

The voice of ADDISS - The National ADHD Information and Support Service

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over £6000 for
ADHD charities
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**ADHD People can
change
the *WORLD!***

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RELATIONSHIP
Bloom

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FOR ADHD
Monitoring

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CAN CHANGE
THE **WORLD**

ADDISS

National Attention Deficit Disorder Information & Support Service.

We provide people-friendly information and resources about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to anyone who needs assistance - parents, sufferers, teachers or health professionals. All our activities are supported by our Professional Board of expert advisers.

■ MEMBERSHIP of ADDISS

Gives you this newsletter four times a year, notification of talks across the UK and abroad, notification of new publications as well as special offers including discounted entrance to conferences and training events.

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- £45 for professionals
- £30 for parents, and adults with ADHD.

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Know how your ADHD makes you different and... See Your Relationship Bloom!

by Melissa Orlov

You are very different from your non-ADHD partner. Your brains work differently, you experience the world around you differently, and you interpret information differently. Understanding how, and you can learn to treasure and celebrate the wonders that your unique perspectives bring to your relationship.

Here are some of the key ways you are unique from each other:

People with ADHD receive information in an unfiltered way: The non-ADD brain is hierarchical. What's not so important at any moment is suppressed enough to get out of the way. So, for example, if a person without ADHD is sitting in a meeting while someone is speaking, their mind generally blocks out the sound of the coffee machine, the tapping of a pencil across the table, the green flashing light of someone's Blackberry. Not so with the ADHD person. The ADHD mind sees or hears all of those things – they are often received with almost equal intensity.

Think of it as having a 'noisy' brain. Much is going on inside, and it's hard to stay focused on the 'top' priority instead of on what is immediate. One friend with ADHD described it as "having the Library of Congress in your head, with no card catalogue." This inability to focus may be an advantage in some realms. For example, creativity might be enhanced by the lack of filter or direction. But in relationships, "why is it so hard for my ADHD partner to focus on what s/he agreed to do?" is a common question. The answer is "because what is immediately in front of me (in my brain) is what is easiest to pay attention to." To adjust to this characteristic of ADHD in a relationship, it helps to bring important things back into the 'now' at the right time – for example, setting aside a one hour window each day to do chores, and then using a list or having a partner remind the ADHD partner of the specific things that need to be accomplished right then. Or setting aside a time every evening at dinner when the only thing on the agenda is to talk with your partner without interruptions so she knows you love her and are interested in her life, even if you are often distracted at other times.

You perceive time differently:

Dr. Ned Hallowell says there are really only two time zones for a person with ADHD – 'now' and 'not now'. A person with ADHD is very 'present' focused. Something that was going on 10 minutes ago is out of mind, as is the thing that will happen 10 minutes into the future. This has to do with executive function strengths and weaknesses, memory, and the ability to visualize what might happen in the future.

This 'present-ness' shows up in a number of ways in your relationship. An ADHD partner, for example, may have trouble remembering what was talked about a week ago. Or she may know that it's good to save money for the future, but has trouble staying focused on that goal when spending right now seems so much more appealing.

Another way to think of 'now and not now' is to imagine you have 'time tunnel vision'. Here is how one man with ADHD describes how he interacts with time:

“I often use this analogy: I look at time through a papertowel roll moving from left to right on a time-line. I see only what is in my vision at that moment. As I progress along the time-line the thoughts and sights that were in my little window have passed to the left and often forgotten. If I act on things in the window I can be somewhat successful. If I miss it, it could be gone forever. I also cannot see or think about the time to the right of my window. This makes it difficult to plan ahead. (For instance, I have a hard time planning for the weekend and before you know it, the weekend is here and I have no plans)”

Being aware of 'now/not now' (or 'time tunnel vision' if you prefer that) can work in your favor. More structured non-ADHD partners can learn to celebrate the spontaneity of being in the now, adding energy and surprise to their lives. ADHD partners can become less spontaneous by creating reminder systems that pop up in the 'now' when it's time to do something or contact someone. In this way, the couple 'meets in the middle' between their two styles.

ADHD partners also tend to perceive time more fluidly than do non-ADHD partners.

There are essentially two versions of time fluidity that I've seen. One is consistently underestimating how long it will take to complete a task because one's sense of time is always off in the same way (my husband). The other is what I think of as 'unevenly distracted' (my daughter). In this case, the person with ADHD might get distracted by anything while doing a project – or might not. So she'll often guess wrong about how long something will take, but she might be off by a little, or off by a lot. Which it will be is unpredictable.

A non-ADHD spouse can compensate for the former by allowing a consistently greater amount of time for any project. If my husband says "5 minutes!" I leave about 25 and don't worry about it. In the latter, a partner might keep closer track by checking in with the ADHD partner on a regular basis. Determine a mutually agreeable way to do this that is neutral (no nagging!) With my daughter, it's usually just a "how are you doing?" question and response...I don't try to alter what she is doing, just stay on top of where she is so that I may plan what I am doing around her.

You respond more emotionally and more quickly: Research done in 2014 suggests that 'emotional lability' may be a core feature of ADHD. That means a person with ADHD responds more quickly, and with a greater intensity of emotion (positive and negative) than one without ADHD. This may make the ADHD partner seem both surprisingly explosive, as well as under-responsive to others' emotions.

Just being aware of the fact that this is an artifact of the executive function issues that an ADHD adult has 'built in' to his or her brain can help a couple devise ways to diminish the mismatches that may occur around this issue. Having a non-ADHD partner let suddenly explosive emotions pass them by, rather than engage with them, can help. In addition, ADHD partners who are aware of how

quickly he or she ramps up and learns it's part of his or her brain (rather than the fault of something the other partner did) can learn to soothe and de-escalate with a gentle reminder from a partner. If sudden and explosive anger is a problem, sometimes medications can also help moderate or eliminate this issue.

Your head is full of energy and speed, even if you have the 'distracted' version of ADHD:

Hallowell likens living with ADHD to driving in the rain with bad windshield wipers at about 90 miles per hour. Every once in a while things are very clear, but most of the time you're not completely sure what's coming at you – and it's coming fast! He is referring to two kinds of speed – the bracing, euphoric, exciting variety (think race car driving) and also the speed and all-encompassing way that information comes at a person with ADHD. As pointed out earlier, the ADHD brain has few filters on it – everything enters at once, and in a big jumble. This provides some interesting dilemmas in a world that values hierarchy, but it also creates opportunity.

Embracing speed is one aspect of ADHD with which many non-ADHD spouses have trouble. I advised one woman whose ADHD husband went on business trips every two weeks (which she described as periods of "blissful calm") then came home in a whirlwind ("completely exhausting!") to start to plan ahead for ways to harness that energy in a positive way. I suggested scheduling fun outings with the kids to take advantage of her husband's energy, and perhaps some time out together.

But I also suggested that she plan her own much-needed downtime while he was home, as well – perhaps going to the library to read or planning a quieter night out with her girlfriends. Or perhaps creating a quiet place for temporary retreat within her home. She can shut the door and refuel a bit. If non-ADHD partners are exhausted by the energy of an ADHD spouse, setting quiet time aside just for oneself is important for their health, as well as for the health of the marriage.

You may lack impulse control: One of the hallmarks of ADHD is having trouble controlling impulses. This may lead to the ADHD spouse interrupting a partner in the middle of an important discussion point, or saying honest but hurtful things because s/he didn't think about how to word what s/he was saying carefully before the words got out. It's easy to misinterpret this as intentionally rude behavior...but it's unintentional. The ADHD spouse needs to take responsibility for learning to control impulsive behavior (it hurts, intentional or not!) It also helps if the non-ADHD spouse is understanding and supportive, rather than responding in anger at every impulsive action of the ADHD partner.

Differences are part of why you fell in love: These differences between the two of you are part of why you got together in the first place and should be treasured, rather than discouraged. Impulsive people can make great entrepreneurs, and people who receive information in a non-hierarchical way often have a great ability to think outside the box because their brain doesn't get in the way. Energy, of course, can be a real asset when you are trying to accomplish something difficult, and speed can allow a person with ADHD to juggle many things at once. Conversely, the organizational skill, natural ability to focus on the important stuff, and slower pace of a non-ADHD partner can help provide stability and grace to your relationship. Opposites really do attract, and treasuring how you are different can add great joy to your relationship. Be open to learning how you are unique, celebrate the positives, and you will be better positioned to have a successful partnership 🧐

Melissa Orlov

is a marriage consultant who specializes in working with couples impacted by ADHD. She is the author of two award-winning books on the topic, and provides phone seminars for couples seeking to improve their relationships.



• More information is available at www.adhdmarrriage.com

• To purchase either of Melissa's books go to the back page ●►

by Colin McGee

A little over three years ago ADDISS received a phone call from The Italian Institute of Educational Technologies in Palermo, Italy, inviting us to join it and three other universities (Portugal, Greece and Dublin) in a European ADHD project.

The project focused on developing an application that would help to bring parents, teachers and professionals closer together in a positive effective framework while observing and managing children's ADHD behaviour. ADDISS were very proud to be asked as this is something that we hold very close to our hearts.

This was a beginning of a new journey for ADDISS. We spent three years immersed in various steep learning curves that thankfully tailed off when we finally reached the areas of the project that our skills and experiences could be introduced more formally. One of the earliest tasks was beginning to understand how applications are designed and produced to work effectively across a wide range of technology that we naively presumed were the same. Fortunately we were led and supported by experts from the different Universities who were responsible for developing the software for Laptops, Tablets and Smart phones. Each piece of technology needed specific software but they had all had to be able to work and talk with each other.

In the beginning of the project our expertise was not significantly called on as it was mainly developing the architecture of the program and the software. Our help was needed when we were

information and advice about ADHD. This was an important area as we were building a resource that many different people could access and they would all be at different levels of awareness. As time passed we felt less lost as we developed a better understanding of the application and what it was going to look like.

The Portuguese team designed and created a wonderful E-training program that helped to deliver up to date information and bring people up to speed on the use of the application.



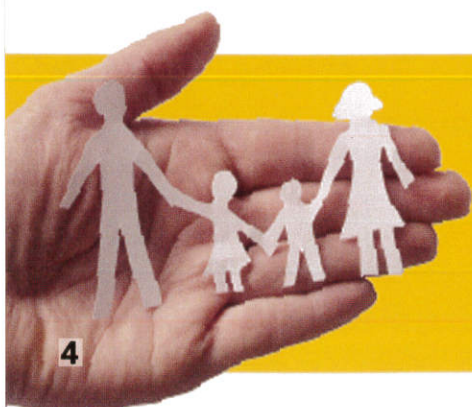
PROJECT

developing questions and ideas to build the software around.

Initially it was a very slow process as there were so many small things that were needed that simply didn't seem to link up with other parts of the program in our mind. Eventually, like an immense jigsaw puzzle the picture started to emerge and we could begin see the bigger picture. Finally we were at a place that we could bring our expertise of working directly with the ADHD community and education into play. It was a relief to get back on solid ground! It was a joyous experience cooperating with experts in different countries to create something that was going to be free and support the ADHD community and probably lot more people in the long term.

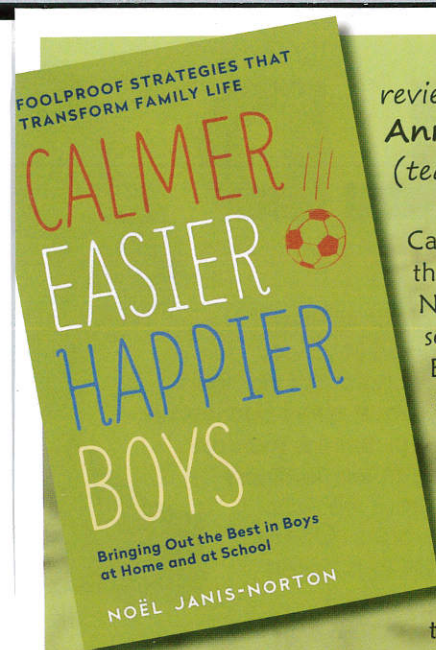
The software continued to be tweaked throughout the project and all members worked on writing passages that would make up the wealth of background

These meetings were a challenge. The working time was intense and detailed. Finer points of the software were explored and each country presented and led on different aspects. There were many hard fought points that we had to work through and agree on. However the spirit and friendships of the WHAAM community was wonderful. After the hard work of the project was finished we were able to gain some real experiences of the cities we visited. Sadly this was only for a short time. Then it was back to the hotel room for more late night preparation for the next day's meetings. We had some interesting 'informal' guided tours of Palermo, Dublin, Porto and Thessalonica as well as wonderful meals and shared experiences in each city. When the final meeting happened in London we hosted it and were supported at The Bridge School, Islington. (An all age special school and teaching school). ADDISS do not have premises to use for this kind of meeting or training. It is near the top of our wish list through!



We give you a helping hand
to create a network
around your child

The web site for the WHAAM application is www.whaamproject.eu. There is an excellent e-training section that has been verified by several universities and can help inform both professionals and families...



review by
Annie Saunders
(teacher and SENCo)

Calmer, Easier, Happier Boys is the third book by Noël Janis-Norton in a highly regarded series that began with Calmer, Easier, Happier Parenting and continued with Calmer, Easier, Happier Homework. More titles in this series are in the pipeline.

This book about boys is of particular interest to parents of children

with Attention Deficit Disorder. It starts by describing the characteristics of typical boys, qualities shared by that significant third of girls who, research suggests, are similar to boys. Many of these characteristics fit well with the profile of children with ADHD, such as being impulsive, fidgety, easily distracted, thrill-seeking, rowdy, socially awkward, along with having a short attention span and underdeveloped fine-motor skills. For many of these children, these qualities adversely effect their behaviour, their academic achievement, their friendships and ultimately their sense of self-worth.

Boys (and those girls) who are born this way, Noël explains, require help to mature. They also need affirmation and channelling of their strengths. Society needs their high energy, enthusiasm, loyalty, risk-taking, sense of adventure and competitiveness. Mums, she says, cannot help boys develop fully without input from a father-figure. Boys need exposure to mature male role models. Where a dad is part of the family, he needs the space to do things his own way with his sons. If the dad is not around, mums need to find other sensible male adults, in or outside the family, so our boys can aspire to be responsible men.

Over the years Noël has helped thousands of families. She has achieved this by teaching parents a set of skills that guide children to become more cooperative, more confident, more motivated, more considerate and more self-reliant.

Those who are already familiar with Noël's work will see here again such parenting strategies as descriptive praise, preparing for success, reflective listening, time alone with each parent, fostering self-reliance and following through with rewards and consequences. In this book Noël shows parents how to use these strategies to make life with boys calmer, easier and happier.

This is a readable book, very clear and full of practical ideas. It has the power to transform our boys' lives and our relationship with them.

When the team met in London, ADDISS had the difficult decision of where to take the WHAAM Team to enjoy our final group meal in London. The struggle of selecting a place to meet and eat was complicated by the amazing range of choices that are available in London. Chinese cuisine won out and had we a very warm and lively banquet at a favourite ADDISS restaurant.

This may all sound very jolly but we were a group of around 20 people from different cultures who worked closely together for three years and who put in many, many hours of background work and planning leading up to each meeting and then more work following them. But, we enjoyed the challenge of making sure both the final application and

the training would be as good as possible. We also knew that the people and families that we support and advise would benefit from the best product we could make. I think that the joint expertise of the five countries have contributed to something that will be very effective and useful for our members, both present and the ones to come and join us in the future.

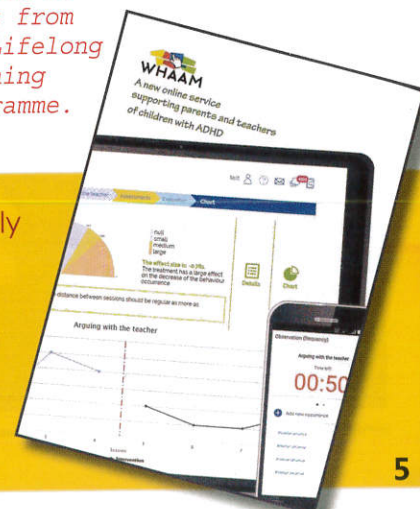
One of the interesting challenges that had very little to do with ADHD was editing the different contributions from each country. The final products we produced were a web site, an effective application and a book that we all contributed to. These were written in the teams home language initially and translated into English, as we followed the

European community regulations. (There are a lot of Regulations to follow!) But editing was fascinating as all of the written work, PowerPoint's and hand-outs needed gentle nudging into more formal English. I now have immense respect for anyone who is involved in translating work. There are so many words that have at least half a dozen possible meanings and the need to select the most appropriate one that links to the next word is more challenging than a cryptic crossword.

The project was funded with an EU grant from the Lifelong Learning Programme.



Lifelong Learning Programme



...about some of the current thinking around ADHD.

It is important we get this information out into schools and the community. Please share the information and let's see if we

can get the application used effectively across the UK.

Copies of the supporting book are free – email: info@addiss.co.uk

I am an adult with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Every single day, I and millions like me struggle through this condition. We have problems following through, staying focused, maintaining motivation, and completing tasks. We do not function well in routine reality, but many of us thrive when life deals us intensity.

By Kevin Roberts

► **When I travel** for example, my ADHD symptoms seem to vanish. Being in new places and around new people excites me and activates my brain. When I did a speaking tour through the United Kingdom and Europe this past June, I stayed organized and energized for two weeks straight. I am an author and usually struggle terribly with writer's block, but on that trip I completely edited my recently finished book, started the outline for my next book, and finished the first stages of planning for an ADHD exchange trip next year. While sitting still and completing rote tasks bedevils people like me, when life is filled with possibility and adventure, many of us with ADHD are unstoppable.

The adults who surround ADHD young people frequently fail to focus on our strengths, and we can as a result develop serious self-esteem issues. The good news is that there are great examples of extraordinarily successful people with ADHD, many of whom have changed the world. We need ADHD heroes and heroines to inspire us and to counteract the steady diet of negativity that many of us receive in school.



Sir Richard Branson

Love him or hate him, **Sir Richard Branson** who to the best of our knowledge, has no formal diagnosis of ADHD but has struggled with dyslexia, has made a huge impact on the world of business. Like many with ADHD, this amazingly successful billionaire does not play by the rules of the system, but rather creates his own systems, excelling in innovation and out-of-the-box thinking. A visionary, he does not limit himself to one field, but is continually on the lookout for new and adventurous opportunities. Like Sir Richard, ADHD young people often fail when shackled to the system because their strengths are pathologized. Young people whose talents, like those of Sir Richard, include creativity, spontaneity, risk-taking, and playfulness are usually viewed by teachers as troublesome and problematic. Weighted down with such labels, individuals like Sir Richard all too often perform poorly in school.

So the place in which we spend 30-40 hours per week, an institution that essentially measures our worth, does not generally honour who we are and our unique contributions to the world. We hunger for adventure, new experiences, and challenge. Without these, we usually fail, or at least underperform. School and many jobs just do not offer the stimulation we require to optimally function. But solutions for ADHDers do not come from helping us succeed in living boring, mundane, and repetitive lives. What if Sir Richard used his energy to force himself to play by the same rules as everyone else? The world of business would be deprived of many innovative strategies.

**when life is filled
with possibility and
adventure, many of
us with ADHD are
unstoppable.**

Another great ADHDer also struggled in school. Unlike Sir Richard, this individual failed at almost every business he ever started. But this man did something so extraordinary that his deeds will echo down the ages. **Oskar Schindler** was kicked out of school, had numerous brushes with the law and, like many ADHDers who fail to find their way in life, struggled with addiction. But for a brief period during World War II, the intensity and dire nature of circumstances brought forth his inner genius. If you do not know the story, he outwitted the Nazis and saved 1200 Jewish people from the fires of Auschwitz.

Oskar Schindler had all the hallmarks of ADHD: impulsivity, poor follow-through, difficulty staying on task, as well as terrible organizational challenges. But when extreme intensity greeted him every day and when people's lives depended on his actions and decisions, Schindler came alive! A few wise Jewish businessmen in the

Kraków ghetto saw Oskar's genius and supported him in his most extraordinary endeavour. Sir Richard's parents also supported his every endeavor, and this fact

underscores the importance of looking passed the disabilities, like Sir Richard's dyslexia, and relentlessly shining light on a person's strengths.

In my work with ADHD people, I find that a very common strength is an innate desire to help others. You will succeed in helping those of us with ADHD if you work to empower us to find intensity and excitement, activities that activate our minds. Better yet, help us find purpose. ADHDers know the pain of alienation, of being shunted to the margins of school and the society at large, and so, many of us possess instinctual empathy and a desire to help ease the suffering in the world.



Oskar



Schindler

We may not all have the skills and aptitudes to become billionaires or defeat an evil empire, but I assure that if you look carefully at a person with ADHD and peel back the problems and the difficulties, you will find an individual who powerfully wants to be of service. You do us the most good when you help us help others. With support, intense and relentless focus on our strengths, and the abiding belief that we have something unique to offer, you can help us—and we will—

Change the World!



Kevin Roberts is an international expert on ADHD, has appeared around the world, been interviewed extensively on radio

and television and is the author of two books, *Cyber Junkie: Escape the Gaming and Internet Trap*, as well as *Movers, Dreamers, and Risk-Takers: Unlocking the power of ADHD*. In February 2016, he will release his third book, published by ADDISS: *Success and Failure with ADHD: The Oskar Schindler Story*. Roberts specializes in forging strategic plans to help ADHD young people succeed in school.

In June this Year Kevin Roberts Colin McGee and Andrea Bilbow will be taking teenagers with ADHD from the US and UK on a 4 day trip to Poland to visit the Schindler Factory Auschwitz & Birkenhau to learn more about how people with ADHD can make great contributions to the world

If your teen is interested in joining us contact ADDISS for more information.

On Sunday the 18th October we hosted the **#ADHDORBIT**

Fundraising Abseil down the Arcelormittel Orbit in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic park in Stratford

The sun was shining and it was a beautiful day. We had 40 wonderful people with ADHD who over came their fear of heights and abseiled 80 metres down this amazing sculpture. That first step over the ledge at the very top is one of the most frightening I have experienced but once I was off it and dangling from the ropes I slowly and calmly descended down this impressive structure taking in the magnificent view of London. Just taking that first step was all it needed and some of our fundraisers decided to go back up and do it again. We would like to thank all our fundraisers who together raised over £6,000 for ADDISS. We were also really pleased that some of the local charities were able to take advantage of the day and raise funds for their own charities. A big thank you to Dr Puvanendran, Fintan O'Regan, Jerry Mills and all our fundraisers. In 2016 we are hoping to go to Wales to ride the longest zip wire in the world.



"ADHD: Change the World" T-shirt

£7.50 + £2.00
postage & packing

www.addiss-shop.com

Better Together Festival

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF WOMEN WITH ADHD

This jam-packed, day-long festival will take place in a large lush park along a beautiful river in the Ann Arbor, Michigan area. The day will feature picnic lunches, live music, and inspirational remarks by international ADHD experts like:

- Andrea Bilbow OBE
- Dr. Ellen Liittman
- David Giwerc
(and of course!)
- Sari Solden.

There will be * Lawn games * an Art Walk * a Pep Rally * Entertainment from pros such as Jerry Mills and Kevin Roberts * Dancing under the Stars * and a world class Talent Show...

All to celebrate women with ADHD! Event attendees will be encouraged to share their talents and actively participate in the festival by sending in artwork or inspirational stories, singing in the choir, or joining in the talent show.

Saturday May 14th 2016
• Michigan USA

Instead of a conference, Sari Solden & her associate Michelle Frank are hosting a gathering that will bring people together to celebrate and highlight the gifts and talents of women with ADHD around the world.

This festival is not just for women; it is for anyone who wants to celebrate the lives of the remarkable women who have shared their stories, struggles, and triumphs with us throughout the years.

www.bettertogetherfest.com

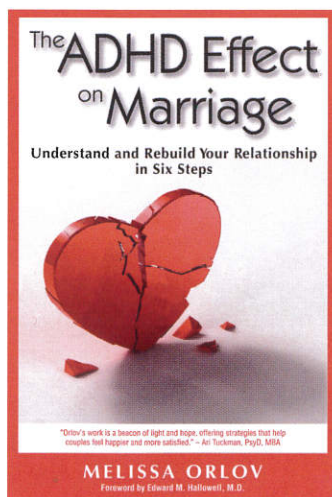
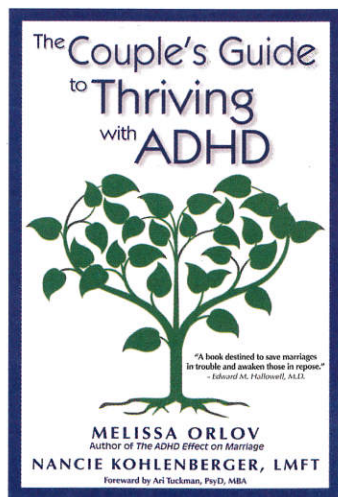
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Sponsored by Sari Solden & Associates

ADDISS SHOP

Books can be purchased from
www.addiss-shop.com



in North London just before Christmas. It was attended by over 80 adults who are struggling with ADHD and relationships. Melissa has published two really helpful books which you can now purchase through the ADDISS bookshop. She also recommends the all time classic book on adult ADHD, *Driven to Distraction* by Edward Hallowell and John Ratey

About 15 million adults have ADHD, and they and their partners often experience significant relationship difficulties as a result.

The characteristics of ADHD - chronic distraction; poor planning; time management issues; short-term memory issues and more - can make staying happy when you have family and marital responsibilities a challenge. Partner responses to

ADHD symptoms also contribute significant stress. However, adult ADHD is manageable by most, and couples that are well educated about how to manage the impact of ADHD can thrive together. Melissa Orlov was our guest speaker at a recent event



MELISSA ORLOV

The 5th Congress of UKAAN

22nd & 23rd April 2016

Key Challenges and Practical Solutions- a clinician focused conference on Adult ADHD

The UK Adult ADHD Network will host its 5th Congress at the IET Savoy Place, London.

More details
www.ukaan.org

UKAAN

UK ADULT ADHD NETWORK

In JUNE
Lookout for new events in Scotland with Kevin Roberts and Jerry Mills.