

# Ep #124 The difference between coaching and therapy

This is episode 124.

We welcome you to the ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast. Here to heal and elevate lives is your Parenting Coach, Siope Kinikini.

Hey everybody. How are you? This is Siope. I'm your host here at the ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast. Thank you for joining me. Those who are long-term listeners, glad to have you back wherever you may be and whatever you may be doing. And for those who are new to the podcast, welcome. Pull up a chair. Let's have a chat. We're going to be talking today about the difference between coaching and therapy.

This is a question that has popped up quite a bit. When people call in for coaching sessions, they often are unsure about the differences between coaching and therapy. So I want to clarify this, and this can be used in a broad range of different areas and expertise.

What I want you to be able to walk away with after this podcast is a clear definition of what coaching is, and what therapy is, and the purposes of each of those because they are very different, although they seem to be super similar. We're going to go through, and I'm going to answer those questions that have popped up in relation to coaching and therapy. I also want to go over what you would receive if you were to sign up for coaching with Smarter Parenting.

Now, you're probably wondering why I'm thinking about this, and obviously, it's a question that's popping up, but I also want to help you as a parent figure out what it is you need to meet your needs. What is it that you need to help your child and your family progress forward? Because it may be therapy. It may be coaching. It may be a combination of the two.

As I look at my own daughter, she is moving and growing up, and pretty soon, she will be moving out. Not yet, thank goodness. I'm still enjoying her company. But as I go through older pictures and videos of when she was younger, I realized just how valuable life is and how much that time period when she was five-years-old existed for only a certain amount of time.

And so, in a way, parents are working against the clock. Because you can only enjoy your children at the age, they are right now for a certain period of time, and then they move on. I'm kind of waxing nostalgic, obviously, as a parent of an older child. But as I look back, I realize how precious time is and how fast it goes as kids grow up.

So helping you know what to do in these times is going to be huge because it will save you time, it saves you effort, and it gets you to where you need to be or where you want to be with child.

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Again, we're going to be talking about coaching. [We're going to be talking about therapy, the difference between the two, and also what you can expect if you sign up for coaching with Smarter Parenting.](#)

I don't know about you, but I think it's important to recognize that over the last year since the pandemic started, there has been an increase in people providing coaching services online. You'll find coaches for just about anything.

You can find a coach that will help you learn how to fix your car. Beauty coaches who help you know how to beautify yourself. Yoga coaches. You'll have life coaches. There's so many type of coaches out there and coaching programs out there since the pandemic that it's been interesting to see this growth in this field.

With the increased amount of coaches that are available, what happens is people tend to struggle understanding exactly the difference between therapy and coaches. What do therapists do? What do coaches do? What is the difference? And they're so closely related to each other that it can be confusing. Let's start off with therapy. Let's talk about what it is, what you can expect from it. What the focus is of therapy.

You go to see a therapist when you experience mental health symptoms that cause distress in your life. This can include anxiety, depression, trauma, eating disorders, PTSD. When you're working with those type of mental health symptoms or issues, you usually go see a therapist, and you want to heal from these past hurts or these traumas.

You also go to a therapist when you need support navigating those difficult emotions that you're struggling with. It can also be focused on interpersonal relationships, and you want to learn strategies to feel less impacted by other people.

Therapy is also helpful in people who are experiencing relationship issues, and they could benefit from couples counseling. A therapist is there to help address symptoms from mental illness or to treat mental illness.

Therapists are licensed in their state to provide services. So, your therapist had to go to school for a very specific program, and then they had to pass, graduate, and then take a formal exam, which allows them to be licensed in your state or wherever you are living. A therapist, that's their focus when you go to see a therapist. That is what you were seeing a therapist for.

Now, let's compare that to what you get when you see a life coach or what a life coach is. A life coach is someone that you go to when you want to get unstuck from difficulties, when you want to set goals that you want to actually achieve.

Life coaches help you accelerate what it is you are focused on. Whether or not it's a career, your own personal presentation, your well-being. If you feel stuck like your life has just plateaued,

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you can see a life coach for that and they can help you walk through that. You want to stop unhelpful habits and replace them with healthy alternatives.

These types of issues that you may be experiencing where you are focused on specific goals. And that's the thing I want to bring out. With mental health and therapy, you're focused on the issues. Mental health issues. Mental health issues that are going on. With coaching, you're focused on goals. And with coaching, you're focused on what are the goals that I want to set, and how do I move forward with the goals that I want to accomplish? This could also include if you are wondering or feeling confused about how to proceed in your life. Relationship issues can also be under the umbrella of coaching.

Now, it sounds like there are some similarities between the two. There are similarities between these two, therapy and coaching. However, it's important to separate them that way. If you are dealing with some type of mental health issue, a therapist is where you should go. If you're dealing with goals that you want to set and work through, then you can go to coaching.

Now, you're probably wondering where I stand in on those. I have to give a disclosure here and let you know I am a therapist. I'm licensed in the state of Utah, which means I can only provide therapy for people who live in Utah in my state. I did go to school for that. I became licensed, and I've been doing it for years.

So, therapeutic interventions, mental health issues, yes, I do that here in Utah. However, for Smarter Parenting, I provide coaching. And this is to help parents reach their goals with their children.

What are the goals you want to achieve? Do you want to stop tantrum behaviors? [Do you want to improve relationships?](#) Do you want to have Effective Communication? Do you want to help your child make better decisions? Those are all goal-oriented things that we work on when we are in a coaching session.

One other way that you can think about it, and this is an example that I've used with parents in helping them understand the difference between therapy and coaching, is that you can go to a doctor for a very specific illness that you may have.

However, you may also have a personal trainer, and your personal trainer would serve as the coach. And they meet you at the gym, you do a workout, and they push you to meet certain goals along the way. They're very different, and yet they both are complimentary towards each other. And you see how that works?

Some people will think that "Hey, I just want to go to the doctor for all of my issues and all of my needs." And yeah, you can do that. But usually when you go to a doctor or a physician to do that, you usually are seeing your doctor or physician for 15-minutes, 30-minutes at a time. They're giving you a treatment plan, and they're telling you what to do. If you were to go to the gym and meet your physical trainer, your personal trainer, they're going to push you, and they're

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going to focus in on the goals that you're trying to meet every week. As you can see, you can get mileage out of both of those depending on what it is you want to accomplish.

Do I get more pressure from the therapist to get a lot of things done? Personally, for me as far as exercise goes, having a personal trainer is better. Because a personal trainer will set the goals, and holds me accountable, and we move forward.

A therapist will also do that, but they do it in a very different and structured way in how they intervene and help you work through some of the difficult issues that you are struggling with in regards to mental illness.

Again, very, very different approaches both focused in on health and the way that you can help yourself improve. If you keep that in mind, if you need a coach, if you need someone to guide you, you have very specific goals you want to focus in on, "Hey, I just want to improve my child's behavior, so they are less reactive towards me." Coaching would be a great option for you. That's a great thing for you because we focus on skills that help meet those goals.

Now, if you are dealing with some mental health issues like suicidality, or things that are really related to mental health, you want to go to a therapist. And the therapist will help guide you through.

Now, I have seen, and I have heard, that therapists often will refer clients to coaching services in addition to the therapeutic intervention. And that's only to help provide a more robust format for intervention. I personally have started to do that as well.

From working with a client with mental health issues, and they need something to help them along the way, I may send in a coach to help with organization. Say the family is very disorganized and they need help organizing their home in a way that it remains clean, and they can put everything in the right place. I will send in a coach. A coach to help them work through some of those things, and get that in place as we work on the mental health issues on my side. And what I found is that they both are so effective in helping families improve.

Let me explain what that would look like. I'm currently working with a family. I'm going to call the father Brian, but he's working with his son, who is struggling with ADHD and also with some anxiety related to the ADHD. As I was speaking with Brian about this, Brian mentioned that his son was going to therapy and whether or not he should stop going to therapy. I recommended no. In fact, let's do this approach where your son continues in therapy that's continuing coaching, and let them supplement each other and help each other out.

His son has been going to therapy in order to address some of these behavioral issues. And with me in coaching, we work on skills that they can implement in the home. The idea is that we can better attack an issue or a problem if we're looking at it from multiple sides.

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Think of it as shining light on an object. If you're shining a light on an object with just one light, you only get one perspective. However, if you add a second light to that, you have definition and you have more definition. You're able to see things in different ways. It actually adds more context to what it is that you're observing.

I highly recommend if you're going to therapy and you need coaching, use them both. Just like you would go see a medical doctor for a medical issue, you may also hire a personal trainer to help you with workouts. It's just a more effective way of bringing about the change that you may want to see happening in your child's life.

This is a personal call for you as a parent to figure out exactly, "What do I need? In what ways can I get my needs met? Should I be focused in on therapy, therapeutic approaches? Or should I be focused on. I have some goals, and this is what we want to achieve with the goals, and we need some very specific skills to do that."

Okay? Okay. Hopefully, that's a lot more clearer for you. Now, I'm going to talk to you about Smarter Parenting and the skills that we provide on smarter parenting to help you along. I am going to share that with you in just a minute after this message,

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[So, let me explain to you what you get if you sign up for coaching with Smarter Parenting. Smarter Parenting is focused on the Teaching-Family Model, which is a set of skills that helped shape behaviors in a positive way and also reinforced positive relationships.](#)

What I do as a coach for Smarter Parenting is I help you learn those skills, and how to implement those skills with your children to meet the goals that you have.

If you have a goal for better communication, we may use [Effective Communication](#) as the skill. I teach you the skill, I practice the skill with you, then we set some goals during our coaching relationship where you work on those and then report back how they're working. And we may do a Role-play through Zoom or through our conference call, so you can get a feel for it.

The goal is to reach your goals using skills. This is also helpful because I can see what progress you're making. You can see what progress you're making on a weekly basis, and then we can adjust and make changes as needed.

When you call in, that's what we do. We focus on the skills. If you have a goal of reducing a tantrum behavior with your child, there are multiple ways that we can do that with the skills that we have on Smarter Parenting. We could use the skill of [Effective Negative Consequences](#) to

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help address negative behaviors. We could also use [Effective Positive Rewards](#) as a way to reinforce positive behaviors to overcome the negative behaviors. We may use [Problem Solving or Decision Making](#) as a skill for you to learn as a family and for your child in order for them to weigh the options of how they should behave in certain situations. I mean, it all depends on the developmental status of your child, what they're able to consume and absorb and understand, and then how they best process information.

The coaching session itself is focused when you initially call on me asking a lot of questions. I want to know your strengths. I want to know what it is your child does well. I want to know in what ways you interact as a family. I want to know how you resolve conflict. And then, from there, we start building on the strengths that you currently have using these skills—these very specific skills from the Teaching-Family Model.

There is an art to it when you are coaching. And when I'm coaching a family, because I have to take all of those positive traits that you're doing and the good that you're doing right now, and then introducing the skills in a way that is natural and that fits your family dynamic using all the steps.

Now, the skills and the steps don't change. But how we teach them to children may change because children learn in different ways. Your child may learn through a game or an activity how to use a skill. There are games and activities that we use in Smarter Parenting that help you teach those. And so, we find the best fit for you in the coaching relationship for you to meet your goals along the way. All right.

[That's what you get when you call in for Smarter Parenting. We initially have a call. I find out more about you and your family. We set up a plan of what your goals are, and then we introduce skills to you as a parent and to your child that you can use to help build your relationship and also shape the behaviors to be more positive. And then we check-in and see how things are going.](#)

It's a wonderful way to reach out to people around the world and provide coaching to help them along their parenting journey. I mentioned earlier that parents only have a very short amount of time to enjoy their children at the age that they are, and there's so much truth to that.

This podcast was really meant to help you understand the differences, so you know what you need to look for when you're seeking help. I'm here to help you in whatever way I possibly can if I can guide you along with coaching and help your family, wonderful. If not, you now understand if we need to do a therapeutic approach, this is what therapy is about and what it can do.

For us at Smarter Parenting, I only do coaching. Only do coaching. We're going to focus on the skills. We're going to focus on meeting your goals. Think of me as your personal trainer to guide you along this whole process.

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If you need something that deals with the mental health issues that are happening, then you would go over to find a therapist in your area or a therapist to deal with those issues. All right? Those are the differences between coaching and therapy.

I really am hoping for parents to be able to access what is in their best interest as a family. I know that things are starting to change with the pandemic. I mean, there are a lot more immunizations going around. Things are starting to open up a little bit. I hope during this time, as stressful as it has been, that you've been able to see the good times that you have had with your family having them at home.

I've heard from countless parents who have expressed the joy that they felt in having their children with them for this time. They ended up spending more time with their children, and it was a wonderful thing for them. Because normally, everyone would be so busy doing their own things, and then they would meet for dinner, and go to sleep, and then start over again. And now they were at home together for so long that it ended up being a joyful experience.

Now, for some, it was more challenging. However, there's nothing like being at home with your kids anyway. Just being at home with your children, what a gift and what a blessing it is to spend some additional time with them, especially considering time is so precious.

Well, that's it for me. Thanks for joining me. Next week, we'll be talking about so much more. There is so much lined up for podcasts that are coming up. We are going to be delving deep into the Teaching-Family Model because there is so much happening in the world of testing and behavioral health and how we can best help children. Some new things are coming out, and I want to share those. And also, why the Teaching-Family Model is so effective and why it's continued to be effective for so long.

So, we'll be sharing some of that. We'll be talking about how you can help decrease some of the stress that you feel as a parent. I noticed that there were a lot of parents that are dealing with some very difficult emotions as well. We'll be talking about that in future podcast episodes. A lot of great things are in the lineup for the future. And I look forward to sharing all that information with you.

Thanks for joining me today. I hope you have a wonderful day today, and just know I'm thinking about you, and I'm hoping the best for ya. All right? That's it for me, and I will talk to you later. Bye.

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[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

[Ep #113: Why the Teaching-Family Model creates lasting change](#)

[Ep #59: The ADHD Smarter Parenting Coaching Process](#)

[Ep #58: The Teaching-Family Model is relationship focused](#)

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