

# Coaching ADD with Sharon

## Newsletter

Women and Girls with ADD

February 6, 2007

### in this issue

- [Women and Girls with ADD](#)
- [Getting Help](#)
- [I'm Interested in Hearing From You!](#)

**Dear Friend,**

One of the reasons that I know as much as I do about ADD is because I have ADD. For years I could not figure out why I could not keep up with others, always felt disorganized, had such low self-esteem, could not understand why I was told to "just try harder," when I was trying as hard as I could. Now I know that focusing, organization and time management are more difficult for me, but I am not lazy, I am trying as hard as I can. Coaching has given me strategies for working with these issues and helped me to regain my self-esteem.

I am a practicing coach and graduate of the ADD Coach Academy and have a degree in Mental Health Psychology. Coaching can be a positive component of a multi-modal treatment plan. I invite you to read the information below, use it and share it with a friend or family member who may be dealing with the frustrations of ADD. Please refer to my web site at [www.coachingaddwithsharon.com](http://www.coachingaddwithsharon.com) for additional information about me and how coaching can help you.

In this sixth issue of the **Coaching ADD with Sharon Newsletter** I will discuss **Women and Girls with ADD**. In the past, diagnostic criteria for ADD came from studying boys who tend more often to be hyperactive and aggressive. We now know that ADD is just as common in girls as it is in boys. In general, the symptoms are different for woman and girls than they are for men and boys. So if you are a woman or parent of a girl who is suffering quietly with confusion, disorganization and feelings of being overwhelmed by daily life, but haven't been able to identify its cause because you are not hyperactive, pay close attention to the information below.



## *Women and Girls with ADD*



According to the Mayo Clinic, there is an estimated 7.5 % of school-aged children with ADHD. This means that there are approximately 4.5 to 5 million women in this country alone with attention deficit disorder. The majority of these women went undiagnosed as children because they were not hyperactive or disruptive in the classroom. These young girls were working as hard as they could just to concentrate and keep up with the class because they had difficulty focusing, noises in the room were distracting, organization was difficult and they were hypersensitive to criticism. Because they did not disrupt the class, they were overlooked. This is called Inattentive ADD (easily distracted with a low

attention span, not hyperactive, but often seeming sluggish or apathetic).

Those girls who have hyperactive ADD (ADHD) feel frantic and argumentative, but still deal with the lack of ability to focus, distractibility and disorganization of the Inattentive ADDers. In both cases they suffer from feeling overwhelmed, have self-esteem issues and have a low tolerance for stress.

As adults, women with ADD struggle with worry, insecurity, feelings of being overwhelmed, and low self-esteem. They are constantly behind in their daily schedule and deal with piles of paper and other clutter. If they have learned some of the skills to compensate for their ADD, they are often expending immense amounts of energy in staying organized.

The daily demands of balancing a career, home and family are difficult for anyone, but for the ADD woman, it is very stressful and impossible to stay on top of it all. When this happens, she faces criticism from others, being labeled a bad housewife, not doing enough, lazy. These criticisms are internalized adding to anxiety, low self-esteem and often substance abuse. Many are uncomfortable in relationships, feel incapable of entertaining, are challenged by parenting.

ADD in women is often diagnosed as depression. Although women with attention deficit do struggle with depression, it is only part of the problem. If you wonder if ADD is part of your life, but are not sure, some of the major symptoms are:

- You were told as a child that you should "just try harder" by parents and teachers
- Difficulty with math and/or English in school
- Hypersensitivity to noise, touch or smell
- Have trouble completing tasks
- Are constantly misplacing things
- Feel constantly overwhelmed by daily demands
- Are constantly running late for work or meetings
- Are always buried under piles of paperwork
- Constantly forget appointments or other important dates
- Ruminating (constantly reliving past bothersome issues in your mind)
- Can't balance your checkbook
- Are impulsive about things like spending money, making decisions, food choices
- Have trouble shifting your attention from one task to the next
- Difficulty remembering names
- Extreme difficulty paying attention to things that do not interest you (easily bored)
  - Trouble falling asleep and waking up



ADD can be mild, moderate or severe. You may have all or some of the symptoms listed above. You may have some of them to a greater degree than others. In any case, they are keeping you from living a productive and satisfying life.

***"Don't let what you can't do get in the way of what you can"***

*Getting Help*

Coaching is a non-judgmental partnership that focuses on guiding you toward actions to improve the quality of your life. Sessions begin with what the client feels is their

strategies for change. If you are ready to improve your life, I can help. Visit my web site [www.coachingaddwithsharon.com](http://www.coachingaddwithsharon.com) or email me at [sharonh75@optonline.net](mailto:sharonh75@optonline.net).

*I'm Interested in Hearing From You!*

As part of my bi-weekly newsletter, I would like to know if you have questions or experiences to share. Other readers can benefit from answers to the questions or situations you have successfully dealt with. Please e-mail me at [sharonh75@optonline.net](mailto:sharonh75@optonline.net) and I will try to include your questions and/or situations anonymously in future newsletters.

Sharon Howell

*Sharon Howell*

### *Quick Links...*

- [More About Us](#)
- [CHADD \(Children with Attention Deficit Disorder\)](#)
- [ADDA \(Attention Deficit Disorder Association\)](#)
- [CACLD \(CT Association for Children & Adults w/Learning Disabilities\)](#)
- [Dr. Daniel Amen and the Amen Clinics](#)

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