

Georgia Southern University

Georgia Southern Commons

National Youth Advocacy and Resilience
Conference

26th Annual NYAR Conference (March 1-4,
2015)

Mar 3rd, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

ADHD: Maladaptive Disorder or Evolutionary Adaptation

Jeremiah Hopes

The Center of Hope, jhopes@centerofhopes.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar_savannah



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hopes, Jeremiah, "ADHD: Maladaptive Disorder or Evolutionary Adaptation" (2015). *National Youth Advocacy and Resilience Conference*. 59.

https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar_savannah/2015/2015/59

This presentation (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences & Events at Georgia Southern Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in National Youth Advocacy and Resilience Conference by an authorized administrator of Georgia Southern Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

ADD, ODD or Just BAD

ADHD: Maladaptive Disorder or
Evolutionary Adaptation

March 3, 2015

National Youth at Risk Conference
Savannah, GA

Jeremiah Hopes, MS, LPC, LCAS, CAADC



Objectives

- ▶ Explore research that presents ADHD as adaptive rather than maladaptive
- ▶ Analyze the implications of viewing ADHD symptoms as strengths
- ▶ Discuss how parents, teachers, helping professionals and physicians can use this information to assist children impacted by ADHD

Hunter-Gatherer Theory

- ▶ Researchers of evolutionary psychology propose the idea that inattentive, impulsive, and hyperactive symptoms typical of ADHD increased survival in harsh prehistoric hunter gatherer societies (Hartmann, 2003).
- ▶ Thom Hartman calls the “symptoms” response ready characteristics. Sedentary learning environments promote failure among response ready individuals (Stolzer, 2009).

Hunter-Gatherer Theory

- ▶ Rather than medicating natural and adaptive traits, researchers suggest that school systems creatively harness the strengths of response ready children.
- ▶ The implications of viewing the symptoms of ADHD as strengths may change the vantage point and possibly the scope of treatment, parenting and education.

Implications of the Evolutionary Adaptation Theory

- ▶ **Medication**
- ▶ **Education**
- ▶ **Therapy/Treatment**
- ▶ **Parenting**

Implications for Medication

- ▶ Children need nutrients to meet the demands of their rapid metabolic systems
- ▶ Foods high in sugar, caffeine, food additives, and artificial ingredients contribute to behavioral problems.
- ▶ Medications used to treat ADHD often suppress the appetite which leads to malnutrition (Romm & Romm, 2000).

Implications for Medication

Phillips (2006) also argues that dyslexia and autism are highly problematic disorders with no particular pharmaceutical treatment, but the pharmaceutical giants are far less adamant about educating teachers about these disorders.

Educational Implications

- ▶ Hartman (2003) discussed Thomas Edison's marginalization by the his school.
- ▶ His teacher described him as slow, inattentive and too active.
- ▶ Edison's mother removed him from the school and taught him herself.
- ▶ She did not give up on him and did not allow the teacher to define who he was and what he was able to do.

Alternative Educational Options

- ▶ Barkley (2005) contends that the teacher is the most important component to success of ADHD diagnosed children in the school environment. He expresses the importance of parents communicating openly and frequently with their child's teachers.

Alternative Educational Options

- ▶ Stolzer (2009) suggests the impetus rest on the education of the educators.
- ▶ Encourages teachers to learn more about the gender differences between boys and girls
- ▶ Recognize that sedentary learning environments may be counter productive for boys and children diagnosed with ADHD.

Alternative Educational Options

The Hunter School

Alternative Educational Options

- ▶ Montessori Education
- ▶ Maria Montessori, born in 1870

- ▶ Thought that each child is born with a unique potential to be revealed, not a "blank slate" waiting to be written upon.

- ▶ Preparing the most natural and life-supporting environments for the child

- ▶ Observing the child living freely in this environment

- ▶ Continually adapting the environment in order that the child may fulfill his or her greatest potential, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Source: www.montessori.edu/maria.html

Alternative Educational Options

▶ Diamondback Ranch Academy

Implications for Parents

Focus on your child's strengths

Inform your child's teachers of his or her strengths

Encourage participation in a variety of extracurricular activities

Encourage fresh air play and activities (hiking, biking, outdoor activities)

Show pride in your child (brag to others about his or her strengths)

Use strength based behavior modification approaches

Focus on motivation systems

References

- ▶ Amen, D. G. (2001). *Healing ADD: The Breakthrough Program That Allows You to See and Heal the 6 Types of ADD*. New York: Berkley Books.
- ▶ Armstrong, T. *Multiple Intelligences In The Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (1994).
- ▶ Barkley, R.A. (2005). *Taking Charge of ADHD*. New York, New York: The Guilford Press.
- ▶ Buss, D. M. (2009). The great struggles of life: Darwin and the emergence of evolutionary psychology. *American Psychologist*, 64(2) 140-148.
- ▶ Copeland, E.D. & Love, V.L. (1995). *Attention, Please: A Comprehensive Guide for Successfully Parenting Children with Attention Disorders and Hyperactivity*. Plantation, FL: Specialty Press.
- ▶ Frick, PJ & Nigg, J.T. (2012). Current issues in the diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and conduct disorder. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* 77-107.
- ▶ Klingner, K., Vaughn, S. (1998). Using collaborative strategic reading. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 30(6), 32- 37.
- ▶ Hartman, T. (2003) *The Edison Gene: ADHD and the Gift of the Hunter Child*. Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press.

References

- ▶ Hallowell, E.M. & Ratey, J.J. (1994). *Driven to Distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood through Adulthood*. New York, New York: Touchstone.
- ▶ Jensen, P., Mrazek, D., Knapp, P., Steinber, L., Pfeffer, C., & Schowalter, J. (1997). Evolution and revolution in child psychiatry: ADHD as a disorder of adaptation. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 36 (12), 1672–1681.
- ▶ Jitendra, A.K., DuPaul, G.J., Someki, F., & Tresco, K.E. (2008). Enhancing academic achievement for children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder: Evidence from school-based intervention research. *Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*, 14, 325-330.
- ▶ Mannuzza, S., Klein, R. G., Moulton, J. L. (2008). Lifetime criminality among **boys** with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: A prospective follow-up study into adulthood using official arrest records. *Psychiatry Research*, 160, 237-246.

References

- ▶ Phillips, C. (2006). Medicine goes to school: Teachers as sickness brokers for ADHD. *Public Library of Science Medicine*, 3 (4), 1–9.
- ▶ Pruitt, D.B. (1998). *Your Child: Emotional, Behavioral and Cognitive Development from Birth Through Preadolescence*. New York, New York: Harper Collins.
- ▶ Romm, A., Romm, T. (2000). *ADHD Alternatives: A Natural Approach to Treating Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*. Pownal, Vermont: Storey Books.
- ▶ Stolzer, J.M. (2009). Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: Valid medical condition or culturally constructed myth? *Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry*, 11 (1), 5-15.
- ▶ Wender, P.H. (2000). *ADHD: Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children, Adolescents, and Adults*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

Contact

Book a Speaking Event: booking@centerofhopes.com

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/jerhopes>

Email: jhopes@centerofhopes.com

Website: www.centerofhopes.com

