

Preface

Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) constitute from 5 to 7% of the school-age population. Treatment for children with ADHD may also involve a number of different professional groups, including psychologists, medical practitioners, family therapists, and educators. Of these groups, educators will spend by far the most time with these children. Because of this fact, schools should play a central role in their treatment. Unfortunately, educators all too often are provided little if any background knowledge and training in ADHD and effective interventions for working with children with ADHD.

Ironically, if educators attempt to seek out information on ADHD they encounter another problem. There is an ocean of information on ADHD, from periodicals, books, and scholarly articles, to support groups, "how-to" books, and websites, to name a few. Want to find "the latest and greatest miracle cure for ADHD"? It's out there—and someone will be glad to sell it to you. New techniques, "miracle cures," and treatments pop up, disappear, and reappear like clockwork. Unfortunately, many lack any semblance of a theoretical base, and, even more important, are not empirically supported by research. To further confuse the situation, myths, misconceptions, and misinformation about ADHD are abundant. Teachers need a sound factual working knowledge of ADHD. Many parents will approach teachers for advice on treatment options or with basic questions about ADHD. Teachers should be in a position to provide accurate information and should be knowledgeable about effective accommodations and interventions that can help children with ADHD succeed in the schools.

The purpose of this book is to provide practical, immediately useful information for educators who work with students with ADHD. The focus is on the "big ideas." In each chapter we identify key concepts/information that teachers need to know and provide practical "how-to" knowledge and useful resources. Rather than discuss a topic at the abstract level we provide specific information. When discussing interventions or accommodations, we provide step-by-step instructions on how to implement them.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide background information on ADHD. Chapter 1 is intended to dispel some widespread myths and misperceptions about ADHD and students with ADHD. It provides an overview of the extent of the problems posed by ADHD along with a brief historical overview. We stress that ADHD is not a recent phenomenon, but has been documented for hundreds of years. In Chapter 2 we describe the features of ADHD and present and explain the diagnostic criteria. The common comorbid conditions (e.g., oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, depression) are noted and their ramifications discussed. Major theories of ADHD are also introduced.

Chapter 3 deals with the ADHD assessment process. We note the steps entailed in the assessment process and how teachers are involved; discuss the types of assessment instruments and how they are used in the assessment process; and list instruments commonly used in the ADHD assessment process in schools. We also discuss major issues/concerns in the ADHD assessment process.

Chapters 4 and 5 cover how children with ADHD are served in the schools. In Chapter 4 we discuss how these children fit in the special education system, and how Section 504 relates to children with ADHD. In Chapter 5 we introduce the multimodal treatment model for ADHD: medication, behavioral interventions, classroom accommodations, and ancillary services (e.g., social skills training). Educators will be involved to some degree in all of these treatments. Important program planning considerations are noted. Finally, we provide an overview of questionable treatments for ADHD and give tips for spotting them.

Parents are a critical part of the ADHD treatment process. Chapter 6 provides tips on how to involve parents in the treatment of their children and also discusses why it may sometimes be difficult for some parents to help. We review some of the problems that parents of children with ADHD may face. We also provide information on supports for parents and a simple home-school intervention that has been demonstrated to be effective.

Medication is a recommended and widely used treatment for ADHD. However, many educators have misconceptions about the effects of medication and what they could/should expect. In Chapter 7 we review the major types of medications that are used with children with ADHD; provide information on what to expect and not to expect from medication; and discuss common side effects and the school's role in medication treatment.

One aspect of ADHD that is often overlooked is the fact that the environment can shape and maintain problem behaviors. Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is a process that can help teachers to identify the environmental antecedents and the consequences that can maintain problem behaviors. This in turn can lead to effective interventions. In Chapter 8 we provide an overview of FBA and an explanation of its purpose; list the steps in the FBA process; and provide examples of the FBA process along with sources of additional information.

In Chapter 9 we provide an overview of behavioral interventions that are effective with children with ADHD. We present guidelines for using behavioral interventions with children with ADHD and detailed examples of how two of the

interventions (token economies and response cost) could be implemented in the classroom. Academic problems are common among students with ADHD, and Chapter 10 discusses specific instructional approaches that can be effective.

Current theory now views ADHD as a disorder that results from a deficit in self-regulation. For this reason, interventions that can help students self-regulate their behavior may be very useful. In Chapter 11 we provide an overview of self-regulation interventions that are effective for children with ADHD and step-by-step examples of how the interventions can be used in the classroom. In the final chapter, Chapter 12, we discuss “survival skills”—the social and organizational skills that can be a lifesaver for children with ADHD. We review social skills training and common classroom survival skills, and provide examples of organizational supports.

Helping students with ADHD succeed in schools is a challenge. Students with ADHD pose complex problems, and effective treatment requires attention to the academic, behavioral, and social aspects of ADHD. Moreover, it requires a coordinated approach that, ideally, is integrated across home and school. It is our hope that this book will provide teachers with knowledge and practical ideas that can help them work more effectively with students with ADHD in the classroom.