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(800) 233-4050  
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## Ask the Expert

### Is My High School Student Ready for College?

(And Is My College Student Ready to Go Back?)



Ari Tuckman, PsyD, MBA

The National Resource Center on ADHD, A Program of CHADD is the nation's clearinghouse for evidence-based information on ADHD. This Ask the Expert webcast is supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 1U38ED000376 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and does not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC. The National Resource Center on ADHD, CHADD and the CDC do not endorse, support, represent or guarantee the accuracy of any content presented or endorse any opinions expressed in this webcast.

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## CHADD is home to the



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For more information:  
<http://www.chadd.org/About-CHADD/National-Resource-Center.aspx>



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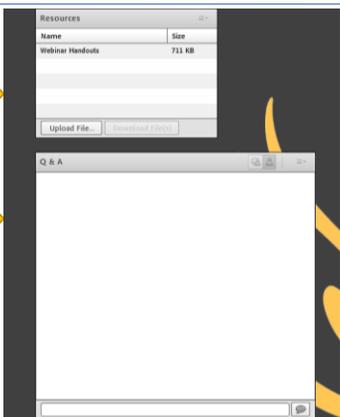
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Slides

Ask a question



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**Do you need help with choosing  
what direction to go?**

Call and speak to an  
ADHD Information and  
Resource Specialist



1-800-233-4050  
Mon-Fri, 1-5pm ET



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## College Can Be Disastrous

- Students who made it through HS with lots of assistance may bomb out when all that structure disappears in college.
  - College is the most tempting and distracting place in the world.
- Many of these students wind up back at home.
  - Live at home and work and/or take classes.
  - So sometimes a preemptive gap year is better.

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## They Don't See What They Don't See

- They notoriously under-rate the extent and impact of ADHD impairments.
  - Seems to be more neurological than psychological.
- Concern is seen as much ado about nothing, with heartfelt promises that things will somehow be better.
  - Without specific reasons why.

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## The Parental Power Struggle

- Teens have a high desire for independence—but lower ability.
  - This is even more true with ADHD.
- Parents understandably want more control over the teen's behavior.
- The teen understandably wants to make their own choices.

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## Set the Expectations

- Talk to your teen about specifically what you need to see to feel confident that they are ready for college.
  - Focus on what matters the most.
  - Create concrete requirements for greater freedom.
- Start early, then review progress occasionally.

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## Focus on Process, Not Just Outcome

- A good process scales up well for the greater demands of college.
  - A bad one is more likely to break down—and more dependent on too many stars aligning.
- Applies to daily tasks, but also to the application process, SATs, etc.
  - The college application process may be predictive of their college performance.

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## Lifestyle Sets the Foundation

- Many teens with ADHD have terrible lifestyle habits that decrease their functioning.
  - Sleep, diet, exercise, stress, manageable substance use, media use, balance of work and play, etc.
- Makes a bad situation worse.
  - Cognitively, emotionally, psychologically, socially.
- So lifestyle is a major point of intervention.

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## Foster Understanding

- Many resist interventions because they don't understand how ADHD is impacting them.
- It's important for the teen to understand how their ADHD impacts their performance.
  - Until mid/late twenties, they often underestimate the impact.
  - Focus on specific examples and patterns.
- Identifying the causes of problems gives them more control over future outcomes.

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## Active Problem-Solving

- Ability to go beyond standard procedures to solve problems:
  - Recognize there is a problem
  - Ask questions in class
  - Contact teacher
  - Seek tutoring, etc.
  - Put in extra effort
- This is a crucial skill!

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## Highly Effective, But Under-Used

- College students are notorious for not taking their medication.
  - Despite it being a major contributor to them getting into college.
  - Some don't see the need; some don't like the idea.
- But it's often a cornerstone of success.
- Don't give away your meds!

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## College Alternatives: Before/During

- A planned gap year beats a forced one.
- There are official gap year programs that can be great (and expensive).
- Combination of working, volunteering, and/or classes while living at home.
  - Create a stepped transition from HS to college.
  - Give more freedom and responsibility—and focus on a self-directed good process.

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## Additional Resources

- Transitioning to College
  - CPAMM (Coalition to Prevent ADHD Medication Misuse) <http://www.cpamm.org/>
  - The Jed Foundation, Set to Go Program <https://www.settogo.org/>
- Gap Years
  - General information
    - <http://www.americangap.org/>
    - <https://www.teenlife.com/category/gap-year/>
    - <https://www.studyabroad101.com/countries/gap-year-abroad>

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## Upcoming Webinars

5 Ways Nutrition Can Impact ADHD Symptoms  
Guest Expert: Laura Stevens, MS  
Wednesday, February 22  
2:00 - 3:00 pm ET

Register Now at  
[www.Help4ADHD.org/AsktheExpert](http://www.Help4ADHD.org/AsktheExpert)



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