

Dealing with Family and Sleep Issues

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ADULT ADHD?

Email them to attention@chadd.org and highly qualified experts will respond.

I'm twenty-three years old and feel like I'm doing a pretty good on managing my ADHD, but my mom still worries all the time. How do I get her to relax and have some more confidence in me?

I'm twenty-five. I've been there. Here's the bottom line: Mom and Dad are bound to worry. Begin by writing out a letter (really). Physically writing down your thoughts takes some time, giving your attention-different brain more pause for thought.

Here's how I'd go about it: "Mom, I am so appreciative of your deep love and willingness to check in. However, lately your check-ins have felt more like a lack of trust rather than a positive, accountability check. I know you can't be here with me all of the time so you haven't had the opportunity to witness what I am handling quite well! So let's set a time to chat so I can share with you the areas in my life that I believe I'm performing quite well after which I'll share the areas where I could your advice."

Now email this and set a date. But first set a date for yourself to write out those areas where you feel confident and those you need help. Remember, failures are often necessary for positive growth! This can create an open dialogue so that your parents know that it's okay to reach out and check in on you, even if sometimes the response they get is, "Actually, I'm doing pretty well."

Stephen Tonti | Writer, director, public speaker | Adult with ADHD

I feel like my family gives me a hard time about being late, but I'm not the only one who's late. How do I help them see that I'm not as late as they say and that they are more late than they admit?

First, let's take a look at your end goal. You write that you want your family to see that you are not the only one running late. When we have ADHD, sometimes we want to let our family members know that we're not the only ones with an issue! I wonder if your goal may be more about being heard and more respected by your family.

While I don't know your particular family dynamics, it can be difficult living in a family where your faults are

continually pointed out—especially things that we find difficult to control with ADHD, like running late. Sometimes just telling family members, "When you point out I'm late, it feels bad, because I feel I don't point out when you are running late. I'd like the same courtesy," can go a long way toward healing. Setting boundaries (letting others know what you will and will not accept) may cut down on the pointing out of faults.

Also, take a hard look at how often you may be critical toward your family members. Sometimes we are mirrors of others in our family. We learn how to interact in the family by how others treat us. Try catching your family being "good." Compliment and praise more than you criticize.

Stephanie Moulton Sarkis, PhD, NCC, LMHC | Psychotherapist | Author, *10 Simple Solutions to Adult ADD: How to Overcome Chronic Distraction & Accomplish Your Goals* (2011)



I really struggle with getting to bed on time. I know I should, but the pain of tomorrow doesn't register during the fun of tonight. How do I motivate myself to get into bed earlier?

This is something that I've been struggling with for as long as I can remember. I always seem to get my second wind right at the time that I should be winding down to go to bed. The constant lack of sleep weakened my immune system and led to my getting sick often. So, recently I decided it was time to develop a better nighttime routine.

Much like managing any other aspect of ADHD, it requires a little bit of work to get into a new habit. For me, it's been helpful to find a meditation/relaxation/breathing exercise that I can listen to at night before bed. This calms my mind



and the millions of thoughts going through my head. I also bought an alarm clock to use instead of the alarm on my phone. Now I charge my phone at night in a different room. That way my phone isn't in my bedroom distracting me when I should be getting to sleep.

Exercising in the morning, or whenever possible, has also been helpful. Rather than dreading sleep, I'm so physically tired at the end of the day that I'm happy to rest.

Hawken Vance | Art Director | Adult with ADHD 

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