FCACM (Family Centred ADHD Coaching Model) and my proposed complement to the very popular RSD discussion - EAR - Emotional Acuity Resonance.

After introducing evidence that mindfulness can (and must) be adapted for ADHD families, I explore possible physical mechanisms for improvement in ADHD traits following the introduction of mindfulness practices and how combining it with emotional intelligence can lead to a decrease in DESR (Deficient Emotional Self Regulation - Dr Barkley) - which could overall

result in better communication, more self efficacy and compassion as well as lower rates of unhelpful coping strategies.

I discuss EAR - and how framing the powerful emotions experienced by many with ADHD as an opportunity to connect with themselves and others, re-orienting it as a potential strength that can be leveraged in families and at work as well as finding ways to set a limit on how much power we give to others could be a significant step into what Ben Zander calls the 'Zone of Possibility'.

Concluding, I hope that as coaches we are able to recall our essential function - to partner with them. That we reflect the strengths, talents, and potential in each of them by seeing them as already whole, creative and resourceful - using our ADHD informed lens to bring the positives into focus at the same time as sharing space, love and wonder along with specific tools they can take up and own; from creative ways to describe and understand their experiences to mindfulness strategies to be used in moments of heightened executive function demand, to the reframe of that emotional intensity and dysregulation as a powerful connector, the emotional acuity resonance, that could in fact become one of their greatest gifts.

(FCACM and EAR are abbreviations created as part of my own work).

Thank you

# Joining the Dots - Selected Further Reading & Bibliography

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