

ADHD

Don't Like the Name?

by Jeff Copper, PCC, PCAC, MBA

PEOPLE SEEKING AN ADHD DIAGNOSIS for themselves or their child will often ask, “Can’t they change the name?” Others find the term ADHD so off-putting that they refuse an evaluation, even when life isn’t working very well.

Authorities on ADHD understand completely. After all, they became ADHD professionals to help people. But could there be reasons to keep the name intact? Let’s take a closer look.

Look up the word “deficit” in the dictionary and you’ll find definitions that include phrases like “falls short,” “a disadvantage,” “a loss,” “a lack.” Look up “disorder” and you’ll find phrases like “lack of,” “irregularity,” “a disturbance.” Both “deficit” and “disorder” make up half to two-thirds of the labels, “Attention Deficit Disorder” and “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.”

How negative can you get? Both terms bully the mind of the innocent and ignorant away from hope and toward despair. They blind the public to hope and possibility and suggest giving up.

Hope inspires; it propels; it ignites. Despair victimizes and disempowers. Dr. Ned Hallowell has said numerous times in presentations at CHADD conferences, “For those with ADHD who get a proper diagnosis and treatment, there is hope, because it is possible to live a rich and fulfilling life. Indeed, there is great hope.”

So, why don’t we change the label? Why not pick a new name? Simple solution; right? Wrong!

Dr. Russell Barkley’s executive function deficit disorder construct focuses on ADHD as a self-regulation

issue and not so much as strictly a deficit of attention. In an interview with Dr. Barkley on Attention Talk Radio, I asked him, “Why not change the ADHD label, just change the name?” He responded:

Well, I doubt that it will be changed. I know in DSM-5 it won’t, but there’s a very practical reason for that. It’s not because science hasn’t shown this isn’t an executive disorder. It is.

It’s that the term “ADHD” appears in so many laws and regulations and rulings and protections and in schools and in the Americans with Disabilities Act and in the IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act], the Social Security Administration, that if you change the name of a disorder those laws don’t apply any more to the people with the new name, and you can disenfranchise them from a lot of these hard-won protections and the civil liberties and the entitlements they’ve won over the last twenty years. So, we don’t change names of disorders too quickly, because we know that there are legal, political, and just practical side effects from doing so, and we don’t want to be too cavalier about that.

I have to admit this wasn’t the answer I was looking for, but his argument has merit. While the Americans with Disabilities Act doesn’t have a Rosa Parks-like figurehead, this was a major effort by many individuals, some of whom faced personal hardships to move this forward. Those protections, civil liberties, and entitlements hard-won over the

There's Still

HOPE

Interest Deficit Disorder



Attention Deficit Disorder



Interest Deficit Disorder - it's overrated

last twenty years have changed lives! They have enabled countless individuals with ADHD to live fulfilling lives more easily.

If you are affected by ADHD you are being asked to “take one for the team” and to make a sacrifice for the greater good by accepting this name. Most likely ADHD has caused you or your child some inconvenience. Will one more inconvenience be that much of a bother, if it would “un-do” protections put in place for those with ADHD?

Don't despair over the ADHD label, for there is hope for a better tomorrow in the ADHD community. We've come a long way... even though we aren't so thrilled with the name! 🗣️

A certified ADHD and attention coach based in Tampa, Florida, **Jeff Copper, PCC, PCAC, MBA**, specializes in coaching adult individuals and entrepreneurs who have been diagnosed with ADHD later in life. He is the host of Attention Talk Radio and Attention Talk Video. Learn more at digcoaching.com.

© 2013, DIG COACHING PRACTICE LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.