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6 Practices for Achieving Excellent Self-Care

By Jennifer Koretsky

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by: **Jennifer Koretsky**

Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) often feel like they are running behind schedule, and just don't have the time get everything done. As a result, many ADDers end up sacrificing their own self-care in order to scratch off items on their to-do lists. Those who skimp on self-care, however, will find themselves slowed down in the end. It's nearly impossible to be an effective parent, spouse, friend, or worker when you are not operating at your best. And you can't be at your best when you are not taking care of yourself!

The following strategies are small changes that ADDers can employ to practice excellent self-care.

1. Cover the Basics

Eat right, exercise, and get enough rest – we hear it all the time for good reason! These are the basics that our bodies and minds need to stay fit. Making even small changes in these areas will increase your energy levels and ability to focus. Please talk to your doctor if you need some guidance in these areas.

2. Schedule in "Down Time" Every Day

With or without ADD, life is hectic. But ADDers frequently report feeling like they are on "over drive" or "high speed" throughout the day. And this applies to mental activity, as well as physical activity! It's extremely hard to make progress when operating in this mode. Learning how to slow down and recharge may take some time, but the benefits are well worth it. Try meditating, sitting quietly, or taking a peaceful walk by yourself. Feel free to start small – just 5 minutes a day will make a difference – and increase your down time as the practice becomes more comfortable.

3. Choose Great (Not Just Good) Doctors

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>From general practitioners to dentists, make sure that you have a friendly and reliable doctor who can help. Adults with ADD, especially those taking medication, should make sure they have GREAT doctors. Don't settle for doctors that make you feel uncomfortable. When choosing a doctor, talk to friends and family and find out who they recommend. Make sure the doctor listens to your feelings and concerns, and answers your questions. If you've been to a doctor a few times and they never remember your name, face, or circumstances, it may be time to find a new doctor. The extra effort that is sometimes required is worth the stress and frustration that you save yourself in the end.

4. Indulge in Your Passions

Life should be about more than to-do lists! What do you love to do? Paint, sing, visit the theatre, rock climb? Schedule in regular time to indulge in the activities that you are passionate about. It will help keep you happy, positive, and motivated! And you deserve it!

5. Surround Yourself with Happy & Helpful People

One of the best ways to stay happy and positive is to surround yourself with others who are happy and positive. Energy is infectious, and we absorb others' positive energy just as easily as we absorb others' negative energy. Surround yourself with people who will see the good in you, instead of those who are overly critical or quick to point out your challenges.

6. Don't Tolerate Things or Situations that You Don't Have To

When adults with ADD feel weighed down with day-to-day life, they often feel like they lack the necessary motivation to make big changes. Things like bad relationships, undesirable living spaces, or unfulfilling jobs seem easier to tolerate than to change. But making these types of changes doesn't have to be all-consuming. When large goals are broken into small steps, progress becomes more realistic and less draining. It's difficult to be happy and healthy when life is full of things you tolerate, instead of things you love.

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Jennifer Koretsky is an ADD Management Coach who helps adults learn how to manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers individual and group coaching, workshops, and skill-building programs. Her work has been featured in various media, including The New York Times Magazine. Subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, by visiting

Virginia Schools Signs Agreement With SACS CASI For School Division Accreditations

By Patricia Hawke

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) was founded in 1895. It is a voluntary,

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nongovernmental agency with more than 13,000 accredited colleges, universities, secondary, middle and elementary schools. The Council on Accreditation and School Improvements (CASI) is a division of SACS and accredits pre-kindergarten, K-12 and vocational schools in 11 southern states, as well as several other countries.

In the spring of 2006, the Virginia schools signed an agreement with SACS CASI. Under this agreement, Virginia schools divisions will be encouraged to pursue accreditation with the Council. The agreement complements Virginia schools already rigorous accreditation standards and will build strong foundations for continued growth in learning and achievement within each school and each school division.

Only Virginia schools divisions may be accredited by SACS CASI. To qualify, all schools within a division also must be fully accredited under the Commonwealth's Standards of Learning accountability program. This encourages and rewards the use of best practices at all levels of the school division.

Additionally, a joint steering committee will coordinate the:

- Division accrediting process, · Training and technical support, · Recognition for achieving accreditation, and · Will encourage all Virginia schools divisions to participate in the program.

Though the program is voluntary for the school divisions, the Virginia schools views the agreement as an incentive for its schools to accelerate their current efforts to improve instruction and increase scholastic achievement.

The SACS CASI accreditation process compares the Virginia schools' policies, practices and conditions with SACS CASI's standards. They look at several different best practice areas, such as governance, instruction, accountability, management, planning and sustained improvement.

Accredited Virginia schools demonstrate their commitment to best practices, quality instruction, and increased academic achievement. It is a way to implement a systematic approach to these goals at all levels within the school divisions.

An added benefit is to the state and local Virginia schools leaders, who share these promising best practices with other accredited schools across the nation.

At the time of this writing, both Hanover and Roanoke County school divisions have been accredited by SACS CASI. Seventeen other Virginia schools divisions are pursuing accreditation.

With encouragement from both SACS CASI and the Virginia schools, we should see many other school divisions with accreditation from the Council within the next few years.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K-12, providing free, in-depth reports on all U.S. public and private K-12 schools. Patricia has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school

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