

Episode #1: Transforming ADHD parenting mindset

This is episode one. Let's get started.

Smarter Parenting welcomes you to our podcast series, The Parenting Coach for ADHD. Here to heal and elevate lives is your parenting coach, Siopé Kinikini.

Hi, I hope everybody's had a great day and I hope everything is going well for you. Actually, today's been a really, really good day. I've been able to do a lot accomplished and it's empowering to be able to do that in a short amount of time. Today what I wanted to do is talk to you a little bit about the transformation of the parents' mindset when they receive the diagnosis that their child has ADHD. It's interesting to talk to parents who have children with ADHD 'cause a lot of times you can learn a lot by how they phrase their sentences. Sometimes some parents come in and they say, "Well, my child is ADHD. He is ADHD."

And stepping back and listening to the way that they talk about ADHD, the label itself becomes so ingrained and attached to the child that there's almost no separation between the child and this identity that the parent has forced on the child. Some parents come in and say, "My child has ADHD or has issues with ADHD." Now you may think that there's no distinction between the two, but there is a distinction and it's a mindset distinction. In one area, and in one way of saying it, what you are doing with the label is you're ingraining that label into the child and the child is, "I am ADHD and so this is who I am and how I behave." When you say my child has ADHD, it's a different mindset. Just like you can say, "My child has a cold or my child has diabetes or something else." It's something that exists outside of your child's identity, which can be addressed.

Now, when I meet with clients and we sit and we discuss, we discuss the different areas and aspects of what's happening in their lives and specifically with their children with ADHD. I pay attention to these new answers and the communication style of the parent. Because what it will do is it provides me an idea of their paradigm of the issue of ADHD. A lot of therapists do this, which is why we like to hear people talk. We love to hear them talk because you start to learn about people's perspective by the way that they communicate when they start to communicate in the first way. When there's, "My child is ADHD," it's all about ADHD. What we begin to do is to begin to separate that and we say, okay, "Your child has ADHD, but tell me more about your child in other aspects in other areas. What else is involved in the identity of your child?" This helps the parent understand, okay, there's more that we can work with here.

There is more that we can deal with here rather than saying "Okay, ADHD is just the focus." It's the only gate of entry into helping my child. No, there are multiple ways that we can work around and help your child. Now with parents who come in and say the second phrase, which is my child struggles with ADHD, what we're able to do is build this identity also around other areas.

Now I like to think of it as the way people put on hats. So when I come to work I put on my work hat and then I behave a certain way. Then I take that hat off, I go home and put on my home hat. Then I'm a dad. Okay, that's my dad hat and I'm going to take off my dad hat. I'm going to go mingle with some friends I put on my friend hat. It's this idea that we are a lot more fluid in our identity than a lot of people believe.

Now, does that mean that I'm inconsistent? Absolutely not. It means that I'm a human being that's integrated in different social situations, which is exactly what parents need to teach their children who struggle with ADHD. It's helping them learn. Okay, I'm in school, I need to put on this hat and I need to follow the rules that are associated with this environment. And then when it's time to leave, then I can remove that hat and then I can put on. Okay, I'm here and I need to do this and this is what I need to do. It's helping them adjust, between the different things that need to be done in their different identities. That whole communication I can learn actually in the first five minutes of meeting a family where they place their focus on their child and the issue that the child is struggling with.

If they approach me in that, it takes a lot longer. Now, the reason that I'm bringing this up here is that it's important for parents to really assess how you communicate this with your child and with other professionals. So when you go into a meeting with school officials over teachers and you discuss the issues that are evolving with your child, it's important for you to separate that your child has an individual identity and that they struggle with something that you can help them work through rather than, my child has this and this is all our focus is on this. Because it creates a less resilient youth, it recreates it a less resilient individual if they are unable to be flexible and move around.

What does that, and I want to go back to the pattern that I used before in what we had talked about, what does that look like? What does it sound like? What does it feel like? Okay, so if I were to go into talk to a teacher for example, what does it look like? I would sit down with the teacher and they would tell me what's happening and it would look like me communicating with them that I understand the difference between my child's behavior in my child's individual needs. And then learning to find a way to bridge how to correct the behavior and still support my child's individual needs. And so it'd be collaborative, cooperative with the teacher in finding effective ways to work through that. Now what it would sound like is I would actually say that to the teacher and say, well, I realized my child is struggling through some things here at school behaviorally. Now he struggles with ADHD, but he's also very competent in doing this and this and this.

So how can we make this work in the school environment? Now I had a teacher and actually in a parent teacher conference go through this process and it was interesting to Role-play with the teacher. This whole process because what I ended up seeing is a lot of agreement and collaboration and cooperation from the teacher. We had already scripted out what the parent was going to say and the parent came up and said, well my child struggles with ADHD but my child is also capable of following instructions fairly well when you are very direct and give very

specific instructions. My child is also able to do things on a timer. If you have a timer that will be super helpful. That actually provided the teacher with the tools needed for them to create an environment where that child could be successful.

They decided and the child was there to give the child the instruction of well if he's disruptive I need you to go stand in the corner in the back corner in this space, in this area. It's almost like a timeout area but it's just removed enough that it doesn't disrupt all the other children. They practiced it a few times during the parent teacher conference, which is great cause then it was ingrained in the child and then they were able to do. He was able to follow, follow that instruction. Now the teacher also said, "Well let's use the timer." So they actually use the timer for how long you would have to be in the corner in order for him to come back and sit in and they see, which is roughly around two minutes that was it. They didn't want to go over and make it too long or so about two minutes as the maximum, it could be up to a minute.

But so the teacher gave the instruction kay, you need to go and stand in the corner. I'm going to set the timer for a minute and then once it rings you can come back to your seat. So that was the protocol that they use and there was a reporter from the parents de-escalation in the events of the child was struggling with in school. So that's what it sounded like was this whole dialogue where the parents are able to recognize there is an issue, but also that there are other strengths of the child exhibited and then using those strengths in order to address the problems. So that's what it looked like, that's what it sounded like, what did it feel like. What I felt like was powerful. We left that at parent teacher conference and the parents felt empowered.

The youth felt empowered. This young man felt very empowered because he knew exactly what to expect and what to do in certain situations. Now they went through the school year and as I continued to work with his family another month, they reported back that the notes coming home from school actually decreased. There weren't nearly as many notes coming in. They did receive a few notes for some other things, but they were able to go back and address those issues with the school with the teacher using that same technique that we had practiced during the parent teacher conference. So it felt great for them, it felt powerful, it felt helpful. So where are you with a family with ADHD role playing is definitely something you definitely want to do. You can learn more about how to do this type of interaction with professionals and also with others on the spar parenting website.

The Smarter Parenting course specifically for ADHD is the course that I recommend for parents because they'll be very, very helpful in helping you with your child and especially help your child become more successful. It empowers parents, it tells them what they do, what they can do, what they need to do, how to do it, what it sounds like, what it will feel like. I mean all those things are addressed in helping apparent along this whole process of helping their child.

So jump over there. Jump over to the Smarter Parenting blog for more information on ADHD we have a lot of information on there that should be super helpful for parents who are trying to learn a little bit more about what they can do to be more effective as parents. Now that's it for me, but again I for me, pay attention to how you communicate what it is your child struggles with. Your

child is not the diagnosis, your child is struggling with the diagnosis, but their identity is a lot bigger than that. They are a lot more than just a diagnosis.

Really pay attention to how you communicate, what it is your child is struggling with, and that will actually give you more tools to find additional ways to help your child succeed. That's it for me leave a comment and let me know what you think your thoughts and I'd be happy to hear from you and that's, I will see you again next week.

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