

ADHD Coaching: What's It All About?

By Dana Rayburn, ADHD Coach

If you or someone you love has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder you know the chaos and frustration ADHD causes. But there's hope. With the help of an ADHD coach, people with ADHD can calm the chaos by learning how to manage both their life and their brain.

What is an ADHD Coach?

An ADHD coach is a professional trained to guide and support a person in overcoming the challenges of living with ADHD at work, at school and at home.

Specifically, ADHD coaches help their clients...

- Create structures and tools to stay on track
- Improve organizing skills and design organizing systems
- Plan projects, get clear on tasks and manage time
- Increase self-awareness
- Set and reach their goals
- Improve crucial lifestyle habits such as diet, sleep and exercise
- Improve relationship and communication skills

How Does Coaching Fit With My Other ADHD Treatment?

ADHD coaching nicely supplements the treatment you get from your physician(s) and counselor. Since you'll talk to your coach often, he or she will have a realistic opinion about how well your ADHD symptoms are being controlled. Your coach can help you identify apparent problems with your medication or other treatment so you can take useful feedback to your doctor or counselor.

Is ADHD Coaching Different from Therapy?

ADHD coaching is not psychotherapy. Instead of focusing on a person's past and emotional healing, coaching focuses on taking action so a person can move to where he or she wants to go in life. Some people work with a coach while they work with a therapist or counselor.

How Does Coaching Work?

ADHD coaching is a close, ongoing partnership. Most clients work with their coach for at least six months and often much longer. In a typical relationship, coaches meet with their clients by telephone three or four times each month.

Coaching sessions cover what's going on in the client's life, with emphases on challenges, opportunities and strategies for success. Most coaches provide support and accountability between sessions by e-mail or phone, and give homework that helps the client accomplish his or her objectives.

Does Telephone Coaching Really Work?

Yes, in fact telephone coaching works particularly well with ADHD. Most people find

telephone coaching less distracting than meeting face to face. Plus, it makes it easier to select a coach since the coach doesn't have to live in your area.

How do I Select an ADHD Coach?

Most coaches offer a get-acquainted interview or a sample coaching session at no charge. Use it to find out if you like the coach's personality and to learn if the coach has the training and background to help your situation.

It's a good idea to talk with at least three coaches before making your choice. When evaluating your choices, listen for clues that the coach understands ADHD and how to work with it. Ask about involvement in an ADHD coach training program, membership in ADHD organizations and participation in ADHD conferences. Ask what they read about ADHD and how they keep current in the field.

Are ADHD Coaches Certified?

The International Coach Federation certifies coaches in general coaching skills. However, there currently is no certification specifically for ADHD coaches.

How Much Does Coaching Cost?

Coaching fees can vary greatly. Experienced coaches, for instance, charge more than newly trained coaches or coaches in training. On the other hand, ADHD group coaching, where a coach meets by telephone with a small group of clients at one time, is less expensive than individual ADHD coaching. At present, coaching is not covered by health insurance.

Is Coaching Always Successful?

No, it's not. Working with a Coach isn't easy and it certainly isn't a magic fix. It requires a commitment of time and money. But many of those who accept coaching with an earnest desire to improve find their lives do change for the better.

Can You Give Some Examples of What to Expect from Coaching?

I sure can! To illustrate some of the changes coaching can inspire, here are two case studies from my own practice. (To respect confidentiality, client's names have been changed.)

TIM AND THE CASE OF THE OVERWHELMED BUSINESS OWNER

Tim, 42, began coaching soon after he was diagnosed with Inattentive ADHD. His construction business was spinning out of control. He struggled to manage his schedule, client projects and paperwork. Customer service was neglected, invoices were sent late and his assistant was threatening to quit.

The first thing we did was to clarify Tim's values and goals so he knew where to focus. He learned what distracted him and what overwhelmed him. We set up routines to keep him on schedule and on top of his paperwork and commitments. He learned to delegate. We made simple business procedures that he could easily follow.

After six months of coaching, Tim's profits had increased and his crews were measurably more productive. He was more relaxed, exercising regularly and once again excited about his business. His assistant was happily taking on more responsibility and settling in for a long career.

SUSAN AND THE CHALLENGE OF TAKING CONTROL

When she started coaching, Susan was a 32-year old corporate middle manager. Her Hyperactive ADHD was taking its toll and she was exhausted. Her home was a mess, she wasn't exercising and she was behind at work. She wanted to learn to manage her work and family responsibilities more easily so she and her husband could start a family.

Susan's first step was identifying her strengths and weaknesses. She learned to think before making commitments and how to plan projects. She also worked on improving her communication skills with her managers and colleagues. She learned how to run better meetings, how to delegate, organize her office and plan her time. At home we set up routines and systems so she could manage the household chores.

Like life however, coaching doesn't always turn out as planned. Susan was fired from her job. It took a few months before she found a job that better suited her strengths and personality. The fresh start turned out to be a blessing. Susan discovered she could stay on top of projects and keep her office organized. She was able to think before making a commitment or sharing her ideas. She started biking to work in the summer and gave ski lessons in the winter so exercise became a natural part of her work.

At home she began to relax and not stress out her husband. The most exciting moment was when they had a dinner party and realized they didn't have to spend two days cleaning the house first!

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About The Author

Dana Rayburn, A. C. T., is an ADHD coach with an international practice who helps adults live more successfully with their ADHD. To read FREE tips and articles and to learn about her monthly E-zine, *ADDED Success*, visit Dana's web site at www.danarayburn.com.

Need Help Finding a Coach?

For a FREE list of qualified ADHD coaches, send an e-mail to dana@danarayburn.com with Coach Referral List as the subject. Your e-mail address will be kept private and used only to send you Dana's Coach Referral List.