



# Quaran-teens with ADHD

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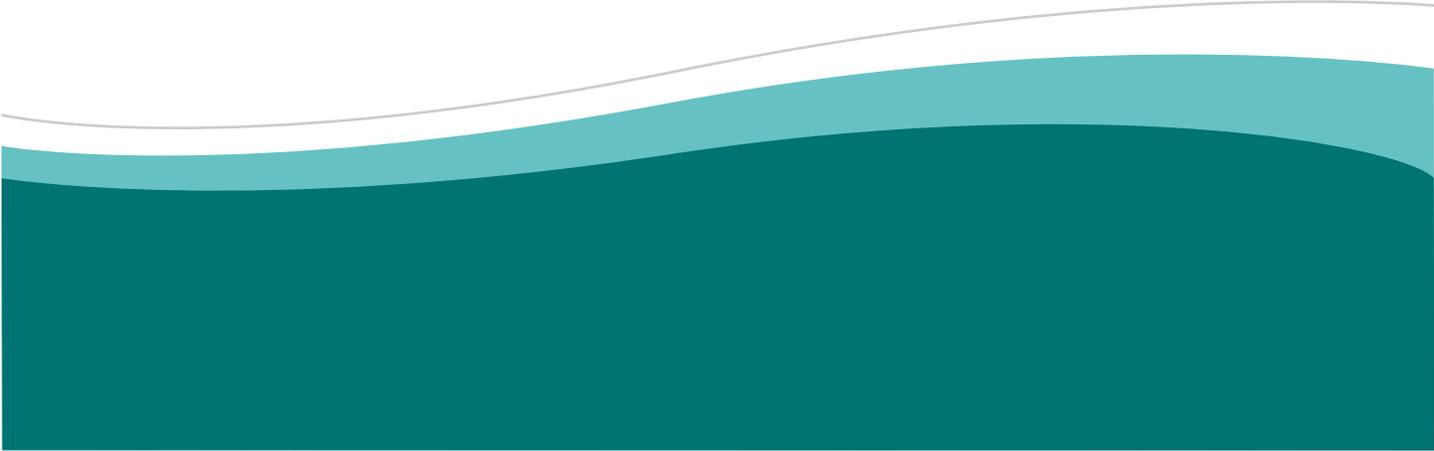
I recently participated in a webinar facilitated by Jodi Sleeper-Triplett, a trainer, mentor coach and author of the book *Empowering Youth with ADHD*. This webinar functioned as a forum for parents to express some of their biggest ADHD parenting challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. This webinar was directed towards parents of teenagers, and many of the obstacles and possible solutions can be applied to children and youth who present with symptoms of ADHD. Below is a list of challenges that may arise and how they can be addressed.

## **1<sup>st</sup> challenge: Your teenager has no motivation to complete any work**

Many school boards, private schools and teachers are communicating with parents and students to provide them with access to educational platforms and individual work. For youth who have lost their school communities as grounding anchors, motivation can be difficult to manifest. You can help your child by breaking down their school work into small chunks and performing accountability check-ins with them. You can also speak with your child to find out if there is someone that they can study with online or by telephone. This can be monitored by the parent but may allow your child to connect to someone outside of the family unit.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> challenge: Creating time for a physical outlet for energy**

Although access to private and community athletic services is not currently possible, use the space in your house, in your yard or in an outdoor green space to release pent up energy and frustrations. If you remain indoors, find an activity that everyone can get involved in. This may involve a household task that is decided upon by your child, listening or playing music, or dancing. Taking breaks from school work or completing school work while standing up (the computer can be placed on a dresser) can encourage your child to remain more focused.





### **3<sup>rd</sup> challenge: Your child may feel lost without a consistent daily routine**

A schedule is important because it allows you to be able to determine what you can realistically accomplish with your time. Creating a schedule with your teenager will allow them to determine what they are able to do in their day and you may be able to somewhat mirror the routine that they had when they were attending school. Set up a routine in which there is a clear understanding of all the steps. Work on having accountability check-ins, which can also be done by text message. Give yourself and your teenager time to adapt to a new schedule. If you provide your teenager with opportunities for choice and they feel that their input is valued, it will be easier for them to buy-in to the schedule.

### **4<sup>th</sup> challenge: Distractions at home and online**

Negotiate the times in which your teenager can use their devices. Use timers and check-ins that you and your child agree upon. You do not need to consistently monitor your child, but if a schedule and times for devices are agreed upon by both of you, they will be more likely to comply with the request.

### **5<sup>th</sup> challenge: Face to face accountability**

Ensure that there is someone or something to help your teenager remain accountable (ex. a friend, trusted family member, timer).

### **6<sup>th</sup> challenge: Difficulty with time management skills**

Children and youth who have ADHD may have difficulty with time-management. Timers can help them stay focused and function as a visual reminder to complete their task(s). Using timers can help build internal time-management skills, which is a useful life-skill.

### **7<sup>th</sup> challenge: Absolute refusal**

Your child may refuse to do any work or participate in any family activities. Involve them in the process and ask them what they would like to learn about. Provide them with a task that is interesting to them and helpful for you. Perhaps they can research a topic that interests them and then teach you about what they learned.





**8<sup>th</sup> challenge: Spiraling anxiety and worry**

If your child is expressing anxiety and worry, you can ask them questions such as, “When you were anxious before, what did you do that worked for you?” Have candid conversations with your child about how this stressful moment is also impacting you. Hearing you acknowledge that you are also experiencing challenges can help normalize your child’s emotional experience. Not all teenagers are comfortable sharing their internal world with their parents and so your child could also be encouraged to keep a private journal that they can write in as needed. You can also validate their desire for privacy and assure them that you are available to speak if they change their mind. Continue to check in with your adolescent and engage in an activity, like cooking a meal together, that promotes connection and communication.

**9<sup>th</sup> challenge: Parents’ emotions**



As parents, we are also experiencing our own stressors and a complete upheaval in many spheres of our daily lives. It is important that we pick our battles with our children and that we rely on our immediate supports for perspective and connection. We must find ways to help one another so that our battles do not escalate. Being able to care for ourselves and modelling it to our children allows us to offer the gift of resilience to those we love.

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