



## **CHADD and the National Resource Center on ADHD**

### ***Ask the Expert Chat Series***

**Wednesday, Nov. 16 – Is There an App for That? – Social Skills for Young Adults with ADHD**

**Moderators – NRC Staff**

**Expert – Michele Novotni, PhD**

**Moderator 1:** Today's topic is "Is There an App for That? - Social Skills for Young Adults with ADHD."

Thank you for joining us today. We will begin shortly. Just to remind everybody, this is a moderated chat. All questions go to the moderator and we will do our best to post as many of your questions as possible.

It's likely that many of you may have similar questions dealing with the same issue. Even though your particular question may not be posted, please try to see how Michele Novotni's responses to other question may apply to your situation.

Thank you for being here with us Dr. Novotni, are you ready to begin?

**Michele Novotni:** Hello everyone. Thank you for joining this chat

**mama21d:** Do teens with ADHD ever improve socially and become more accepted by their non-ADHD peers?

**Michele Novotni:** That depends. As young adults mature, many do develop a wider range of acceptance. Over time many of the disruptive symptoms of ADHD do tend to lessen. As young adults mature, they also begin to better see the need to smooth some of their rough edges. This also helps improve social relationships. Unfortunately workplace demands are often very tough with little room for social challenges.

**Teachermomplus1:** Why are some people popular while some are not?

**Michele Novotni:** There are a number of variables that make people "likeable" The more of these characteristics you have, generally the more popular you are. You can assess your social skills on these likeability traits using the free Novotni Social Skills checklist. You can get a copy on my website [www.michelenovotni.com](http://www.michelenovotni.com).

People generally need only 1-3 friends to be popular enough. It is important that everyone finds at least one match.

**Abe:** my son is 13 years old and he is having a very hard time with social skills with the family. Any suggestions?

**Michele Novotni:** Problems with sibling relationship are very common. Often parents spend a great deal of time with the child with ADHD and the others feel slighted. Parents can be exhausted! It is often helpful for parents to spend 1 to 1 time individually with each child to help with the conflicts.

In addition, it helps if everyone in the family will model treating everyone with respect. This also includes parents not yelling or screaming too. If all else fails, a behavior management plan rewarding appropriate behavior and having consequences for negative behavior may also be helpful.

**LAC:** How as parents can we help our college age children prepare for the working world and the varying personalities they will encounter? Many of these personalities will clash with an ADHD individual. I want to help her to learn to work with often challenging and obstinate co-workers without losing her cool or job because of ADHD impulsive reactions to them.

**Michele Novotni:** This is a critical area. Many people lose their jobs not because they can't do the work, but rather because they don't get along with others. It would be good to work on social relationships in their everyday world. It helps to do a "social autopsy" and examine what worked well and where the challenges are. You may be able to use TV shows to spark discussions.

There are also a number of books to help navigate relationships that are not specific to those with ADHD that can be helpful. The book I wrote, *What Does Everyone Else Know That I Don't?* could also be helpful and is designed for young adults/adults with ADHD.

**Moderator 1:** [CHADD local groups](#) provide support and networking with other adults who understand the frustrations of ADHD. In addition to supplying each other with local resources and support, the meetings usually have a speaker who talks about current events or research in the ADHD community. Each local group is different, so use the CHADD website to find the group closes to you and find out what they have planned.

**dobyjoy9500:** How do people with ADHD work in the workforce, when they are used to the accommodations they receive in school?

**Michele Novotni:** Workers can get accommodations through their HR office for ADHD. However, most if not all are not relevant for social skills. It is usually up to the individual to work on their social skills outside of the workplace. Coaches or psychologists may be helpful.

If ADHD traits are getting in the way, it might be helpful to identify yourself as having ADHD or at least describe your challenge such as "I sometimes interrupt and am trying not to."

**StaciR:** My daughter just started college. Her first roommate also had ADHD, and it was a bad situation. They were constantly annoying each other. My daughter was moved to a new room. Any suggestions about how she can be more successful this time?

**Michele Novotni:** Living with someone can be very difficult, especially with ADHD in the mix. It helps to start off sharing your strengths and challenges. Time to sleep and time to work need to be respected on both ends. If there are difficulties, the RA can often be helpful in reaching a compromise.

It's always good to remember that many of the things that frustrate us aren't all that important. Help them keep things in perspective so they can only worry about the important issues like drugs, sex, alcohol and the quiet time needed to study.

It may also be good to start off with a positive experience. Ask the roommate what she'd like to do and plan an activity together quickly. All the best to her this time around.

**Moderator 1:** For more information about social and romantic relationships, check out Gina Pera's monthly CHADD blog. In addition Nadine Taylor-Barnes writes monthly on parenting and Nancy Ratey discusses coaching. Stay updated on our new blogs by visiting <http://www.chadd.org> weekly!

**Mrn:** What can a young adult do to improve his social skills that will enable him to succeed in the workplace and in friendships?

**Michele Novotni:** First step is to recognize that there is the possibility to improve relationships. Next would be to get honest accurate feedback regarding the specific areas that could be improved. In order to improve it is usually good to focus on one behavior at a time. He (or you) can send himself a reminder to work on this skill using an app like e-nag.

Re-coaching also may be helpful where they preview the situation and rehearse the skill needed. Visualization can be a very helpful way to practice a social skill in a safe setting. It could also be helpful to ask a peer for feedback in certain situations. Young adults often value peer feedback more than that of adults.

**Julie:** As someone with ADHD, I recently had an acquaintance get quite verbally angry with me in a public place, criticizing me in front of the kids about something about \*me\* that had probably been eating at her for quite some time. I was stunned, open mouthed and couldn't say much. I had no idea it had been eating at her. Was I supposed to read her mind? It was quite rude and embarrassing. We've not spoken since. What, if anything, is my responsibility for righting this situation?

**Michele Novotni:** It sounds like there might be some issues on the other end here. However, one of the most important things you can discover is what other people know but aren't telling you. Since this relationship may not be a keeper anyway, you might want to ask the person to meet in a calm setting and share with you her concerns. This way you can see if she has a valid concern that might be frustrating others also.

If she does have a concern that you feel is valid, you have something to work with. Most people don't tell others about social skill violation which is what makes learning/fixing social skills so hard. In this case you might also want to share your social insight about her behavior. If it doesn't work out well you haven't lost anything.

**CHADDict:** From the time I was young through college to today, I've always had a tendency to find a good friend or two, then burn them out. I have trouble maintaining friendships because I rely so much on the one or two I have at the time. What can I do to fix this?

**Michele Novotni:** The good news is that you are aware of your behavior. Relationships need to be in some sort of balance, with each getting and giving in somewhat even fashion. If you wear them out, perhaps you can pre-talk with someone else before going out with them, or try for larger group settings so you can share your energy.

You also might want to be on the lookout for signs you are wearing someone out and start giving them a break. You could also give them permission to let you know when you are too much and they need a break.

I actually have to do this with my very ADHD son when he is wearing me out too. I love him, but sometimes I just can't listen anymore or I need some quiet time. This way we can both enjoy being together.

**Julieg:** Do you believe Social cue skills training works for young people with ADHD? I've been given conflicting opinions by different doctors.

**Michele Novotni:** I do think that social skills or social cue training can make a significant difference if the person wants to learn the skills. If parents are sending children or young adults who don't think they have a problem, it can be very difficult to help them.

The biggest challenge is helping them remember to use the skills outside of the learning environment. This is why it is important to work with someone that really understands ADHD.

Unlike other disorders, with ADHD, many times they know what to do; they just don't remember to do it at the appropriate. This is where impulsivity, inattention or hyperactivity gets in the way. So if someone is only using regular social skills training, that may not as effective.

There are a number of psychologists and coaches with expertise in this area. Fortunately, this can be done long distance through Skype or by phone so location should not be an issue. Many young adults prefer coaching to attending a social skills group or even counseling.

Again, the most important part for those with ADHD would be helping them prepare for situations in advance and setting up a system of prompts/reminders to use the skills.

**Moderator 1:** While we are waiting to learn more about positive ways to interact with others, please see our information sheet [What We Know # 15s: Interacting With Others: Tips for Adults with ADHD.](#)

**CLE:** Thinking about the title of this session, are there any particular phone applications that are helpful for young adults with ADHD (memory, alarms, tracking, organization)?

**Michele Novotni:** There are a number of apps that can be very helpful for them to manage their ADHD symptoms. This can in some indirect ways of help in relationships too. Some of my favorite apps:

- Honk guides you back to your car and tells you how much time is left on your parking meter.
- ShopSavvy lets you do a price check on any item. Some stores will instantly sell the item for that price.
- e-Nag lets you send or get reminders to cue you to do things you want to remember to do.
- Mint can help keep track of money.
- Dragon Dictation turns voice to text and is great for reminding yourself.
- Noise level lets you know how loud something is, including your voice, and is great for those who speak too loudly.

There are tons of apps to take notes and a number to help them track assignments.

**Moderator 1:** Missed part of the chat? Past chat transcripts are available to CHADD members as a benefit. To learn more about joining CHADD, visit: [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org).

We have ten minutes left. Michele Novotni will move through as many questions as possible. If we are unable to get to your question please contact one of our Health Information Specialists on ADHD by calling 1-800-233-4050 between 9 AM- 5PM EST or by clicking on the "[Ask A Question](#)" link on the top of [our website](#).

**Alryeth:** How does one balance social skills and interaction with medication? It feels like I'm more socially outgoing when it's worn off.

**Michele Novotni:** If you are feeling too dull or blunted on your medication, you may want to talk with your doctor and consider a dose change or perhaps even a medication change. You may not have to give up on feeling outgoing. If what you are feeling is that ADHD energy and random thinking, you may want to balance out the potential negative consequences of untreated ADHD with the decrease in spunk.

You may also have to focus on bringing that outgoing you out even if you don't feel like it. Usually once you get started, you may find it easier to be outgoing again. Hopefully you will find the right balance and be able to focus, manage your ADHD and still feel like yourself.

**Michele Novotni:** Wrapping up, I'd like to thank all those for participating. Wishing you and those you love social success!

**Moderator 1:** The National Resource Center on AD/HD hosts "Ask the Expert" chats every month! Our next chat on *Handling Holiday Stress with ADHD*, with former CHADD president Marie Paxson, is scheduled for Dec. 14 from 3:30-5 p.m.

**Moderator 1:** Thanks to everyone who joined us today. Thank you again Dr. Novotni for your expert advice. We are sure it will make a difference for our participants.

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