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**Check out Emerging Minds’
*In focus: Child mental
health and disability* with
tips and resources to
support the needs of
children with disability and
their families**

**Emerging
Minds.**

National
Workforce
Centre for Child
Mental Health



Webinar 35

Primary health strategies for working with children who present with ADHD concerns

7:15 pm to 8:30 pm AEDT
Monday 11th December 2023

**Emerging
Minds.**

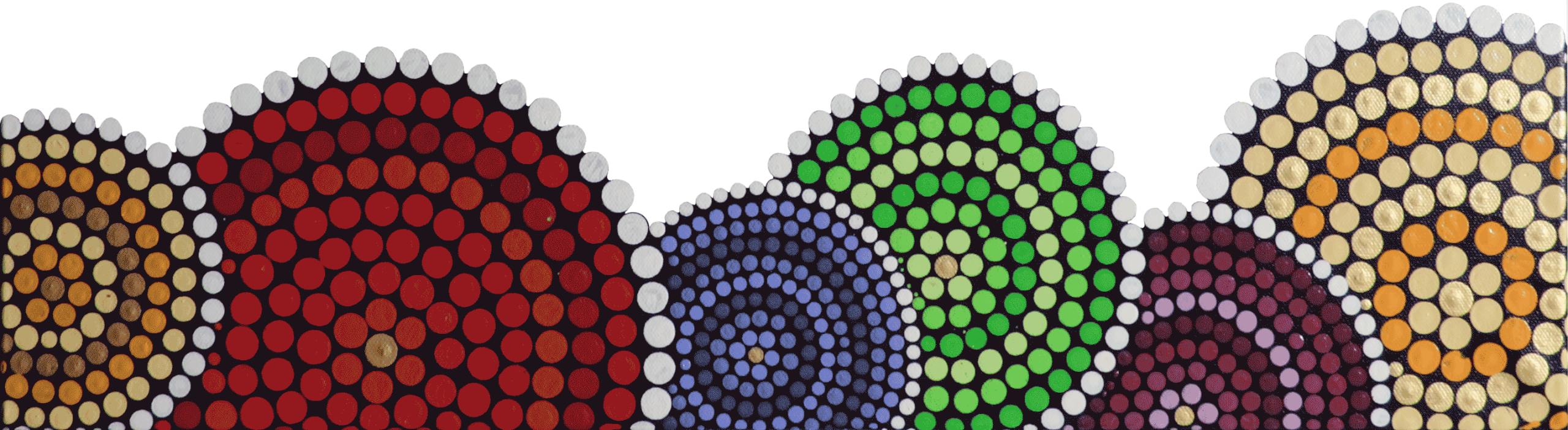
**National Workforce
Centre for Child
Mental Health**



Acknowledgement

National Workforce Centre
for Child Mental Health

We recognise and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the Lands we work, play, and walk on throughout this Country. We acknowledge and respect their Traditional connections to their Land and Waters, culture, spirituality, family, and community for the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.



Welcome to Series Six

This is the third webinar in the sixth series on infant and child mental health, presented by Emerging Minds and the Mental Health Professionals' Network.

Upcoming webinar topics will include:

- Child mental health in First Nations' communities (March, 2024)
- Understanding children's mental health in culturally diverse communities (April, 2024)
- Practice strategies for children; bullying behaviour (June, 2024)

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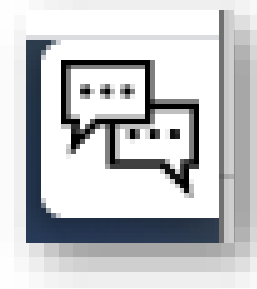
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Chat: To open the audience chat box, click on this icon located in the top right hand side corner of your screen.

Learning outcomes

At the webinar's completion, participants will be able to:

- Apply a whole of child framework to understand a child's presentation of ADHD symptoms.
- Discuss how to best collaborate with schools and other services to assist children with ADHD behaviours.
- Outline primary health strategies that can support families with their child's behaviour, attention, and relational needs.

Tonight's panel



Amanda Peters
Child and Family Partner,
QLD



Dr. Andrew Leech
General Practitioner, WA



Carla Koay
Occupational Therapist,
SA



Facilitator:
Nicole Rollbusch
Practice Development
Officer, SA

The lived experience perspective



Amanda Peters

Amanda's Background

- Daughter received ADHD & Anxiety diagnosis at age seven
- Depression diagnosis at 14 years old
- Judgement from others on parenting ability and labelling child as 'naughty' or 'lacks discipline'
- We use the term 'brain-wiring' at home – for us, it's a more helpful way to think of my daughter's behaviour.
- ADHD impacts our family on different levels...

The lived experience perspective



Amanda Peters

An Illustration

- The bedtime routine was a real challenge for us
- I tried to make sure that she has sufficient amount of sleep every single night.
- My daughter was alert and energetic and I was exhausted and constantly tired.
- Paediatrician said “your daughter doesn’t need as much sleep as you do – it’s not how her brain is wired.”
- The pressure was off.
- A lesson in Neurodivergence vs Neurotypical

The lived experience perspective



Amanda Peters

The case study

- GP – first port of call
- Looking for a ‘magic solution’ to fix the behaviour
- Parents are usually tired, frustrated, exhausted and in need of support.
- Important to check in on the parents of the child you’re treating.

Nothing is going to positively impact that child more than a parent taking care of themselves, as it helps that parent to be a better parent.



The lived experience perspective



Amanda Peters

Some practical tips for practitioners

- **Encouraging families to ring the practice first** to see if the practitioner is running on time so the family can adjust their arrival and wait times if needed.
- **Offer a variety of visits** including telehealth appointments or first appointments of the day.
- **Suggest other ways parents can provide information** such as short videos to demonstrate behaviours or areas of concern rather than the parent trying to describe them.

The lived experience perspective



Amanda Peters

Some practical tips for practitioners (cont'd)

- **Read the information you have**, it's incredibly frustrating to waste half of the visit time going over old information. Often these visits have a long waiting time and can be expensive for the parent. Can the 'old' information be reviewed via phone first?
- **Share information between and with other practitioners**, talk to each other and keep me in the loop. I will happily sign any forms to share information between service providers.
- **Giving the parent something to take away from appointment**, such as a strategy, idea to try, or what the next step in the process will be. We need to positively look ahead.

The lived experience perspective



Amanda Peters

My learnings

- I learnt the most through my own research.
- The key for me was to listen to my daughter and try to understand her experience. She is the expert on herself.
- Family Mantra – ‘one step at a time’
- Pick two learning goals or behaviours and use them as a starting point.
- Break them down - what’s working, what’s not?



The lived experience perspective



Amanda Peters

Further strategies

- Regular movement breaks, this can look like getting a drink of water at school, picking the back row of a movie theatre so the child can get up and move around, shaking our sillies out before we sit down at a restaurant.
- Lots of exercise in general.
- Break tasks down into 1- 2 manageable steps, not just limiting the steps in the process but also the number of words used within the instructions.
- Eliminate unnecessary steps such as putting dirty dishes straight into the dishwasher without having to rinse them first.
- Declutter on a regular basis!
- Making sure items have a home, clear containers make it easy to see the contents. People with ADHD are often very visual so the more visuals the better such as colour coding items where possible such as towels, sheets, cups, schoolbooks etc



The GP's perspective



Dr. Andrew Leech

What is actually going on for Liam?



Is this a 'busy boy' who is developmentally normal?

Could this be the first presentation of an emerging ADHD or Autism?

Is this child dealing with trauma?

Are there mental health concerns?

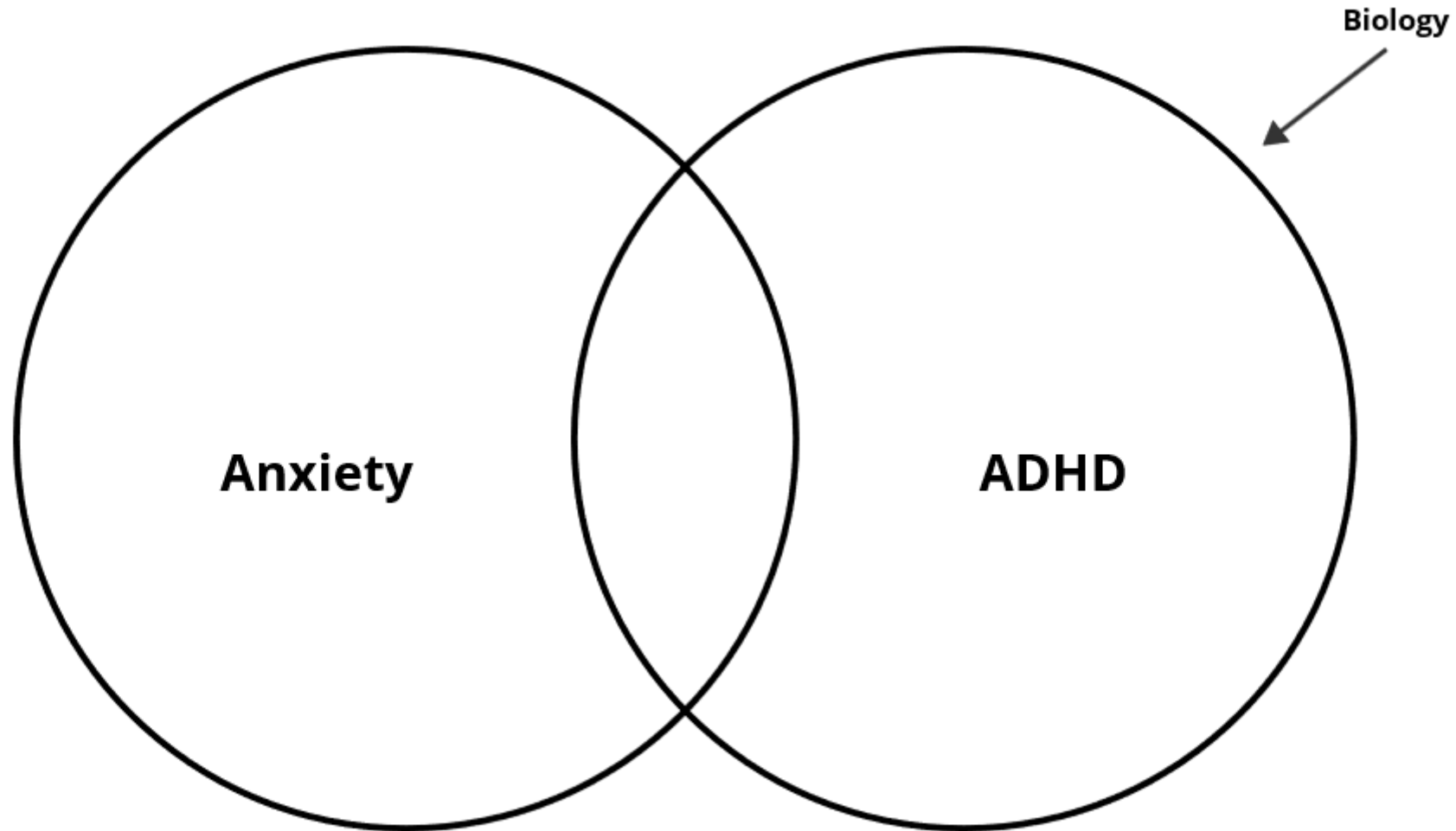
Are there any health concerns?



The GP's perspective



Dr. Andrew Leech



The GP's perspective



Dr. Andrew Leech

The importance of biological influences



Nutrition



Sleep



Screens



**Genetics
Health
Development**



The GP's perspective



Dr. Andrew Leech

What is Liam's family needing right at this moment?

-
- Reassurance
 - A diagnosis
 - Medication
 - Parenting advice
 - A letter for school
 - Confused and seeking answers
 - Referrals or care plans to anyone that can help

Common trends of families seeking support from their GP

The GP's perspective



Dr. Andrew Leech

Don't forget the school

Write a letter with your plan can include strategies for learning (sit at the front, fidget toys, positive reinforcement, breaks outside etc)

The GP's perspective



Dr. Andrew Leech



Where do academic assessments fit into all this?

The GP's perspective



Dr. Andrew Leech

Where to from here?

Medical Screening

Physical examination

Pathology testing, vision, hearing, sleep

Determining the greater problem

Mental health ie. anxiety

Developmental health

If unsure use screening tools

Free online - SNAP, Vanderbilt, SDQ

Conners 4 (through MHS online), psych profiler

Follow up and review

Results and planning

Parenting mental health and support

Referrals to allied health or paediatrician



The OT's perspective



Carla Koay

Establishing partnerships

- Building relationship & information gathering through 'doing'
- Conversations through movement and play
- Uncovering strengths, interests, challenges, and what's meaningful
- Facilitate opportunities to share successes and wins
- Highlight and utilise skills of child, parents, and educators
- Give the family a couple of manageable next steps to try (discussed and written down)



The OT's perspective



Carla Koay

We are all sensory beings!

Our sensory preferences impact the way we engage with the world and participate in different environments

- "A lot feels like a little"
- "A little feels like a lot"

Supporting the nervous system

- Sensory input influences our level of alertness (what is calming vs alerting for Liam – notice and ask!)
- Sleep and diet can influence the way we respond to sensory input
- Liam is likely to need a lot more movement and heavy work input opportunities throughout the day
- His sensory preferences may not match with those of his family



The OT's perspective



Carla Koay

Consider how environment and activities facilitate learning and participation

Environment:

- Opportunities for movement and heavy work
- Furniture and seating – experiment with options to provide movement and/ or postural support
- Visual (consider the impact of ‘visual noise’, what is Liam needing to screen out?)
- Auditory (seating position, headphones ear/ muffs, recording instructions – ‘talking spot’)

Task adaptation

- Connect to interests and leverage strengths
- Sensory input as a part of the activity
- Motor skills challenge – ‘just right’ fit

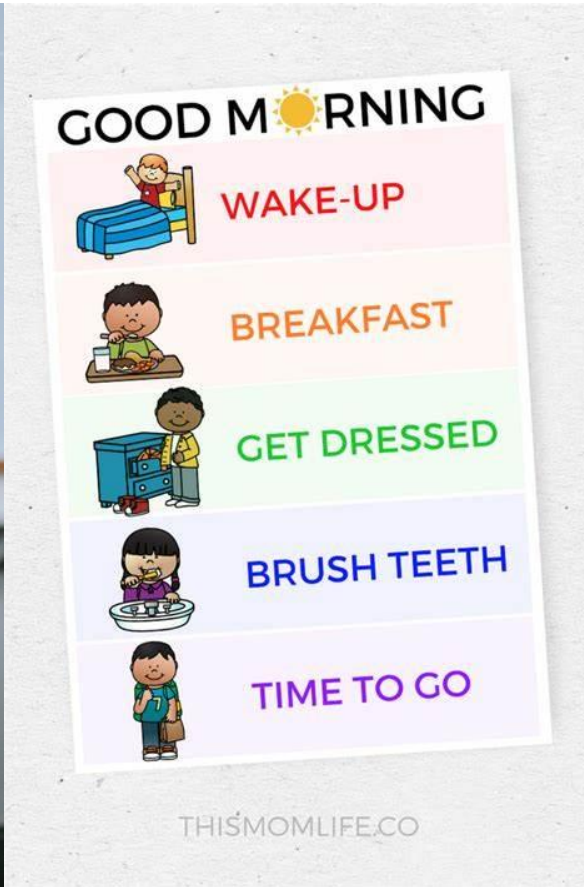


The OT's perspective



Carla Koay

Organisation, predictability and routine



- Support working memory and time management
- Visual schedules and supports - involve the child
- Help make time more 'concrete' with visual timers
- Give clear instructions around task expectations - what does 'done' look like?

The OT's perspective



Carla Koay

Accessing Services

- OT Australia 'Find an OT' tool
<https://otaus.com.au/find-an-ot>
Screen for telehealth and paediatric services and/ or local area
- GP and teacher recommendations
- Parent supports
 - My Time (eligibility criteria)
 - Wellbeing supports in schools
- Possible referral to NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) partner
<https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers/early-childhood-approach-children-younger-9> -



Q&A Session



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Future Webinars

Strategies to support client/patients with chronic pain to participate in work that benefits their health and wellbeing –

Thursday, 8th February 2023, 7:15pm-8:30pm

Identifying and treating agoraphobia – TBC March 2024

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MHPN Network

MHPN supports over 350 networks across the country where mental health practitioners meet either in person or online to discuss issues of local importance.

Visit www.mhpn.org.au to join your local network, a number bring together practitioners with a shared interest in young people's mental health.

Interested in starting a new network? Email: networks@mhpn.org.au and we will step you through the process, including explaining how we can provide advice, administration and other support.

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This webinar was co-produced by MHPN and Emerging Minds for the Emerging Minds: National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWCCMH) project.

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