

First of all, let me thank you for the opportunity to share with you what I believe, and what I have learned with regard to Learning Disabilities/Attention Deficit Disorder. My presentation at Carman Collegiate's Home & School Meeting on April 4, 2011 barely 'touched the surface' when it comes to discussion of the above – however, by sharing that small amount of information, I hope it has paved the way for greater understanding of the challenges of those affected, as well as those that work with them, those that teach and coach them, and those that parent, live with and love them. I wish to be honest by explaining to you, that because of personal involvement, most of my learning process has revolved around Attention Deficit Disorder. Below are notes from my presentation.

\*\* I am NOT a PROFESSIONAL – I am a CONCERNED PARENT. Therefore, please forgive me for any information which you may or may not agree with.

\*\*I certainly DO NOT HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS but I'm willing and anxious to SHARE any information or knowledge that I have, with anyone who is seeking it.

\*\*I BELIEVE that disabilities/disorders which are "invisible" hold additional challenges (meaning gaining the understanding and belief of AND the support for) from those which people can readily "see".

\*\*With both Learning Disabilities and Learning Disorders (sometimes referred to as Learning 'Differences'), symptoms can range from mild to moderate to severe.

\*\*I BELIEVE (and I have read) that if the symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder are severe enough, this condition is most certainly "DISABLING".

\*\*Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) can include varying degrees of INATTENTIVENESS, IMPULSIVITY AND HYPERACTIVITY – each person will have their own UNIQUE combination of symptoms.

---I would like to add here that although it was thought at one time that children would eventually "outgrow" this disorder, it now seems apparent that this is a LIFE-LONG disorder. From what I understand, the symptoms may appear to diminish over time, possibly because the individual has learned coping strategies. ---

\*\*A diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder is NOT an INDICATOR of INTELLIGENCE LEVEL (IQ). The challenge is that the ADD person struggles with the ability TO USE the intelligence they have i.e.: it's been compared to an educated, intelligent, highly creative executive who would be absolutely 'lost' without their 'executive' secretary to keep things in ORDER for them (the phrase 'absent-minded professor' comes to mind!).

---I encourage you to 'google' DR. THOMAS E. BROWN, specifically his "Brown Model of ADD Syndrome", which so clearly explains the EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS (the cognitive management system of the human brain) which are IMPAIRED in this disorder (activation, focus, effort, emotion, memory and action). A short, easy-to-understand and very worthwhile read.

Also, I'd like to pass on to you another explanation (in very abbreviated and simplified form) presented to us at an ADHD Conference we attended this past fall in Winnipeg. Key-note speaker, Chris A. Zeigler Dendy – an author, former educator and school psychologist AND parent of grown children with ADHD – asked us to think of intelligence or information in our brain that is being transported around in little 'dump' trucks. These little trucks take information to where it is needed in our brain and once we have accessed what we need, the little trucks head off and 'recycle' what we don't need. In an ADD brain, these trucks arrive with the information that is needed but because of 'faulty wiring'?, they head for the 'recycling depot', before that part of the brain has had a chance to access what it needs.----

\*\*A couple of examples we've heard used to attempt to explain what having ADD is like:

- You're in a room with 40 TVs.....they're all on.....they're all on different channels....you are being asked to focus on one TV
- How many of us, from time to time, have moments where we can't remember why we went to the next room or why we went downstairs? For someone with ADD, this can happen over and over and over again in a single day

## RESOURCES

Internet – a multitude of information – search for trustworthy names such as:

Chris A. Zeigler-Dendy

Thomas E. Brown

Russell Barkley

Richard Lavoie

Boyne Regional Library – currently has a number of books on Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder. I've been in touch with them over the last couple of weeks and they have ordered more books on these topics which should arrive soon. I did not ask about videos/DVDs but they have been more than willing to offer assistance so this may be another option/request to consider.

Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba – located at 617 Erin Street in Winnipeg PH: 774-1821. An amazing resource for those seeking information and assistance. They offer Information/Referral (conferences, courses, workshops, etc., training for employers and professionals, distribution of brochures, newsletters and info. bulletins), their Resource Centre has a well-stocked 'library' – a \$25.00 annual membership allows you to 'borrow' books, tapes, DVDs, Support Services for families, adults and professionals, parent training courses, Public Awareness through provincial and national newsletters, forums, on-going media relations, Networking of parents and professionals, other disability groups, presentations to school and gov't. agencies, Research and Other Activities including conducting pilot projects, volunteer development, review of legislation and support systems. Check them out at [www.ldamanitoba.org](http://www.ldamanitoba.org). for a complete description of their services.

At the April 4<sup>th</sup> Home & School Meeting, we had a very few minutes to watch a clip from a video entitled **“When the Chips are Down”** featuring **Richard “Rick” Lavoie, M.A., M. Ed.** This 62 minute video is available, in its entirety, simply by “Googling” *Richard Lavoie – When the Chips are Down* or just *Richard Lavoie*. In this video, he speaks to teaching professionals AND parents regarding children with Learning Disabilities (he does include Attention Deficit Disorder in this session). Topics include ‘changing’ behavior rather than just ‘stopping’ it, positive reinforcement vs. negative consequences, ‘questionable’ practices, preventive discipline and the last 11 minutes or so focuses on Learning Disabled youth (and adults) who just don’t have enough ‘Poker Chips’. Watching this video is one of the best 62 minutes I have ever spent and I encourage all to take time to view it. Many of the views expressed in this video could also be beneficial when dealing with those who do not have a learning disability.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the concern and frustration in dealing with an ADD teen but more importantly, we need to keep in mind how frustrating it must be for the teenager.