

Notes from 2/28/24 ADHD and Friendship

What do we as ADHDers offer as friends? 😊

Accepting and Inclusive
Creativity
Empathy
Energy
Engaging conversations
Enthusiasm
Exciting and fun
Humor
Loyalty
Spontaneity
Trusting
Quick thinking
Unique perspectives

What does having friends offer us? 😊

Accountability
A place where we can be ourselves
A sense of acceptance and belonging
Challenge our perspectives, expand our worldview
Community
Connection
Courage
Creation of healthy, positive memories
Discovery of new interests
Emotional regulation – someone to check in with to see how they see/feel the situation, etc.
Essential to well-being of all humans – naturally social, communal creatures
Exploration of shared interests
Laughter
Life enhancing
Partner to do difficult things, try adventurous things, travel
Reassurance
Sounding board
Support – real world, real time; from rides to raising money

*Mention: Types of friendships → Dr. Sharon Saline (2023) Intimates, Best Buddies, Pals, Acquaintances, Strangers
She wrote What Your ADHD Child Wishes You Knew*

Key comments about what type of friend is what type of friend

The difficulty of moving through those bands – may feel like we've connected more deeply quickly and be incorrect; struggle to identify who goes in what "band."

Who to call when need someone?

Friends who stick and are okay with it falling away and coming back together; others who "give up."

Relationship as negotiation.

Struggle to let go of friendships because life stage changes – friendship isn't balanced. Trying too much be a part of their lives and they pull back. Others who are looking for me and not able to carve out time/space for them. Geography, partner/marriage changes, children, etc.

What ADHD traits/behaviors and/or associated experiences interfere with our ability to make or keep friends?

Apologizing "all the time" and accepting the blame too quickly for "everything"

Being "too much," "too energetic" or going "all in"

Blunt/Directness/Abrasive

Boredom (needing a break from friends, appearing inconsistent, unreliable)

Chameleon

Disliking large gatherings (overwhelm, attention concerns, preferring to be one on one or in small groups)

Emotional dysregulation

Endings – ADHDers don't typically like endings so we hang on to friends even if not healthy

Fear: of rejection, of being taking advantage of, of loss, of being embarrassed, of disappointing them or them disappointing me

Hyperactivity aka fidgeting

Impulsiveness (creating/canceling plans at last minute; bluntness/speaking before thinking/sending emails or texts before thinking/overing unsolicited advice)

Inability to sustain focus during interactions

Inflexibility (cognitive as executive function)

Impulsivity (cutting off friendships when hurt or disappointed; jumping deeply into friendship without getting to really know them first)

Interrupting (impulsiveness) and fast talking as aggressiveness

Lack of engagement perceived as shyness, aloofness

Low self-esteem/negative self-image/negative narratives

Masking

Moodiness

Over-sharing

Over-thinking

Overwhelm (see struggle below; and being overwhelmed by the other person(s) schedules, challenges, etc)
Out of sight out of mind
Physical clumsiness
Previous exclusion or harassment
Previous experiences having been bullied or teased
Previous trauma
Rejection sensitivity dysphoria
Shame and guilt
Social anxiety
Social chameleon
Struggle to manage the day to day (overwhelm)
Symptoms of associated depression
Time blindness (how has it been since you last spoke to _____?)
Unintentionally or intentionally stealing the spotlight when in a group (“holding court”)
Working memory and other memory impacts (birthdays, things that matter to them)

END PART ONE

NEXT WEEK: PART TWO

Whether we are neuro-spicy or neuro-boring....

What can we do/learn that would support our ability to get to know new friends and keep our longer-term friends?

Maybe we can talk about:

Endings and transitions more, too

Being okay with others not liking us

Be a friend with the gifts/challenges we have

How and what to disclose to friends about our ADHD, Autism

Share examples of changes we've made

RESOURCES

<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-make-friends-when-you-have-adhd-20402>

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