



CHADD COORDINATOR GUIDEBOOK

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Chapter One

Social Media Communications

In this section you will learn how to reach your audience through social media including how to update and create your website.

Your Website

Once you become an official CHADD Chapter, you will receive a website template to add your meeting location, date, time and other important information you want to share with the public. Make sure your CHADD webpage for your group is always updated as this will help grow your meeting attendance.

To edit your group's Web page, go to: [ENTER NEW TEMPLATE's URL]. This will be provided to you by the national office. Once at the site:

- Enter your id: _____ (this is your group number that has been assigned to you by the national office. Leave the state abbreviation that goes before the number out).
- Enter your password: _____pass (this is your group number that has been assigned to you by the national office and the word "pass" after the number. Leave the state abbreviation out of the password)
- Once you are logged in, you can make changes to each section of the Web site by clicking on the blue links. Be sure to click on "update" to save your changes.

If you have any trouble updating your Web site, please contact Jantell Stone at Jantell_Stone@chadd.org or by calling 800-233-4050, ext. 114

Things to think about as you create/update your website

A well-designed, user-friendly website can help you engage new members, raise money, and communicate with decision-makers. The main sections of your website include the following sections:

About: This section includes information on the chapter along with contact information, chapter leaders' contact information, photo gallery for featured images, and a section for local volunteer opportunities.

Events: This section is a place in which you can list your current and upcoming events such as meetings or fundraisers.

Links: The Links section includes a list (with links) to suggested reading and resources along with chapter documents you wish to share with your constituents.

More: This section can include FAQs and a section that allows a chapter to create a custom title and content.

Below, you will find more information on each section of your website. Besides the information below, you can learn more when you go to the Affiliates login portal once there you will find a training webinar titled “Navigating the New CHADD Chapter Website.”

THE ABOUT SECTION:

Enter information about your chapter that would describe what services and supports that your chapter provides in this section of the website. This section will be the first page that your visitors will see. You must choose from the following options to list the services and supports that are provided by your chapter. You may add as many details as you would like to fully describe your activities for the public, but start by using the list of possible options:

Services and Supports:

Choose from the following list of possible "Services and Supports" that you may be providing and enter the information in the text box provided:

1. Our website links to other community resources in the links section.
2. Our website links to national resources in the links section
3. We have a telephone recording that lists our services and supports, but does not take messages.
4. We have a telephone number that takes message and we will return your call within ____ days.
5. We have a live person who answers the telephone
 - a. The person is available during the following days and hours
6. We hold public meetings where “experts” and “authorities” provide public information:
 - a. Meeting is regularly scheduled
 - b. Meeting is held monthly, except for the summer months
 - c. Meeting is held quarterly
 - d. There are public meetings, but they are not held using a set schedule
7. We offer a free support group for (choose from the following):
 - a. parents of school-aged children
 - b. grandparents of school-aged children
 - c. others interested in school-age children
 - d. teens and adolescents with ADHD
 - e. adults with ADHD
 - f. focused on employment for adults with ADHD
 - g. focused on relationships for adults with ADHD
 - h. focused on spouses for adults with ADHD
 - i. Spanish as the primary language
 - j. predominantly African-American
 - k. other (Please provide the details)

8. "Parent-to-Parent: Family Training on ADHD" program (fee)
9. Persons willing to provide advice in dealing with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), IDEA's Individual Education Plan (IEP), and "Section 504" elementary and secondary education resources.
10. Professional Advisory Board members who are willing to offer generalized advice on obtaining multi-modal treatment for ADHD.
11. We are available to assist sister non-profits organizations in public policy advocacy.
12. We are a chapter that is in full compliance with CHADD's "critical elements".

Add style to your page:

- Use the tool bar to bold, italicize, underline, color, bullet, number, insert hyperlinks, inset pictures, insert tables.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Please list any volunteering opportunities in this section.

Contact Information:

The contact information will be displayed on the top of your Web page and in the "about" section of the site. In the instructions section, please provide the visitors with the best way to contact you (e-mail, phone). If you are unable to provide individual assistance, please provide this information in this section and tell the visitor to contact the National Resource Center on ADHD by calling 800-233-4050 / <https://chadd.org/about/about-nrc/> for further information and assistance.

EVENTS SECTION:

1. Please enter the dates and times of your meetings and events in this section.
2. You may also add a file for your visitors to download (full meeting schedule, event flyer, registration form, etc.)
3. To attach a file, you must upload it first by going to the "upload files" section. After you have uploaded you Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF file, you may attach the file in this section of the site.

LINKS SECTION:

Note: CHADD policy prohibits links to professional or for-profit information in this section. Anyone "for-profit" requesting inclusion in the your "links" section should be referred

to CHADD national for a professional membership. After they join CHADD, they will be listed on CHADD's online Professional Directory and a link to this section is available on every CHADD affiliate Web page. You can also add a link in your “links” section to the professional directory or to CHADD’s National Resource Center on ADHD “finding a professional” section.

1. Enter the name, hyperlinks, and descriptions of local or national non-profit/government sites that may be helpful to your local community.

MORE SECTION:

This section is provided so that you may provide additional information that may be helpful to your visitors. For example, you may wish to add:

- the names of their board and professional advisory board members
- details of any special events that your group will be participating in
- information about a parent to parent training class in your community
- testimonials from support group attendees (with their permission) describing how your group has helped them.
- references to your group in the media (if you would like to include a newspaper article, get permission from the editor or just summarize the article). This is your chance to highlight the benefits of coming to meetings and being a CHADD member of your group.

CREATING YOUR WEBSITE (General information)

When update or creating your website, you might wish to recruit a volunteer from your chapter who you designate to manage the chapter’s website. However, if you must hire an IT person, below are a few things to consider.

- What is the cost to hire a website content manager?

There are many outside providers that can help build you a custom site or maintain your current one. Prices can range with these services. Expect a cost between \$15 to \$600 per hour. CHADD also has an internal IT team that can help you with your affiliate website. Contact it@chadd.org for a quote.

- How do I find and hire a website content manager?
 1. You can find a website content manager by printing a job announcement in your local chapter’s newsletter and advertise on your website.
 2. Submit announcements to local media. For example, if your meeting notice regularly appears in the Health Notices section of the paper, you can also advertise for a content manager.

3. Send flyers or extra postcards to local health, mental health and education professionals and ask that they post the notice in their offices.
4. Contact your local school system and see if they will be willing to work with you to promote the website content manager opening. For example, if your local school system distributed your meeting flyers to all public schools through their mail system at no cost, you could also advertise the opening for a website content manager, and have a link to your chapter's website.
5. Flyers and newspaper ads. Use your local newspaper and put flyers in the public library to publicize an opening for a website content manager.

Social Media Engagement

In this section you will learn how to engage with your target audiences, as well as your detractors, which is an integral part of your social media communications strategy. Below are a few best practices to improve on your engagement strategy.

- **Create awareness**

1. Keep social profiles full of worthwhile content for your target audiences
2. Share content from influencers (sources and people)
3. Stay active in social comments and conversations, but don't participate to the point where your communications are considered "overkill." There is no need to "thank" everyone or state the same message multiple times.
4. Do not respond to every post unless a response is warranted. Not only will it be overkill, it will clog up the comments feed.
5. Do not over promote. Use the "80/20 Rule." Eighty percent of the time, CHADD should serve as an information resource on all of your social platforms, and 20 percent of the time, you can promote CHADD programs and services on social platforms.

- **Don't overshare**

1. While it is important to stay in the loop and maintain social relationships, according to The Pew Research Center and the Social Media Research Foundation, posting and commenting too often, whether with Facebook photos, status updates, or frequent Tweets containing the same information, could likely be interpreted as "oversharing" and will become a "turn-off" to your audience.

- **Don't always feel compelled to jump into a social conversation**

1. Some things are better left unsaid. You do not always need to respond every time someone mentions CHADD. In fact, it is sometimes better to let individual members, followers, fans, influencers, or other members of the community interject before or instead of you.
2. If you jump into a conversation at the wrong time, you might send the wrong message. Pick your spots and determine exactly what kind of posts you want to

respond to and which ones you want to let lie. Take this on a case by case basis. If two people are engaging in a heated discussion on a CHADD Facebook post, use your judgement regarding when to let it ride out and when it is appropriate, if at all, to step in.

- **Be transparent**

1. Openness can go a long way in social media communications. By being transparent, your community will feel involved with CHADD and appreciate the trust you put in them.
2. Be honest and open at all times. Do so because your community is interested in your story. They will want to get involved in what you are offering, and they will stay more in touch when it comes to updates. Often, this is exactly what organizations need to generate new members and keep them for the long term.
3. Practice transparency by livestreaming meetings or conferences, or introducing the CHADD social media team (those communicating in the social media sphere on behalf of CHADD).
4. Be clear about who is communicating where and in what social network.

- **Determine Chapter's online tone**

1. Showing personality and moving away from corporate-speak is a powerful way to interact with people in the social sphere.
2. Use a conversational tone.
3. Keep posts positive and upbeat.
4. Use correct grammar and Associated Press Style whenever possible.
5. Recognize that sometimes messages are forced to be short. So, abbreviation will need to occur at times.
6. Place periods at the end of sentences and utilize other proper punctuation.
7. Make modified Tweets (edited Tweets known as "MT") on Twitter when a Tweet is not written with proper grammar or style.

- **Respond to both negative and positive feedback**

1. Three good rules of thumb for responding to positive feedback include:
 - *Thank them.* Thank your audience for positive remarks left on any of your social platforms.
 - *Return the favor.* Is someone sharing your original content? Take note of their most recent posts, and if the content relates to the type of information you want to share, share with your networks.
 - *Add them as a guest contributor.* Take note of those individuals who have the voice and passion to contribute something of value that your community will relish. Place regular contributors in a list so you can pay attention to them frequently. These people will become your online friends and they can help you further extend your reach.

2. Three good rules of thumb for responding to negative feedback include:

- *Respond quickly, ideally within a few hours of the post, or at most, within 24 hours.* Social media users have come to expect a rapid response.
- *Do not delete.* Avoid the urge to delete items, even negative posts. Your followers may take that as a sign that your organization is uncaring and in social media, disappearing feedback can still be posted elsewhere, which will not reflect well on your brand.
- *Do not feed the trolls.* Stay focused on the constructive criticism. Always support your position and gain respect by communicating it respectfully.

- **Keep it short**

1. As a general rule, keep Facebook posts as brief as possible while still providing the necessary information. Each post should be just long enough to convey your message. Do not limit relevant details just to keep it short.
2. While the Twitter limit is 140 characters, Tweets containing less than 100 characters receive 17 percent higher engagement than longer Tweets.
3. On Facebook, there is no limit to the number of characters, but be clear and concise. Images and photos create high interest and engagement. Use them to help communicate your message.

- **Always write social posts with the “5 Ws of Communication” in mind.**

Never assume a follower understands what you are writing about. Always include the who, what, where, when, why (and how) in your communications posts to ensure your audience fully understands the message you want to convey. Always include an introduction or explanation when sharing a link.

- **Follow those who you are truly interested in.**

1. Following those who follow you on Twitter is a kind gesture from person-to-person and from person-to-brand, but never feel the need to follow someone just because they are following you.
2. If someone following you has value to offer, then follow them in return.
3. When you follow back, you might get some public thanks, which will give you added exposure.

A Few General Rules in Regard to Social Media Engagement

1. Maintain brand consistency.

At any given time, all of CHADD’s social assets (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) need to match as one brand with the same logo, same colors, same taglines, etc. If the

organization ever opts to change the look of a social platform for a specific month or event, change all of the social assets simultaneously.

2. Develop relationships with influencers.

In every industry, there are people who have established themselves as influential contributors. They often have large followings, publish regularly to blogs, and speak at conferences. CHADD should establish relationships with these influencers. Since they are talking to your target audiences on a regular basis, they are in a position to communicate with CHADD if you engage with them. They may even want to work with CHADD in some way.

3. Set regular meetings to analyze metrics.

All of your work and results in the social sphere not only require constant monitoring, fine-tuning and reporting, this work needs to be reviewed and discussed regularly as a team. The only way to know what needs to be adjusted or strengthened is to evaluate the results on an ongoing basis and discuss the findings.

Schedule a monthly or quarterly (whichever works best for you) social media listening results meeting, following the development of your monthly social media listening/monitoring/analytics reporting, to review the performance of your social media communications work. Even if all is going according to plan, it is important that everyone continues to be on the same page.

4. Everything you write online will become open to the public.

Privacy settings are constantly changing and, ultimately, everything written on a social communications platform or network is public. Formal social media listening programs like Radian6 or TalkWalker prove this, as they find online conversations in every social platform.

5. Experiment with different social platforms and content.

Social media possibilities seem to change daily. New social networks and platforms—for example, Storify—are continually popping up. Avoid dedicating multiple resources to any new platform, but do not be afraid to take a chance and find a way to make new platforms work for CHADD, if these platforms meet your communications goals. Trying a social network or platform at a time where making mistakes is more forgivable can be good experience.

6. Speak in a consistent and human voice when starting social conversations.

In general, organizations strive for keeping their social voices human. The word “social” means that the conversations in the social media sphere are just that—social. And to have social conversation, a human being needs to be involved.

Having a human voice matters because you want to avoid sounding like a robot or using too much of canned corporate speak. Keep a human voice on your social channels. Speaking with a consistent voice is important as well. Companies are criticized when the voices are all different in each of the social spheres.

7. Correct grammar and punctuation matter.

While keeping your posts and responses human, use correct punctuation and grammar. Place periods at the end of sentences, not colons. Follow the Associated Press Style for writing as much as possible.

8. Use hashtags effectively.

A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a hash or pound sign (#), used to identify messages on a specific topic and for search optimization around a topic. Hashtags are an important part of the social media communications culture today, but are often used incorrectly. They can be used and have a place in many social networks such as Twitter (where they originated from), Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Knowing how to properly use a hashtag is fundamental to your success.

- Hashtag words that can be “searched” as topics.
- Think of hashtags as the equivalent of content tagging.
- Use a hashtag to become part of that topical conversation.
- The more specific you are with the word being hash-tagged, the more targeted your audience will be, equating to better visibility and stronger engagement.
- Use proper sentence structure and hashtag words where they fall within the sentence.
- You can also add a hashtag at the end of sentence if it does not fit within.

Tweet: How to Write an Effective Tweet

- Twitter is not a news broadcast channel, so do not use it only to push information. If you are pushing information, create those messages in a way to provoke engagement. Ask questions. Pose thoughts. Try to spark conversation.
- Keep Tweets from 140 to 280 characters maximum. Keep Twitter bios to 160 characters.
- Always keep in mind the “5 Ws of Communication”—Who, What, Where, When, Why (and How)—when crafting a Tweet. The more of these you can include, the better a person will understand what you are communicating.
- Hashtag words that can optimize a tweet to enable more of your target audience to find it. But don’t over hashtag.
- Be conversational.
- Never write a Tweet where you refer to your organization in the third person.
- Develop Tweets that are geared toward your target audiences.
- Comment on your target audiences’ Tweets, retweet them, and engage with them.

- When you retweet, (RT) if you don't like the way the tweeter wrote their Tweet, you can modify it. This is called a "modified Tweet" which is known as an MT.
- The @ sign always precedes a Twitter user's name.
- When wanting to refer to another tweeter but not wanting to engage with them, you place a period before their Twitter handle.

Example: @JohnSmith had an excellent study published in JAMA on July 10. Did you catch it?

- When wanting to engage with another tweeter, start with their Twitter handle.

Example: @JohnSmith I saw your most recent study. Great job developing it!

Facebook Post and LinkedIn: How to Write a Facebook Post or LinkedIn Company Page Update

- Facebook is not a news broadcast channel; it is an online social communications platform, where two-way and multiple engagements occur.
- Always keep the "5 Ws of Communication" in mind when crafting Facebook and LinkedIn posts.
- Write Facebook wall posts in full sentences and with an engagement strategy in mind. Rather than just writing a statement, try writing questions along with statements. Or write a question by itself. Doing so makes people want to respond. When they respond, it leads to engagement. The more engagement, the more popular your posts becomes and the more visibility it has. The post will keep getting pushed to the top of the newsfeed as it becomes more popular.
- Include URLs for anything you want to share with your audience. You can place them in the main post or in the comments section.
- Facebook live - Facebook Live is a feature of the Facebook social network that uses the camera on a computer or mobile device to broadcast real-time video to Facebook. Live broadcasters can decide who on Facebook can see their video and use this content to engage their audience during the moments and events that are important to them.
- How to Use Facebook Live:
 - Tap the camera icon to the left of your search bar.
 - Give Facebook access to your camera and microphone when prompted.
 - Switch to "Live" on the bottom of your camera screen.
 - Choose your privacy and posting settings.
 - Write a compelling description.
 - Tag friends, choose your location, or add an activity.
 - Set your camera's orientation.
 - Add lenses, filters, or writing and drawing to your video.
 - Click the blue "Start Live Video" button to start broadcasting.
 - Interact with viewers and commenters.
 - Click "Finish" to end the broadcast.
 - Post your reply and save the video to your camera roll.

Chapter Two

Your Newsletter

In this section, you will learn how to write a newsletter for your constituents. This material refers to electronic newsletters generated by CHADD chapters. Encourage your chapter members to sign up for CHADD's national electronic newsletters—*ADHD Weekly* and *Attention Monthly*.

Newsletters are short, chatty, upbeat, and simple communications to your chapter members. Chapters can use a newsletter to share CHADD articles and news, chapter updates, a coordinator's message, your chapter's event programming and community-building items such as birthdays and anniversaries.

You can create newsletters using whatever resource is best for your chapter. Newsletters come be sent out by different channels: 1) Word document attached to an email; 2) PDF attached to an email; 3) an ordinary email (such as Yahoo! or Gmail); or 4) you can use an email platform such as MailChimp or ConstantContact to send out your newsletter.

Creating your Newsletter:

- **What CHADD will provide:**

CHADD will provide you with a newsletter template and content regularly through the Coordinator newsletter and CHADD's website.

- **Who can help you create your Chapter Newsletter and what will it cost?**

1. Intern: Inquire at local community colleges, colleges, or universities that have communications or journalism schools. Interns may be paid or unpaid; check with the local school for information.
2. Professional: Post an ad on Indeed or another nonprofit employment website. Expect to pay between \$20-40 per hour or on a contract basis \$200 per newsletter issue.
3. Coordinator, secretary, or a volunteer: Recruiting someone from your chapter is the most common and will be the most cost-effective way to develop a chapter newsletter.

- **Newsletter editor/creator**

1. If your chapter is fortunate enough to have a volunteer who has some writing or editing experience, that person would be a good candidate if available and willing to work on the newsletter. However, chapter coordinator should supervise the newsletter but can delegate its creation to an appropriate person.
2. The newsletter editor/creator selects the articles and plans other items to be included in advance. He or she then sets up the content in the newsletter template.

- **What to include in the Newsletter:**

1. CHADD will provide two articles per month. The Coordinators Connection newsletter will list the article titles and links from CHADD that you can include in your chapter's newsletter
2. Articles from *Attention* magazine that are publicly available (not locked for members only) can be used and found at <https://chadd.org/attention-magazine/>
3. Any articles from ADHD Weekly can be used. The articles are available at <https://chadd.org/weekly/adhd-weekly/>
4. Any other public content from the CHADD website, including videos, podcasts, or fact sheets can be used.
5. Information about your chapter events, messages from the coordinator, etc. are all good topics for your newsletter.
6. Non-CHADD Content: Be aware that using materials that do not come from CHADD can put you at risk of the violating the copyrights of other publications, unless you obtain written permission and (possibly) pay reprint fees. Including articles from non-CHADD publications can cause problems if the copyright owner wants to be reimbursed for your use of their materials. Sharing someone else's articles could be a costly mistake for your chapter.

- **How often should you send a newsletter?**

1. CHADD recommends sending out only one newsletter per month in order to avoid overwhelming your local members.
2. Additional emails can also be sent. If you are holding a special event for ADHD Awareness Month or hosting a local conference that's the time to send a special email focusing only on that event. The next newsletter can share the details of how the event went and highlight some great pictures of chapter members at that event.

Chapter Three

Building Partnerships

This section will guide you on how to collaborate with other CHADD Chapters and the public and private sectors in a meaningful way. This chapter will give you a few ideas for collaborations.

Networking with other Chapters:

- Co-host events or programs with other chapters. For example, your chapter could collaborate with other nearby chapters in the area to host a Meet and Greet at a local restaurant to invite new families and adults to learn about the offerings of the chapters.
- Market and attend other chapters' events. A great way to collaborate regionally or statewide is by marketing another chapter's event to your members and sending a group to attend that event.
- Share best practices with other chapters. One of the best ways to find new ideas for your chapter is to connect with other chapters to share best practices. This form of collaboration is a good option for those that are not geographically near other chapters since it can be done remotely (via email or phone).
- Check out CHADD's Leadership Forum <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CHADDLeaders/> on Facebook. The Leadership Forum is dedicated to enhancing communication among all Coordinators to share information that is relevant to operating a Chapter. Examples of idea sharing include 1) event and program ideas; 2) how to grow your membership base; 3) how to partner with the local community; and 4) fundraising and finance.
- Help launch, build, or mentor new chapters. This is an opportunity for chapters in the *network* to help strengthen or build new chapters. Examples include teaching others how to 1) recruit leaders for a new chapter; 2) connect with potential local partnerships; 3) grow membership and participants; and 5) share best practices.
- Besides CHADD's Leadership Forum, Coordinators can contact other chapter leaders directly. You have access to a list of all chapter leaders via CHADD's Chapter Locator. <https://chadd.org/affiliate-locator/>

Building Partnerships with the Public and Private Sectors

Collaborating with other nonprofit organizations, education, business and industry within your community is a great way to form partnerships, build awareness of CHADD and your Chapter's work in the community, and expand your member base. Here are some ideas for collaborations:

- Cohost events or programs with other nonprofit organizations or businesses. For example, hold a webinar with guest speakers from your community targeted to informing families of the many resources in their area related to ADHD.
- Team up with local colleges and universities to hold events for students is a great way to give back to your community and recruit interns for your newsletter, website, etc. Your Chapter could participate in an academic event, have a booth at a college/university

orientation, or partner with various schools to create an event of your own, such as holding a “Find a College” event at your local church or library.

- Partner with local business to conduct an auction. Employees can bring in collectibles and valuables to be auctioned off during your next Chapter event. This could be a quarterly or yearly event and, as it grows, your Chapter will be able to expand the event to outside participants e.g. inviting partners, etc.
- Use Event Brite to publicize and learn about other events in your community to partner with in order to expand your reach of the ADHD community.
- Share information on “others” community events can be shared on the Chapter’s Facebook page, the Chapter’s newsletter, and the Chapter’s website.

Chapter Four

Media Relations

In this section, you will learn about media relations. Media relations is an important function for anyone who hopes to effect change. This is particularly true when you advocate for ADHD issues as a CHADD affiliate coordinator or representative, because you work every day to make a difference for people living with ADHD. CHADD developed the Media Toolkit to help you in your media outreach efforts, providing details on how to reach television, radio, newspaper, and internet journalists with your key messages. We hope you'll find this toolkit useful in your endeavors with the media, either as an advocate or as a coordinator sharing information about your CHADD affiliate's activities.

Working with Reporters

The best way to begin effective media relations is to read your daily newspaper, watch the local TV newscasts, and listen to local radio to identify the programs and reporters that cover mental health and education issues. By doing your research, you will be able to identify specific reporters, their specialties, and the topics they usually cover. If you're dealing with a print reporter, review the newspaper online, search by the reporter's name (byline), and review that reporter's previous articles. Once you've learned who would be appropriate to work with, you're ready to reach out. Following are some techniques to open the door to good working relationships with the media.

1. Contact a Reporter

- Contacting a reporter to suggest a story idea is referred to as pitching a story. Before you begin the process, be sure to have all your information and resources in place. You may ask to schedule a meeting with reporters or editorial boards. This is a good way to educate journalists about a given issue, and while these meetings don't always result immediately in a story, reporters will have a better understanding of ADHD the next time the topic is covered.
- While one-on-one discussions can be effective, in most if not all cases, you'll need to develop written materials, such as press releases, media advisories, opinion/editorials, and letters to the editor. Press releases and media advisories are useful tools for alerting the media to upcoming events, such as your regular or annual meeting. Remember, there is competition between media outlets, so you will want to have something unique for each reporter. Opinion/editorials (often called op/eds) are rather difficult to get published, but are quite effective when they appear. A letter to the editor is another effective technique, written in response to articles or information recently published or broadcast.
- When you've established yourself with the local media as a credible source of information about ADHD, you may receive calls asking you to comment or be interviewed about a relevant story or topic. Be aware that there is no such thing as "off the record." Every word you say can be printed or broadcast. Be sure to use your words carefully. When responding to a question, begin with a general statement that sums up your position succinctly and accurately. Then you can narrow down your response with specifics.

Your goal when speaking with any member of the media is always is to come across as cordial, cooperative, and knowledgeable. If you have questions about media relations protocol, contact the CHADD Communications and Media Relations at attention@CHADD.org.

The Elements of a Good Story

As the old saying goes, you never have a second chance to make a good first impression. One of the best ways to make a favorable impression on reporters is to be prepared when you approach them. That means you should have a story idea that the reporter, editor, or producer will find unique, interesting, and well thought out. Editors and producers typically define “news” as a story that includes one or more of the following elements:

- **Timeliness** – Media outlets compete fiercely to be the first to disseminate a story. Your success may be based on whether you can help the journalist you are working with meet their deadlines and be the first to deliver a story to the public.
- **Novelty** – New and unusual topics or angles attract readers. Don’t pitch the same stories that typically run about ADHD (such as “Back to School”). Think of viewpoints that haven’t been so thoroughly explored (“A Teacher’s View of ADHD in the Classroom”).
- **Controversy** – It’s unfortunate, but conflict increases interest. Those of us working on mental health issues know that controversy is not in short supply. While you may find yourself working on a controversial story, you should always help reporters focus on the science. It is always a good idea to let the Communications and Media Relations department at CHADD know when you are working on stories with this sometimes necessary but always volatile news element.
- **Proximity**– People want to know what is happening in their own backyard. Make sure your story ideas focus on local issues.
- **Emotional Appeal or Human Interest** – The public, and thus the news media, enjoy stories that involve human emotion and pull at the heartstrings. You’ll probably get a more positive response from the media if you relate the facts through personal stories from parents and children affected by ADHD.
- **Possible story ideas** - 1) the impact of untreated ADHD; 2) older adults with ADHD; 3) ADHD in your state/area (e.g., public policy initiatives designed to protect or hinder the rights of those with ADHD); and 4) parents who learned about their own ADHD once their children were diagnosed

Your Press Materials

The *press release* is one of the most common ways to communicate your story to the media. Press releases are typically one to two pages in length, and should be sent via email several weeks in advance when regarding an event. The first paragraph or lead provides the "who, what,

when, where, and why" of an event or newsworthy item. The format is a fairly structured one, set by convention and tradition, and must include the elements listed below. The easiest way to organize this initial information is to follow the sample included in this toolkit.

1. A press release should include:

- A descriptive headline that catches or piques interest
- Contact information
- A dateline, which includes the geographic location from where the release is being sent and the month, date, and year; this appears prior to the first sentence in the opening paragraph
- An opening paragraph with the who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Quotes from the affiliate coordinator, a parent, an expert, teacher, etc.
- Marks indicating the story has ended (either **-30-** or **###**) at the bottom of the document

A *media advisory* or *media alert* briefly explains a program or event in a quick, easy-to-read format, and serve as an invitation for the media to cover your event. These documents are always one page long and single-spaced. Photo and interview opportunities should be noted. To invite television coverage of an upcoming event, email your information directly to the "News Assignment Desk." The correct contact information is typically available on a station's website. Some websites also provide specific email templates to send materials. When in doubt, call the station and ask where to send your event advisory.

2. Media advisories should include:

- A descriptive headline that catches or piques interest
- Contact information (this should appear before the story begins)
- When your event will take place, including date and time
- Where your event will take place
- Why the event is important and will benefit the public
- How people can learn more or register (if appropriate)

3. A letter to the editor or op/ed

- A letter to the editor or op/ed can be used to communicate your message, particularly if you want to respond to an article or column in your local newspaper, or address a state or local issue. If you decide to submit a letter to the editor, you will want to keep the letter very brief. Every media outlet has its own set of guidelines about when and how they will accept these materials. If you fail to follow the rules, your letter or essay may be discarded without being read. Specific requirements for letters to the editor and op/eds can be found on the individual websites for each media outlet.

Once you have developed your materials, you can email them to local reporters. Typically, email addresses for reporters can be found on the media outlet's website. Many print outlets also list email addresses in the publication.

The Elements of a Good Interview

If your pitch has interested a reporter, you'll most likely get a call asking you to provide more information or answer some questions. The key to feeling comfortable and doing well in an interview is knowing what you want to say and saying it clearly. Most interviews are brief, so you must deliver your messages quickly, clearly, and often. Many times, especially in radio or TV interviews, only one quote or soundbite is used in the final piece, so you have to make every word count.

To prepare for an interview, craft three message points that clearly communicate the information you want to leave with your audience. Use quotable language, speak in short sentences, and include statistics and real-world examples to paint a compelling picture. For instance, don't say that a child with ADHD may be hyperactive. Instead, you can say he or she may not be able to sit still, cannot finish a five-minute quiz, and repeatedly gets out of his or her seat and moves around the classroom. Try to paint a picture with your words.

Reporters often already know the direction their story will take. They are looking to you to support or challenge their angle. The best answer to a question comes from listening carefully to the question. If you need to, pause before you answer to allow yourself time to formulate your response. If you don't understand a question, ask politely that it be repeated.

Do your best to respond to the question, and try to bridge to your message points. A bridge enables you to shift the conversation back to your key messages, allowing you to deliver the points you want to make. If you do not know the answer to a particular question, let the reporter know you will need to check on that information and will get right back to them.

- Quick Tips in Interview Etiquette

Your credibility depends on how you present your knowledge to the interviewer and audience. Here are more tips for a successful interview:

1. Set ground rules. Before the interview, establish the time, date, place, length, and subject(s) to be covered. Knowing what to expect will help you prepare.
2. Be personable and engaging. Call the interviewer by name; make small talk before and after the interview.
3. Remember that nothing is off the record. Never assume that the interview is over or hasn't begun. This includes any time spent in small talk.
4. Eliminate distractions. Close your door, hold all telephone calls, and don't allow interruptions. Give the reporter your full attention and respect.

If the reporter has a negative perception or agenda, the questions you're asked will reflect this point of view. Rather than answer controversial questions, when your responses might be misconstrued or might place you or CHADD in an unfavorable light, you can say simply "I don't have the answer for that. I can find the answer and get back to you." You should never feel

obligated to accept unfamiliar facts or figures. Use your time to set the record straight or present facts. You might say, "This is a common misperception. Here's why..." Never say "no comment"; it is construed as a very negative response. If you have any concerns or reservations, please contact the national office of CHADD.

How CHADD Can Help You

As you work with reporters to disseminate your key messages about ADHD, we encourage you to stay in close contact with the CHADD Communications and Media Relations department. The department is staffed by professionals with substantial experience who could prove beneficial to your efforts. If you have a media call that you have any concerns about, please contact us. Good luck with your efforts!

CHADD Communications and Media Relations

Susan Buningh, MRE
Director of Communications
attention@CHADD.org
(800) 233-4050 x102

Public Policy Committee Staff Liaison

Karen Sampson Hoffman, MA
publicpolicyliaison@CHADD.org
(800) 233-4050 x123

Online Resources

- CHADD and CHADD's National Resource Center on ADHD at www.chadd.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) at www.nih.gov

Chapter Five

Samples and Templates

In this section you will be provided with samples and templates to assist you in creating news releases, event media advisories, event calendar listings, and social media messages.

Sample News Release

**New Research Suggests Untreated ADHD Reduces Life Expectancy by Young Adulthood
—Treatment May Help to Address the Problem**
CHADD and Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D., Partner to Announce Findings

Lanham, Md. (Jan. 8, 2019)—The message is clear. Treatment for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), along with the related health risks it poses, has the possibility of adding an average of nine to 13 years to the lifespan of children and adults diagnosed with ADHD. This is the implication of a cutting-edge research study conducted by Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D., who evaluated the connection between ADHD and 14 critical health factors including nutrition, exercise, and tobacco and alcohol use.

Dr. Barkley summarized his findings in his Keynote Address at the 2018 Annual International Conference on ADHD in St. Louis, Missouri, where he was presented with the [CHADD](#) Lifetime Achievement Award. The complete study, *Hyperactive Child Syndrome and Estimated Life Expectancy at Young Adult Follow-Up: The Role of ADHD Persistence and Other Potential Predictors*, was recently published in the *Journal of Attention Disorders*.

“Our research shows that ADHD is much more than a neurodevelopmental disorder, it’s a significant public health issue,” says Dr. Barkley. “In evaluating the health consequences of ADHD over time, we found that ADHD adversely affects every aspect of quality of life and longevity. This is due to the inherent deficiencies in self-regulation associated with ADHD that lead to poor self-care and impulsive, high-risk behavior. The findings are sobering, but also encouraging, as ADHD is the most treatable mental health disorder in psychiatry.”

Dr. Barkley and his team utilized data from a longitudinal study in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that followed a group of mostly male patients with ADHD from childhood to adulthood, and analyzed the data using an actuarial-based life expectancy calculator developed at the University of Connecticut by the Goldenson Center for Actuarial Research.

“Dr. Barkley’s research confirms what we’ve suspected for some time,” says CHADD Resident Expert L. Eugene Arnold, MD, M.Ed., Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Nisonger Center Clinical Trials Program, Ohio State University. CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) is the nation’s leading resource on ADHD, providing support, training, education, and advocacy for the 17 million children and adults in the United States living with ADHD, their families, educators, and healthcare professionals. Dr. Barkley has been working with CHADD in various capacities for more than 30 years, and will partner with the organization to identify and execute various initiatives stemming from his research findings.

“If you look at the four biggest health risks in the U.S.—poor diet, insufficient exercise, obesity, and smoking—ADHD presents a greater risk than all four of these concerns combined,” explains Dr. Barkley.

“ADHD is a major health problem that has not been evaluated in that light by policymakers,” adds Dr. Arnold. “It needs to be taken much more seriously.”

To varying degrees, ADHD is a factor in many first-order lifestyle behaviors that result in reduced life expectancy, and Dr. Barkley contends that these behaviors are not likely to improve until the underlying problem—ADHD—is addressed. He says the professional influencers who are most likely to have an impact on healthy lifestyle choices—primary care physicians, pediatricians, cardiologists, and other healthcare professionals—often do not look for ADHD as a potential reason for their patients’ noncompliance with recommended changes.

“Healthcare professionals need to look behind the curtain for ADHD,” says Dr. Barkley. “Patients who struggle to follow their physicians’ advice to manage weight, stop smoking, or reduce sugar intake, among other concerns, should be screened for ADHD and treated accordingly. We need to educate our colleagues about the symptoms of ADHD, the substantial impact this disorder can have, and how to screen for it. The good news is, with accurate diagnosis and the continued use of evidence-based treatments including cognitive therapy, educational support, skills training, and medications, people with ADHD may add years back to their lives. And collectively, we can make a significant impact on some of the biggest health concerns we face as a nation.”

CHADD will host a webinar with Dr. Barkley titled *Health and Life Expectancy in ADHD: Treatment Matters More Than You Think* on Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 1:30 pm ET. Click [here](#) to register.

About Russell A. Barkley, PhD

Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D., is an internationally recognized authority on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adults who has dedicated his career to widely disseminating science-based information about ADHD. Dr. Barkley is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Virginia Treatment Center for Children and Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia. Learn more at www.russellbarkley.org.

About CHADD

CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) is the leading resource on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), providing support, training, education, and advocacy for the 17 million children and adults in the United States living with ADHD, their families, educators, and healthcare professionals. As home to the National Resource Center on ADHD, funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHADD is the most trusted source of reliable, science-based information regarding current medical research and ADHD management. To learn more, visit www.CHADD.org or call 310.306.7070.

#

Contact

Barbara Link
610.668.2855
barbara@linkink.com

Template for Event News Release

(Remove Header Before Sending)

CHADD Hosts [Local Event Name] to Recognize ADHD Awareness Month

City, State (Today's Date using Month Day, Year)—In recognition of ADHD National Awareness Month in October, the [local chapter or support group] of the nonprofit organization CHADD will host [Event Name] on [October Day], Year. The event will be held at [location from start time to end time (include am and/or pm)], and will feature list activities, [i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc.] Members of the community are invited to attend. For more information or to register, [details about how to. Include if there is a registration fee or cost to attend.]

“The goal our [Event Name] is to raise awareness about ADHD and to let everyone in our community know that they can turn to CHADD for the support they need,” says [(first and last name of local representative and his or her involvement with CHADD, i.e., co-chair of the local chapter in particular town or city)]. [Name of local chapter or support group] is one of more than 100 local groups affiliated with CHADD, the leading resource on ADHD. “Despite overwhelming scientific evidence, there is still a lot of inaccurate information out there about ADHD,” adds [last name only]. “Many people don’t understand it and some even doubt its very existence. We want people to know that ADHD is real, that it is manageable with the proper treatment, and that CHADD can help.”

ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that interferes with daily functioning and life’s achievements. It affects 17 million people of every age, gender, IQ, religion and socioeconomic background across the United States. Many children and adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the proper treatment, while many others still remain undiagnosed. ADHD life is riddled with difficulties in functioning, interpersonal, social, academic and professional skills, causing significant impairments in school, work, relationships, and all aspects of daily life. ADHD is highly manageable with an individualized, multimodal treatment approach that can include behavioral interventions, parent/patient training, educational support, and medication.

CHADD provides support, training, education, and advocacy at both the national and local levels for families, adults, educators, and healthcare professionals impacted by ADHD. At the national level, CHADD offers a comprehensive range of programs and services including peer training for parents and teachers, educational materials, webinars, local support groups, a helpline, an annual international conference, and public advocacy. At the local level, CHADD is an invaluable resource in the community, with more than 100 support groups across the United States that encourage peer relationships, foster connectedness, and enhance access to local resources. CHADD serves as home to the National Resource Center on ADHD, funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, making it the most trusted purveyor of reliable, science-based information regarding current medical research and ADHD management. Visit CHADD.org to learn more.

Contact:

Your Name:

Your Telephone Number:

Your Email Address

Template for Event Media Advisory

(Remove Header Before Sending)

CHADD Hosts [Local Event Name] to Recognize ADHD Awareness Month

What: [Event Name] to raise awareness about ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) during ADHD Awareness Month in October. The event will feature [list activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc.]

Who: Hosted by [the local chapter or support group] of CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder), the leading resource on ADHD. Members of the community are invited to attend.

Where: Location
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

When: Month, Date, Year
Start Time to End Time (Include am and/or pm)

Background:

Despite overwhelming scientific evidence—endorsed by the most prestigious medical organizations in the world—there is still a lot of inaccurate information circulating about Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that interferes with daily functioning and life's achievements. It affects 17 million people of every age, gender, IQ, religion and socioeconomic background across the United States. Many children and adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the proper treatment, while many others still remain undiagnosed. ADHD is highly manageable with an individualized, multimodal treatment approach that can include behavioral interventions, parent/patient training, educational support, and medication. CHADD provides support, training, education, and advocacy at both the national and local levels for families, adults, educators, and healthcare professionals impacted by ADHD. Visit CHADD.org to learn more.

Contact:

Your Name:

Your Telephone Number:

Your Email Address:

Template for Event Calendar Listing

[Event Name]

In recognition of ADHD National Awareness Month in October, the [local chapter or support group] of the nonprofit organization CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) will host [Event Name on October Day, Year]. The event will be held at [location from start time to end time (include am and/or pm)], and will feature [list activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc]. Members of the community are invited to attend. For more information or to register, [details about how to. Include if there is a registration fee or cost to attend].

Contact

Your Name

Your Telephone Number

Your Email Address

Templates for Social Media Messages

Design note: use Twitter and Facebook icons/pictures

Social media, specifically Twitter and Facebook, are easy and highly effective ways to share information. The following is a list of general messages that your local chapter or support group, and the individual members of your group, can send out from your Twitter and Facebook accounts during ADHD Awareness Month. We suggest sending out tweets and posts on a daily or ongoing basis (in any order you would like). In addition, be sure to follow CHADD's national tweets and posts, and to retweet and share them with your followers.

1. Twitter

- For Twitter, be sure to always include the following hashtags and CHADD's Twitter handle:

@CHADD_ADHD

#ADHD

#ADHDAwarenessMonth

#ADHDChangeTheConversation

#ADHDCon2019 (annual conference hashtag; will be updated each year)

- Examples of Tweets for ADHD Awareness Month
 - October is ADHD National Awareness Month. Join [the local affiliate] of CHADD at our Event Name on October [Date]. For more info, website or contact information.
 - Celebrate ADHD Awareness Month with CHADD at our [Event Name] on October [Date]. For more info, website or contact information.

- Help raise awareness for ADHD. The local chapter or support group of CHADD is hosting an Event Name on October date. For more [info, website or contact information].

2. Facebook

- Examples of Facebook posts for ADHD Awareness Month
 - In recognition of ADHD National Awareness Month in October, the [local chapter or support group] of the nonprofit organization CHADD will host [Event Name] [on October [date], 20—]. The event will be held at location from start time to end time (include am and/or pm), and will feature list activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc. Members of the community are invited to attend. For more information or to register, details about how to. Include if there is a registration fee or cost to attend.
 - Please join us in recognizing ADHD Awareness Month when the local chapter or support group of the nonprofit organization CHADD hosts Event Name on October date, 20—. The event will be held at [Location] from start time to end time (include am and/or pm), and will feature list activities, i.e., a one-mile walk, an educational booth, etc. For more information or to register, details about how to. Include if there is a registration fee or cost to attend.

3. Social Media Messages (examples)

- October is ADHD Awareness Month. Get the facts and find support at <http://www.CHADD.org>
- There are many myths and misunderstandings about ADHD. Check out the most common ones here. <http://www.chadd.org/Understanding-ADHD/About-ADHD/Myths-and-Misunderstandings.aspx>
- ADHD affects 17 million people of every age, gender, IQ, religion and socioeconomic background across the US.
- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence rate of ADHD in the US is 10% for children and 4.4% for adults.
- Contrary to popular belief, at least 60% of children with ADHD continue to exhibit symptoms of the disorder to an impairing degree during adulthood.
- Many children and adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the proper treatment, while many others still remain undiagnosed.
- As many as 17.5% of children currently diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving proper treatment.
- It's estimated that only one in five adults with ADHD is diagnosed.
- ADHD life is riddled with difficulties in functioning, interpersonal, social, academic, and professional skills.
- Without proper treatment, ADHD can cause significant impairments in school, work, relationships, and all aspects of daily life.

- ADHD can have potentially devastating consequences when not properly identified, diagnosed, and treated.
- ADHD is highly manageable with an individualized, multimodal treatment approach that can include behavioral interventions, parent/patient training, educational support, and medication.
- CHADD provides support, training, education and advocacy for children and adults with ADHD, their families, educators, and healthcare professionals. <http://www.CHADD.org>
- As home to the National Resource Center on ADHD, funded by the CDC, CHADD is the most trusted source for reliable, science-based information. <http://www.CHADD.org>
- CHADD has more than 100 local chapters and support groups across the US that encourage peer relationships, foster connectedness, and enhance access to local resources.
- CHADD provides peer training for parents and teachers, educational materials, webinars, local support groups, a helpline, an annual international conference, and public advocacy. <http://www.CHADD.org>
- Tune in to CHADD's monthly online webcasts featuring leading ADHD experts. Webcasts are free and anyone can participate. Learn more at <http://chadd.org/Training-Events/Ask-the-Expert.aspx>

Chapter Six

Changing the Conversation about ADHD - APPROVED LANGUAGE

The following language has been developed to enable everyone who represents CHADD to communicate with one consistent voice. This is essential in creating a strong brand identity for CHADD, and driving home clear and powerful messaging about ADHD.

Position Statement

CHADD is the leading resource on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), providing support, training, education, and advocacy for the 17 million children and adults in the United States living with ADHD, their families, educators, and healthcare professionals. As home to the National Resource Center on ADHD, funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHADD is the most trusted source of reliable, science-based information regarding current medical research and ADHD management, and offers comprehensive programs and services at both the national and local levels.

Key Messages

PRIMARY

- CHADD is the leading resource on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), providing support, training, education, and advocacy for children, adults, educators, and healthcare professionals.
- As home to the National Resource Center on ADHD, funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHADD is the most trusted source for reliable, science-based information regarding current medical research and ADHD management.
- CHADD is dedicated to improving the lives of the 17 million children and adults in the United States living with ADHD every day, and all who interact with them.
- CHADD offers a comprehensive range of programs and services including peer training for parents and teachers, educational materials, webinars, local support groups, a helpline, an annual conference, and public advocacy.
- CHADD is an invaluable resource at the community level, with more than 100 support groups across the United States that encourage peer relationships, foster connectedness, and enhance access to local resources.
- While ADHD is one of the most well-researched medical diagnoses and is recognized by the most prestigious scientific-based organizations in the world, there is still a lot of inaccurate information circulating, leading to confusion and doubt among uninformed or misinformed audiences as to its validity.

- ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.
- It is a disorder of self-regulation, associated with numerous and serious impairments in every aspect of daily life—home, school, social, and work.
- Many children and adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the proper treatment, while many others still remain undiagnosed.
- A comprehensive review of 19 research studies reporting on the cost of ADHD to the US economy found a range between \$143 billion to \$266 billion annually. Most of the costs are incurred by adults due to productivity and income losses. For children, healthcare and education are the primary costs.
- ADHD is highly manageable with an individualized, multimodal treatment approach that can include behavioral interventions, parent and patient training, educational support, and medication.
- ADHD is a significant public health issue. According to a recent study conducted by Russell A. Barkley, PhD, titled *Hyperactive Child Syndrome and Estimated Life Expectancy at Young Adult Follow-Up: The Role of ADHD Persistence and Other Potential Predictors*, ADHD, if treated only in childhood and not through adolescence and early adulthood, may reduce life expectancy by up to 13 years.

SECONDARY

- CHADD empowers people whose lives are affected by ADHD by sharing reliable, evidence-based information and practical strategies.
- CHADD is committed to ensuring that legislators, educators, healthcare professionals, and the general public have an accurate understanding of ADHD.
- CHADD's Professional Advisory Board is composed of the foremost ADHD experts who ensure that the organization's materials meet the highest standards of science-based information.
- CHADD's Public Policy Committee advocates on behalf of the ADHD community by influencing national public policies.
- CHADD is an active member of the Coalition to Prevent ADHD Medication Misuse (CPAMM), a partnership organization aimed at preventing prescription stimulant medication misuse, abuse, and diversion on college campuses through awareness building and education.

Chapter Seven

Advocacy

In this section you will learn how to effectively advocate for the ADHD community. Besides this section, you can find more information by reviewing CHADD's updated advocacy manual which can be found at <https://chadd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CHADD-Advocacy-Manual-2019-FINAL.pdf>

In the meantime, the following pages will provide a few steps in helping to advocate for the ADHD community.

Remember that you are the person policymakers most need to hear from—a real person who can describe how a policy, an ordinance, or a law actually affects you and your community. If you or a family member has ADHD, you are exactly the right expert to inform the policymaking process about the potential impact on those with ADHD. You have firsthand information on what is really needed and how current law really works (or does not) for you. As a resident and a voter in your community, you are a credible advocate for people affected by ADHD.

You can expect that a policymaker does not know much about your issue and what is important to you and your family. Unless your issue comes to their attention and captures their personal interest, your issue is just one of many. And, unless a policymaker has the personal experience—the world of disability issues is more difficult to understand.

As an advocate/educator, you give those issues a face—to make it personal. To do this, sharing your personal story is vital. Once your issues have the attention of a policymaker, school board member, trustee, council member, or a member of the media, you have a much better chance of leveraging your personal experience as a catalyst for action and change.

Joining forces with others in the disability community

Anytime you can join forces with others who have shared concerns, you increase your chance of effectiveness. There are times where organizations differ in their viewpoints. However, there are also many places where organizations can agree and work together. Your work together will be more powerful because of the strength in numbers. CHADD frequently works with other groups such as:

Mental Health America <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>

NAMI <https://www.nami.org/>

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health <https://www.ffcmh.org/>

Child & Adolescent Bipolar Foundation—BP Kids <http://www.bpkids.org/>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists <https://www.aacap.org/>

American Academy of Pediatricians <https://www.aap.org>

National Medical Association <https://www.nmanet.org/>

National Association of School Psychologists <https://www.nasponline.org/>

Parent Teachers Association <https://www.pta.org/>

American School Counselor Association <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

Many organizations have local or state affiliates. CHADD can help you identify experts or partners who might want to join with you in your efforts. We also encourage you to sign up for the email lists of organizations that are potentially aligned with CHADD's goals to learn more about their activities.

Steps for Success

1. How well you advocate is largely determined by how well you communicate your issues or positions to policymakers. There are many ways to share your message; however, there is no one best method to achieve your goals. Listed below are several key approaches that can help you improve your advocacy efforts.
 - Understand the policymaking process for the legislature or other body you are approaching.
 - Realize that most policymakers do not have expertise regarding people with ADHD or our issues.
 - Develop a powerful personal story tied to your policy goals. How does the proposed policy affect you and your family? How does it affect your community?
 - Share your personal story at meaningful times to educate and influence your own representatives at the local, state, and federal levels.
 - Know how to win and lose gracefully. There will be another opportunity on another day.
 - Be generous in your thanks and praise. Send policymakers a handwritten thank you note for their help.
 - Invest time in developing a relationship with policymakers and their staff so that you become a trusted source of information and part of their braintrust on ADHD issues.
 - Work to find issues in common with other people and speak with one voice on the issues whenever possible.
2. Fast Facts to know if questioned:
 - What is CHADD and who funds the organization?
 - CHADD is Children and Adults with ADHD. Founded in 1987, CHADD is the nation's largest family-based organization serving people affected by ADHD.
 - CHADD receives support from a wide range of funders, including the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, corporations, foundations, charitable giving from individuals, membership fees, annual international conference, and more. Information about CHADD's funding can be found at www.chadd.org/donations/
 - What is ADHD and is it limited to childhood?
 - ADHD is recognized by the National Institute of Mental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Medical Association as a neurodevelopmental disorder affecting children and adults.
 - ADHD is characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.

- Many of the symptoms classified as ADHD symptoms are symptoms of executive function impairments. Executive function refers to a wide range of central control processes in the brain that activate, integrate, and manage other brain functions.
 - The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) lists three presentations of ADHD—predominantly inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive and combined.
 - While ADHD was originally thought to be a childhood disorder, it is a lifespan disorder that can persist into adulthood. Symptoms continue into adulthood for more than three-quarters of people diagnosed.
 - ADHD affects about 10 percent of school-age children and about 5 percent of adults.
- What is the best form of treatment?
 - Treating ADHD often requires medical, educational, behavioral, and psychological intervention. This comprehensive approach to treatment is sometimes called *multimodal* and, depending on the age of the individual with ADHD, may include 1) parent training; 2) medication; 3) skills training; 4) counseling; 5) behavioral therapy; 6) educational supports; and 7) education about ADHD.
- Is ADHD over diagnosed in children?
 - Studies show that access to diagnosis and treatment of mental illness varies depending on gender, race, and socioeconomic status.
 - Studies show girls are three time less likely to receive service for ADHD than boys.
 - Minority children are two to two and a half times less likely to receive treatment and support services for ADHD compared to white children.
- What happens if people go untreated for ADHD?
 - Undiagnosed and untreated ADHD can have devastating consequences. This can include low self-esteem, a higher prevalence for sexually transmitted diseases, greater risk for automobile accidents, social and academic challenges, career underachievement and a possible increase in the risk of later antisocial and criminal behavior.

It is important that reporters, policymakers, and members of the public learn as much as they can about ADHD. You can help by encouraging them to visit the CHADD website at www.chadd.org. You can refer members of the media who need more information to the CHADD communications department (301-306-7070, ext. 102) or the public policy committee liaison (ext. 123).

3. Use people-first language

- People-first language is used to speak appropriately and respectfully with and about individuals with disabilities. People-first language emphasizes the person first, not the disability, by starting the phrase with the words “person who” or “person with.” People-first language describes what the person has, not what the person is.

Advocacy Quick Tips

DO:	Don't:
<p>Do believe your voice matters. You vote and you live in the district. Your concerns have much more weight than you think.</p> <p>Do contact the Public Policy Liaison at: (301) 306-7070 ext. 123 or by email: publicpolicyliaison@chadd.org</p> <p>Do know your facts. Use ADHD Fact Sheets from CHADD's National Resource Center at https://chadd.org/understanding-adhd/adhd-fact-sheets . Visit the Public Policy page, https://chadd.org/policy-positions .</p> <p>Do say, “I don't know.” When you don't have the answer you can always get back to the policymaker with the correct information.</p> <p>Do offer alternative language or ideas. Be constructive. Give your policymaker some alternatives.</p> <p>Do say you are a CHADD member. This is a statement of fact that tells the policymaker you are concerned about ADHD without making your comments official CHADD policy.</p> <p>Do vote and participate in the election campaign process. This is the right and responsibility of every citizen.</p>	<p>Don't ever think policymakers are uninterested in your input. You have something important to add to the conversation. Your policymakers and elected representatives need to hear from you.</p> <p>Don't go unprepared to a meeting. Policymakers expect you to be prepared and to the point. You want to know the issue, have facts and be able to tell them what needs to be changed.</p> <p>Don't just voice opinions. Everyone will have an opinion on all sides of an issue. If your arguments are supported by facts and figures, you will have far more influence.</p> <p>Don't try to answer questions when you are unsure of the answers. You'll get caught every time. Just make sure you respond with the information requested.</p> <p>Don't just complain. You will be much more effective if you have an alternative proposal.</p> <p>Don't say you represent CHADD. While this may appear to be a small distinction, it is an important one. We do not want you to be limited to only CHADD official policy.</p> <p>CHADD chapters may not participate in ANY election campaign. Do not invite candidates to any chapter activities and do not lend chapter support to</p>

<p>Do track and report any CHADD expenses incurred while lobbying for any federal, state, or local legislation.</p> <p>This is an IRS requirement and an absolute must. This information goes to the national office with your quarterly financial report.</p> <p>Do advocate for access to all medications and treatments for ADHD.</p> <p>You will appear to be advocating for all people with ADHD. Learn about medications at Treatment of ADHD at https://chadd.org/about-adhd/treatment-of-adhd.</p> <p>Do follow up after a meeting.</p> <p>Always follow up with a thank you letter with an offer to be a resource and any additional information.</p>	<p>any candidate. This is a violation of CHADD's nonprofit status.</p> <p>Don't forget to report CHADD expenses for "lobbying."</p> <p>This includes mileage, food, printing, mailing, phone calls, etc. If you don't track and report CHADD expenses, CHADD could lose its nonprofit status.</p> <p>Don't advocate for coverage of a specific medication or brand name.</p> <p>You will appear to be lobbying for the interest of a pharmaceutical company.</p> <p>Don't assume your work is done.</p> <p>Follow up to see what action has been taken and how you can be helpful. Request another appointment to continue the conversation.</p>
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HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW?

1 EVERY LAW STARTS WITH AN IDEA



That idea can come from anyone, even you! Contact your elected officials to share your idea. If they want to try to make it a law, they will write a bill.

2 THE BILL IS INTRODUCED

A bill can start in either house of Congress when it's introduced by its primary sponsor, a Senator or a Representative. In the House of Representatives, bills are placed in a wooden box called "the hopper."



Here, the bill is assigned a legislative number before the Speaker of the House sends it to a committee.

3 THE BILL GOES TO COMMITTEE

Representatives or Senators meet in a small group to research, talk about, and make changes to the bill. They vote to accept or reject the bill and its changes before sending it to:

the House or Senate floor for debate or to a subcommittee for further research.

4 CONGRESS DEBATES AND VOTES

Members of the House or Senate can now debate the bill and propose changes or amendments before voting. If the majority vote for and pass the bill, it moves to the other house to go through a similar process of committees, debate, and voting. Both houses have to agree on the same version of the final bill before it goes to the President.



DID YOU KNOW?

The House uses an electronic voting system while the Senate typically votes by voice, saying "yay" or "nay."

5 PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

When the bill reaches the President, he or she can:

✓ APPROVE and PASS

The President signs and approves the bill. The bill is law.

THE BILL IS LAW



The President can also:

Veto

The President rejects the bill and returns it to Congress with the reasons for the veto. Congress can override the veto with 2/3 vote of those present in both the House and the Senate and the bill will become law.

Choose no action

The President can decide to do nothing. If Congress is in session, after 10 days of no answer from the President, the bill then automatically becomes law.

Pocket veto

If Congress adjourns (goes out of session) within the 10 day period after giving the President the bill, the President can choose not to sign it and the bill will not become law.

Brought to you by



Your Message

How do you go about crafting your message for maximum effectiveness? It is important to understand the elements of building a powerful message. Below are a few questions to consider when creating your message.

What is it you want the policymaker to do? Summarize what you want done in just one sentence. Be as concrete and specific as possible. This is the point you will return to in crafting and presenting your message.

How do you want the policymaker to do it? Be clear and specific about what you think the appropriate course of action includes. This should follow your summary statement from above.

When do you want the policymaker to do it? Policymakers and staff think in terms of their schedule. Describe the timeframe in which action is necessary.

How does this issue relate to you? What effect has this issue had on your life and on the life of your family? How does it affect other people with ADHD? Remember the point of telling your story is to put a face on the issue and to help the policymaker understand the impact of the issue on your life or that of your family member.

Are others affected by this issue? If so, how many people in the policymaker's area?

Numbers always help. If 10,000 other children in your state are also affected, this will have a big impact on elected officials. Visit CHADD's website at ADHD Data and Statistics <https://chadd.org/about-adhd/adhd-data-and-statistics/> for up-to-date numbers on ADHD and co-occurring conditions.

List the key points the policymaker must know to understand the issue and how it affects people with ADHD. Try to limit your key points to no more than three on any issue. It's easiest for both you and the policymaker to remember three points.

Why should the policymaker be concerned about this issue? Consider the following:

- This is an area of personal interest or the interest of a friend to the policymaker.
- A large number of residents in the representative's area are affected.
- The policymaker serves on a committee, caucus, or other body that considers this issue.
- The policymaker has the opportunity to distinguish himself or herself as a leader on the issue.

Sharing your Message

Once you have crafted your message, how do you share it? Below is a template for sharing your message in letters, email, phone calls, or during a visit.

1. Introduce yourself and thank the policymaker for his or her time.

- Explain who you are, including whether you are a CHADD member, and how you are connected to this policymaker, such as whether you are a resident of the area or a constituent. Always thank the policymaker up front for his or her willingness to engage with you to help set a positive tone for the meeting or the written communication.
2. Identify the issue you will discuss.
 - Keep it simple. Tell the policymaker the overarching issue you are bringing to his or her attention.
 3. Share your story, or your family's story, and how the issue affects you.
 - Keep it short and specific. If you are describing programs you or your family are involved in, use the full names of the programs. Say how those programs benefit you.
 4. Describe what you want the agency or policymakers to do.
 - A brief, one-sentence request is best.
 5. Allow time for the policymaker to ask questions (if this is a meeting or phone call).
 - The policymaker may have questions about your personal experience, the issue you have raised, or about how other policy proposals may affect individuals with ADHD. Take time to educate and engage the policymaker or staff.
 6. Keep the meeting or the communication brief and leave information for the policymaker to review later.
 - Offer to be available as a resource or connect the policymaker with someone who is willing to be a resource. Be sure to leave a summary of the information you shared with the policymaker along with your contact information.

Sample Letters to Legislators

April 19, 20—

Jennifer Smith
123 Maple Ave
Anytown, TX 12345
JennSmith@sampleemail.com

The Honorable Jane B. Doe
Texas Senate
PO Box 12068

Austin, TX 78711-2068

Dear Senator Doe:

Please actively support SB 5142, the Teacher In-Service Training Act.

The Senate hearings, which were on March 14, show the importance of training our public school teachers to effectively educate all children with disabilities. Children with ADHD are the largest group of children with disabilities in our school system and are present in every classroom. When my son, Jimmy, has a teacher who understands his ADHD as a result of specialized training, his academic performance and classroom behavior are significantly improved. All of our children need the same level of expertise from their teachers.

I deeply appreciate your many years of support for all children with disabilities. I ask you to once again show your support by co-sponsoring SB 5142. Your active support can make the difference on passage of this bill. If I can provide you with any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Smith

April 19, 20—

Tom Jackson
123 Maple Ave
Anytown, NY 12345
TomJackson@sampleemail.com

The Honorable Jack Smith
Member of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 1234
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Senator Smith:

I recently became aware of Senate Bill 3173, and I am writing to voice my concern. This bill appears to restrict open communication between teachers and parents about children with behavioral difficulties in the classroom. I am particularly concerned about the portions of the bill that would stop teachers from mentioning that any child may need an evaluation for ADHD.

When my daughter Anne was in second grade, we thought she was just a rambunctious and highly energetic child who did not do very well in school. However, when her teacher suggested we might want to have her evaluated for ADHD, it was a godsend. Now that she is receiving treatment, every aspect of her life (and our family life) has improved. We used to struggle every day to get Anne out the door and on her way to school. She hated going. But today, now that she is learning and experiencing success, she loves school.

Often school is the first place that a child has to control behavior and focus for extended periods of time. For Anne this was not possible until we realized she had ADHD. Passage of this bill will make it more difficult for thousands of families to understand their child may need treatment.

As a strong supporter of the rights of families and parents, please vote against a bill that would deprive parents of essential information to help their children. Please oppose any efforts to pass this legislation as it is now drafted. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Jackson

Emailing Your Policymakers

The internet can be a powerful tool in your advocacy work. You can use email and social media to get your message out to volunteers and supporters, as well as to communicate with decision makers and their staff.

When emailing policymakers, many of the same rules for letter writing apply. Email allows advocates to communicate with decision makers regardless of where they are. It allows for immediate and timely action.

Legislative staffers have told CHADD's Public Policy Committee that if you are not a constituent, and if you do not provide contact information, including address and phone number, then your email will not be answered. Email sent through a legislative member's website, such as those used by members of the House and Senate, must also have your name, address, and phone number if you expect a reply.

You want your email to effectively convey your message:

- **Use the subject line to clearly state why you're emailing.** Do not use vague descriptions such as "Info." Use specific words about your message, such as "Oppose House Bill 000," or "Support for Disability Funding."
- **Make sure your email is formatted just like a business letter,** with your name, email address, street address, and phone number at the top.
- **Write clearly and briefly.** Share your message and how the proposed action affects you and your family. Directly state what you would like the lawmaker to do based on the information you've shared.
- **Be aware of your signature line.** Use your signature line to include extra contact information.
- **Don't spam the lawmaker's inbox.** Your message will get through but multiple emails are likely to be deleted. And if you are part of an email campaign, be sure to write your own message and encourage others to write their own messages. Multiple copies of the same email from different addresses will also be disregarded.
- Sample email below:

Subject: Please support SB 5142, the Teacher In-Service Training Act

Jennifer Smith
123 Maple Ave
Anytown, TX 12345
JennSmith@sampleemail.com
(123) 456-7890

Dear Senator Doe:

Please actively support SB 5142, the Teacher In-Service Training Act.

The Senate hearings, which were on March 14, show the importance of training our public school teachers to effectively educate all children with disabilities. Children with ADHD are the largest group of children with disabilities in our school system and are present in every classroom. When my son, Jimmy, has a teacher who understands his ADHD, his academic performance and classroom behavior are significantly improved. All of our children need the same level of expertise from their teachers.

I deeply appreciate your many years of support for all children with disabilities. I ask you to once again show your support by co-sponsoring SB 5142. Your active support can make the difference on passage of this bill. If I can provide you with any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely
Jennifer Smith

Jennifer Smith
"Being a voice for the voiceless."
Anytown, TX 12345
JennSmith@sampleemail.com
(123) 456-7890

Phoning your Policymaker

Policymakers take notice when constituents call them about important issues. It is less time-consuming than letter writing. Using the telephone to contact legislators is a traditional way advocates can quickly get their voices heard.

While no strategy takes the place of a face-to-face meeting, calling the policymaker's office ensures that someone will answer. Advocates need to be aware that they may not get to talk directly to the policymaker and will likely speak with a staff member or intern, but they can discuss their issue with the staff member and tell them what advocates in their area want the policymaker to do. Most offices also track these calls to determine how much outreach they are receiving on a particular issue. Below are a few telephone tips to consider when calling:

- **Prepare your message before you call.**
- **Be willing to speak with the staff member who answers.** Advocates often do not speak to the policymaker directly; the staff members are the ones who have the ear of the decision maker.
- **Identify yourself as a constituent.** You may be asked for your home address or zip code and you should feel comfortable providing it.
- **Say exactly what you are call about.** If there is a bill number, make sure to reference the bill or issue to make your point.
- **Say specifically what you want the legislator to do** (such as vote against budget cuts, support a bill, etc.).
- **Leave your name and contact information,** including your postal and email addresses, if requested. This will ensure that the policymaker knows you are a constituent and can send a reply if needed.
- **Always be polite and pleasant.** Never criticize or attempt to debate. Staff members and interns are trained not to engage in debate with advocates over the phone.
- **Get to your point immediately.** Chances are the call will only last a few minutes, so being to the point is critical.
- **Finish the call by thanking the policymaker or staff member** for the time and attention to the issue.

Giving Public Testimony

The more involved you become in advocating for people with ADHD, the more likely you are to be asked to speak before a state agency, workgroup, board, advisory committee, or before a state

or federal legislative committee. A public hearing is the only official way for a non-elected person to participate in the legislative process.

Local municipal boards and school boards will often allow residents the chance to speak during the regular meeting, rather than scheduling a special session. If you plan to speak at a local board meeting, the following points will be useful. If you have questions, speak with the clerk of the board before the meeting.

1. Preparing to give your testimony

When planning to give testimony, please contact CHADD's national office for assistance. We have facts to help support your position and/or sample legislation addressing priority issues. Often we can give you guidance on the best way to proceed. Contact the public policy committee staff liaison at (301) 306-7070 ext. 123 or email PublicPolicyLiaison@CHADD.org.

- **Bring written copies of your testimony**

Make sure you have enough copies for all of the committee members and for other interested persons. This is particularly important when you have only a limited time to speak but have important material you may not be able to cover in that time. Written testimony becomes part of the record of the committee's proceedings just as the oral testimony does. When you are called to testify, give your written testimony to the clerk for the committee or the person responsible for taping the hearing. They will distribute it to the members.

- **You'll be asked to sign in and provide basic information about your testimony.**

Often you will need to inform the staff ahead of time that you would like to testify at the hearing. Look for the contact information in the announcement about the hearing. You can usually reply by email or phone. At other times, you will register on site. Cards are sometimes provided for this purpose. The list of those testifying is given to the chairperson of the committee and is used to call people up for the testimony. Generally, the earlier you sign in on the day of testimony, the earlier you will be called to speak.

- **Testimony before state agency boards and other bodies and before legislative committees is usually recorded as part of the record of the group's official proceedings.**

Make sure that you use the microphone provided and speak directly into it. If you need to use an interpreter to help you with verbal communication, make sure that person is also speaking clearly into the microphone.

- **Most state agencies and legislative committees will impose time limits on how long you can speak.**

Normally speakers are limited to three to five minutes. Because of this, it is vital that you have your main points at hand and that you can get to the point quickly.

- **Agencies, boards, etc., are required under the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide accommodations for people with disabilities when they participate in hearings, meetings, etc.**

Notify the coordinator of the meeting or the committee clerk a day or two before you are scheduled to testify should you or a member of your chapter need accommodations. The contact person is usually listed in the notice of the meeting.

How to Address Elected Officials in Writing and When Speaking

Addressing elected officials, legislators, and other policymakers correctly shows professionalism and politeness. It's another way of making sure your message is well received.

1. Federal Elected Officials:

Senate:

- The mail address for the United States Senate is: The Honorable (full name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510
- You can find the postal and email addresses for your US Senator at United States Senate, Senators of the 116th Congress at https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm
- You can reach any US Senator through the Capital switchboard by calling (202) 224-3121.
- Address the Senator in writing: Dear Senator (last name); when speaking: "Senator (last name)"

House of Representatives:

- The mail address for the United States House of Representatives: The Honorable (full name), United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515
- You can find the postal and email addresses of your US Representatives at the United States House of Representatives, Directory of Representatives, <https://www.house.gov/representatives>
- Any member of the House of Representatives can be reached by calling the Capitol switchboard at (202) 225-3121. Please note this is a different number than the one for calls to your Senators.
- Address the Representative in writing: Dear Representative (last name); when speaking: "Representative (last name)" or "Congressman (last name)"

CHADD Advocacy Handbook

For more information, please see CHADD's Advocacy Handbook at <https://chadd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CHADD-Advocacy-Manual-2019-FINAL.pdf>