

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

EPISODE 20

Welcome to Let's Talk Learning Disabilities with Laurie Peterson and Abbey Weinstein. Laurie & Abbey spend their days talking about dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and ADHD. They talk to parents of struggling students and adults who have had a lifetime of academic challenges. They want to share those stories, along with their own insights with you. So, *let's talk learning disabilities.*

Laurie: Hello everybody, and welcome to episode number 20 of let's talk, learning disabilities. This is Laurie

Abbey: And this is Abbey

Laurie: And we are very excited you guys are here today. And I feel like I say that every week, but this one, um, hits pretty close to home. We're gonna, um, we're going to do things a little bit different in that we're going to talk about ADHD in adults and, you know, Abby and I live this. And so we want to make this, um, just a real conversation about what it's like to have ADHD as an adult. What are some of the symptoms? What are some of the things we deal with, but also what are some of the things that we hear from other adults that we work with? Whether we're testing them, whether we live with them or work with them, um, you know, cause not everybody's story is the same. But there is definitely a common thread wouldn't you agree?

Abbey: Sure. Absolutely. I think there is a common thread.

Laurie: I think probably the first thing you know, that I want everyone to understand is that, ADHD isn't something you just wake up with as an adult, right? Right. You have it all of your life. You're born with it. It's, it's a

very genetic, um, you know, when I think about who I got it from fairly certain, it's my mom, she's never been formally diagnosed and how she's dealt managed with it over her 75 years of life is very different, but I'm pretty sure that's where I got it. What about you?

Abbey: I think also now looking back, I think my mom has some ADHD and I think my dad also had some ADHD, double whammy. So, and I know that I've struggled my whole entire life, but, um, wasn't diagnosed until I was in my mid thirties.

Laurie: And that was not because when you woke up with it, you know, had you had it?

Abbey: I had it right my whole life. Now in hindsight, looking back early childhood, middle childhood adolescence is when it really started to greatly impact me, but I had it my whole life and I struggled my whole life.

Laurie: When you were. Okay. So when you were first, when you were diagnosed, had they, did you have like an evaluation? Did someone just ask you a lot of questions? How? Cause that was how long ago? That was about 10 years ago. Okay. So how were you diagnosed?

Abbey: I was diagnosed by a psychiatrist just by talking to him in his office. Really just him asking me questions, me sharing things that I struggle with sharing concerns. I was actually there because I was dealing with a lot of depressive symptoms and a lot of anxiety and my hat, my anxiety had gotten off the charts. Um, there was, it was exacerbated by a stressful work environment and a stressful situation at the time. That's what drove me to go see the psychiatrist and meet with them and talk to them about different medications I could try, but the more I talked about all of my struggles and my concerns, and just really did a little verbal vomit on him. That's when, what came out of it, as he said, you have ADHD. I really think you have ADHD. And I knew at the time all about ADHD and I knew I had some ADHD symptoms. Right. And there was times that I would be struggling or experiencing something I'd say, oh, I'm acting so add. And it was just a phrase I used and it was a coping mechanism that I always said, well, that's just add symptoms, but I really wasn't sure if I really, really had ADHD, I thought I just had depression and anxiety. And now really. Looking back now that I'm diagnosed with the ADHD and

medicated for the ADHD, and I'm doing much, so much better. My depressive symptoms and my anxiety symptoms have greatly reduced. So looking back, probably most of my depression and my anxiety stemmed from having unmanaged ADHD.

Laurie: And that is so common. We hear that. And you know, when we hear it, mostly with girls, so mostly with girls was good with girls because girls tend to be pleasers and they want to do well. We also tend to have a lot of responsibilities and things to keep up with and when we fail and aren't able to keep up with those things. We beat ourselves up. We do. And then that generates that anxiety and the depression. Like I'm just not good enough. That's sense of inadequacy because you just don't feel like you're good enough. Interestingly, I am not a pleaser. I have never been a pleaser. I didn't give a crap, what anyone else thought. And some of that may have just been a defense mechanism. Right. Because I knew I couldn't do it. So what's the point in caring and I, and I don't know, where's your, are you mostly inattentive?

Abbey: Mostly inattentive, but I do have a lot of impulsivity as well.

Laurie: Yeah. So when I look back it, my, I it's all I love the looking back is so well, it's just cool because now I'm like, oh, that makes sense.

Abbey: It totally does.

Laurie: But I found lightening. I was a terrible stunt. I, you know, I was that all you're not working up to your potential. You're so smart. Why can't you do this? Why don't and I just didn't care about school. It didn't interest me. And I think in hindsight, I think I was just overwhelmed by it. Like, and I would just look at other people who could get their work done and stay organized and have their, their trapper keeper all together, like, wow!

Abbey: The trapper keeper, that was a great organizational tool.

Laurie: And I craved that, but I didn't know what to do with it once I got it. And I, I remember going through high school and I was grounded all, my parents. Beat their heads against the wall. And you know, didn't, no fault of

theirs. Nobody knew back in the 80's what ADHD really was. When I meet somebody now who's my age, who started medication in high school? I'm like, wow. How did they know?

Abbey: Yeah, It was so much less. It was, they knew much less about it and it was not nearly as common to have evaluations, to diagnose early for a girl. It was way underdiagnosed. So, and the girls also, we didn't run around the room, climbing the walls. We didn't have a lot of that hyperactive, overt behaviors that interfered with the classroom and interfered with other people's learning.

Laurie: Um, but we did stupid stuff. I did get in trouble a lot in school. I remember the, like, I remember, I mean, as far back as probably second or third grade doing something totally stupid and impulsive and being asked, why did you do that? Um, I always would say, I don't know. Cause I didn't know. It just happened. And then that frustrates a parent so much more because it's like, what do you mean you don't know?

Abbey: You really don't. Yeah. Well we didn't think before acting, we just impulsively made decisions and did things without thinking.

Laurie: I did stupid stuff I did as a kid and it wasn't, nobody got hurt, but, um, but I was the chatty Cathy. I was always talking in class because I couldn't wait to tell my friend something funny or something I needed to tell them right then, and then I'd always get in trouble. I'd get moved. So.

Abbey: I was an excessive talker also, and I was moved all around the room. Back of the room, front of the room near the snotty nerdy kid in the back where they thought I still would find somebody to talk to.

Laurie: Absolutely.

Abbey: Yeah.

Laurie: I, um, I think back now about how often I got moved around the room and how much I just, plus I needed that stimulation. I was so bored and like just somebody talk to me, but all the way, you know, and my parents just kept,

it was just a battle. And so when I got into high school, I. I didn't school was like, I'm like, I'm never going to use this. You know, that was, I was one of those. And I was grounded all the time. When I left for college, my parents, no fault of theirs, said you won't make it. Like, you'll be home at Christmas. You're never the way your study habits are or lack thereof. You're not going to make it. But what happened was, is I got to college and I found my people. And I found that instant gratification because that's what we crave. Right. We crave instant gratification. Don't tell me that it's going to take me six weeks to do this because I won't make it. I need to know how to get it done now. So I found my people, I still though did the bare minimum. Like I found I got into a sorority and I had to have a 2.2, five GPA to get initiated. And I got a 2.25, I slide right in there. Yeah. But I still, and I remember doing things in college, like so impulsively and, and I was kind of. That's what people expected from me because that's just who I was. I, I didn't love myself though. You know, I started to really not like myself in college because I felt very judged. Right. And I was always the funny one and I, you know, and I, I, I am a lot of fun. Don't get me wrong. You know, I never had it. It took until I got to those last two years where I got to start really getting into my major. And like, I like this stuff. This is interesting that my GPA went up.

Abbey: Same. I struggled even going off to college. My freshman year I struggled tremendously. All of a sudden, structure was removed. Discipline was removed. I had so much freedom and I was not a student either. I was not. Student, I didn't have good study skills. I didn't have good organizational techniques and strategies. And I had so much freedom and I was already that impulsive kid that liked to impulsively do things and like to have fun and very social and talkative. And so I almost flunked out of college. After my first semester, I was actually put on monitoring probation. My GPA was so low and I hardly ever went to class. I hardly ever studied. I hardly ever did my assignments and read what I needed to do. And I remember going home during break. Um, one of the first breaks we had. All right. Oh no. I think it was winter break in between semesters and I was on probation and my dad had said to me, you'll be lucky if you end up getting a job in a fast food restaurant, because you'll never graduate college. We will not pay for another piece of anything, especially education if you flunk out. And so that was a really eye opening experience for me. And it was like, okay, wait a minute. And I decided, then I had such a hard head and such a strong personality that I'm

going to prove you wrong. Exactly. Hold my beer and watch me. Um, she believed she could, so she did. Absolutely one of my favorite quotes and I turned things around dramatically from then, but I had to learn how to balance the partying and the fun stuff with the studying. It didn't come naturally for me either. And I had to learn, I had to go other places to study. I couldn't study in the dorm or the dorm room, or even in the study hall in the dorm. And I had to really learn a lot of really good coping strategies.

Laurie: Did you start every semester with your new materials and your new pens and your syllabus and notes. And like, I'm, I've got this, I'm going to get killed and I'm going to every class this semester, I'm going to keep up with my assignments. I'm going to go home everyday and read my assignments. And like after two weeks it was yup. Slid back.

Abbey: Absolutely. I had great intentions at the start of every semester, but if it wasn't, it's hard, you know, I think for those of us with ADHD, if something is not interesting to us and it's not novel, um, it's really hard to be focused and interested in it. You know, the first two years of college you're taking the basics, nothing is interesting until you get into your major. And even then sometimes it's hard to, for a lot of people struggled to find what their major is and what they're really interested in. But I think it's, for me, it wasn't until I got into those classes that were really truly interesting to me, those child development classes and psychology classes and. Child and education and child development, family life, those types of classes that I started making A's and I didn't even really know I was even capable of A's.

Laurie: I didn't think I was for sure.

Abbey: Yeah. I shocked myself when I, and then once I got my first day, I was determined to keep getting A's, but it was hard to live up to that expectation to get there.

Laurie: I think when you have such good intentions, right. Because we always, I have good intentions even today. With projects and organizational systems planning meals, or whatever you do as an adult that when you don't follow through with it, that's where the, you beat yourself. And that's where the depression starts to kind of, and then the anxiety, because. Oh crap. I have

another test and I thought I was going to study for the last one and I didn't, can I pull it off for this one? Do you use art to have that panic? And so, and then when you don't do well, you beat yourself up and it's all that negative self-talk and yeah, we all know we're way harder on ourselves than we will. And we say meaner things to ourselves and we would ever say to another person, right. You're right. We haven't talked to someone, but I think, you know, then I graduated. I had a degree and then I went through 175 jobs because I would do it. I would go get a job at a school. I would love it. The whole newness of it, the newness would wear off and I'd be like, um, yeah, no, um, yeah, to another school. And I jumped schools my resume before I just branched out on my own, which completely was because of my ADHD. Right because I couldn't work for somebody else. I was terrible at following their rules. Their rules were stupid. Why do I have to stay till four? If my work's done by three 30, I should get to leave because my brain goes 90 to nothing, as does my talking clearly, and so I work fast. I get stuff done. Not always efficiently or not always without mistakes. It gets done. So I jumped from job to job, and I think that's a huge thing that we see with others.

Abbey: That is a huge struggle with a lot of adults that we talked to is they struggle in their jobs. W we, we see a lot of people that come in wanting advice on what they should do as their next job, in fact, um, what should be their career because they're struggling in their current job and they've lost interest in it, and they're not sure what next steps to take. So I think that is common. Adults with ADHD. Of course, again, things have to be very interesting to us, new and novel for us to stay motivated, focused, and engaged. And, you know, I think it's hard with these good intentions we have. We can come up with a lot of goals and we can come up with good intentions and we've even been taught to make to-do lists and we can do them, but executing those plans is a whole different ball of wax. And it is very hard for adults with ADHD to execute plans and to see them through, to completion. So I think that we all struggle with, um, getting those tasks. Chores and responsibilities done. We might know exactly the path to get there, but executing that plan is, is different.

Laurie: Well and I didn't get diagnosed until I was I sadly, because I didn't really. I took it seriously, but I was probably in my late twenties and I got on medication and I remember noticing a humongous difference right away. Like I think we were getting ready to move when I started my medication and I went

home and like my first day on medicine, I got the entire kitchen packed. I remember thinking what just happened, right. Because that's like the most boring, tedious, Hey, that job. Um, but you know, what I didn't do is I didn't learn about ADHD. I didn't know enough about it back then to really manage it. I just thought I was going to take a pill and life was going to get better. And we hear that all the time too, is that I just know if I just get some medicine and that is it's going to help a little bit, but if you don't know, if you don't understand how your brain works, if you don't understand how ADHD impacts you every day, then, then it's not going to help. And I actually didn't stay on the medicine because I didn't know how else it was just such a small piece. Right?

Abbey: You probably felt like it wasn't working too, because it didn't, it forgot to read it didn't totally help you. Okay. Or you forgotten that forgetting to take it or forgetting to refill it.

Laurie: I don't even remember right. Because then I started, I had kids and my life got crazy busy and, and I feel like I was just always, I am, I have always prided myself on being a fly by the seat of my pants kind of person. But I don't know that that's a good thing. I mean, I'm really good. I can, I can, I can turn on a dime. That's not always a good thing, but I've been forced to do that, but keeping them. Mom life and working. Right. Oh. And so I really didn't seriously get back on medication again until. I was in my early forties, but then I understood ADHD. And my knowledge of it has evolved over time too. And how the executive functioning skills and how important it is to understand what ADHD is, how it impacts your brain, how the medicine helps, but how there's so many, there's so much more to it and how the coaching and the therapy. I spent a lot of time in therapy, really just learning that I'm not lazy, right. Because that's what I was told. And I had to unwind a lot of that and that helped me deal with all of the negative stuff. But then coaching helps us be more efficient today and put strategies in place because medicine helps me start and finish a task, but I'm doing it at the last minute, right? Or I'm, I'm so unorganized.

Abbey: It helps you focus a little bit better during those tasks also, and kind of filter out some distractions, but you have to be able to organize your mind and organize your surroundings in order to execute that task.

Laurie: I also think too, that at some point you have to realize that there are going to just be things that you're not good at and be okay with that. And that's why here, like we, Lynn is our admin and our office. She is amazing, organized detail oriented. We, we couldn't have somebody with ADHD in that position. We would never get anything done.

Abbey: She wants a system in place for everything we do here.

Laurie: Thank God.

Abbey: And thank God, because, because the rest of us have ADHD.

Laurie: We fly by the seat of your pants.

Abbey: Right?

Laurie: Like, oh no. That'll figure that out later. Right. And so it's finding the people. And surrounding yourself with people that they understand you. So they don't get frustrated with you and having people that can.

Abbey: And with that, finding, finding people that understand you, I think it's really important for those that are closest to you to, to understand more about ADHD, especially close friends, family members, relationship partners, because it can be very frustrating to live with an adult with ADHD if you don't understand it, you don't understand how their brains. And where their struggles are coming from.

Laurie: Why can't, you remember to pay this bill? What is so hard about this?

Abbey: Why can't you, remember what we just talked about or what we just heard?

Laurie: Or how could you not have dinner planned again? We eat it every night.

Abbey: Right? How can you not just get up and do the laundry?

Laurie: Right.

Abbey: Which for me is one of the biggest tasks that I struggle with in my personal life, getting chores done at home, like laundry, grocery shopping.

Laurie: Because my motto is what I do today, what you can put off till tomorrow, right?

Abbey: I am the same way, I'm like 30 more minutes and I'm going to get up and do it 30 more minutes and I'm going to do it. And then I get busy doing something else. And I forget that I even had a list of to-do items to do.

Laurie: So, you're right. I think, I think not just you as an adult with ADHD. Understanding your ADHD, but the people around you, like I read, um, driven to distraction and which is an excellent book I had to read it for. Um, I don't remember why, but I gave it to my parents and like read this book. It explains everything like you will get me. And then I was a guest on a podcast where we talked about ADHD and I made them listen to that because I still. You know, th we still joke about my inability to make a plan. Right. My mom will still ask me two months ahead of Thanksgiving. What we're doing for Thanksgiving. I'm like, please, hello, give you don't I don't even want him for dinner tonight. So can we come back to that topic?

Abbey: Let's talk about Thanksgiving the day before.

Laurie: The day before, before, I still frustrate her so bad, but she's getting better about understanding and throwing me a bone, but yeah. But we've had to have lots of conversations and I have to be okay saying like, I can't do that. Right. But I think, you know, and, and I think also with our family members that we do have, that are ADHD, my husband has ADHD. I have a son and then two stepdaughters with ADHD. We have a lot of grace it's at our house. Right. Because you know what, you didn't get that. I probably would have done the same thing. And I think when you have an, an ADHD and a non ADHD relationship, that's where it gets really tricky.

Abbey: That is tricky because you don't understand.

Laurie: So I feel very blessed to have so much ADHD in my life because everybody gets me. Right.

Abbey: But if they don't, do you help them to understand more about ADHD? SAPs are more compassionate?

Laurie: Absolutely. And I think when we work. Clients of all ages. We encourage everybody in that, in that family, uh, whatever it looks like to read books, watch the YouTube videos, you know, do their own research, whatever race, whatever works for you, right? Like I love those how the HD YouTube videos, those are amazing are awesome. And they're short and they're stimulating and they're interesting. Those to me, like I can watch those all day long.

Abbey: Yes. But go to YouTube and search for how to ADHD his garage. Cameron, Cameron, her name. She can't remember her name. Yeah.

Laurie: Me either, but she's great. She's very informative, but she's easy to understand. Cool graphics and fun little cartoons. And it's very engaging.

Abbey: It is very engaging and interesting. It's that multisensory stimulation. Um, it's a great way to learn more about ADHD and executive function, difficulties, and how ADHD impacts you.

Laurie: I also think it's super important for somebody, especially as an adult that just gets diagnosed to find their people go get on, get in a Facebook group, you know, go find a coaching group or an accountability group someplace where you can be with other people that get you to get you because there's two things that happen to them.

Abbey: And struggle with the same types of statues struggle with, they can validate your feelings.

Laurie: I'm not crazy. They're doing it too. I may learn something from what they are doing or trying. Right, right. But I also, there's also always gonna be someone that's worse. That's true. Okay. I'm not that bad. It's not that bad.

Abbey: That will boost your ego and make you feel better.

Laurie: It does, because you need to know that cause you, you end up thinking that you are totally useless and it's fascinating to me how and I, I, and I'm sure this will be a great study. How ADHD looks so different because I have adult, I know adults we've worked with adults. I have adults in my personal life that can't still can't keep a job at 45 or 50. No, that's still, can't keep a relationship. And it's like, well, how come I can? And how come you can't? And what's the difference? Was it the way you were raised? Is it though? Is it the way you were? Who knows? Right. But it looks so different. And I think everybody needs to understand that no two adult ADHD people, or like.

Abbey: That's true, very different. And it looks different in females versus males. And depending on what the demands of your life are. What type of job you have in your job responsibilities, whether you're sitting still at a desk in front of a computer all day, or you have a job that you get to move around and multitask and do different variety, variety of things, um, it's gonna look different and your symptoms, you know, present differently and your struggles are gonna be different even for non ADHD clients.

Laurie: I always find myself when we're having a career discussion. Talking about jobs where there's, but there's a lot of variety there, like, you know, which is not as not important to everybody, but that's always my first thing I think about. And, and now

Abbey: I like to change it up a little.

Laurie: Right. I wanted, let me look at something different from another angle. Um, and I, I tell my son with ADHD that I pray that, you know, whatever he decides to do, he finds his passion and, and really, uh, he's also one of those people that probably is going to need to work for himself. It's not a real false, which is a very ADHD trait. You know, it's not because you're a bad person. It's not because you're disrespectful. It's just, your brain is wired in a way that it's very hard to understand why rules see a different way. Right. Does doesn't make sense exactly.

Abbey: If I have a way that I can make it work out for me, why can't I just do it this way? I was going to say it's also that, um, I think. Individuals with ADHD or adults with ADHD. A lot of times we're beating ourselves up and we're

comparing ourselves to others, but you said, you know, giving grace. I think educating yourself and learning more about ADHD and how your brain is wired and why it looks the way it looks and why certain symptoms manifest at different times. Um, it is going to help you with a lot of those depressive symptoms and the anxiety also. So, if you feel like you have ADHD or you've been diagnosed with ADHD, I encourage you to really educate yourself more about ADHD and those around you. I think it's crucial and you will start to feel better and more positive and less self-deprecating and stop that negative self-talk.

Laurie: I think just the awareness, right? When I even now with, with what I feel like I have a lot of knowledge, but I still will forget something or miss something. And I go that my, my instinct, my reflex is to immediately beat myself up. But it's because of what I do know. I can take a breath and say, okay, this is, this is not, this is not helping. Like this was not my fault. It is what it is. How are we going to do it different next time? And I think the knowledge. Of ADHD allows you to take that breath, but I also think it allows you then to look at your anxiety and depression and what are the things that really make me anxious and how could that be related? Because you can have anxiety, that's not related to your ADHD or that doesn't have anything to do with ADHD. And you may just have anxiety because that will also make you very inattentive. But that's a great time to examine that and say, okay, when I start to feel down or depressed, is it because I haven't lived up to someone's expectations or I haven't been able to complete a task or I haven't finished my degree or I haven't, whatever it is. And is it related to my ADHD and how do I kind of work myself out of it. And counseling is a great, great tool. And I highly recommend that to all of our adults, because I do think you have to unpack all of the years, you've had that negative from teachers and bosses and parents and yourself. And start to learn how to take that and shift moving forward to now, what do I do as information and how do I differently?

Abbey: I agree.

Laurie: Where do I need to shift and make changes? So back to coaching. I, I would love to tell you that I have been in regular coaching now for several years, because I haven't, because that road requires scheduling it and sticking to it, all the things I struggle with. But I do have a relationship with a coach that I can call her when I start to have that overwhelmed feeling

or when I there's something specific that I'm like, okay, I've got to get on top of this and we'll spend 30, 45 minutes zooming. And. It never fails. I leave that conversation with, okay, I can do this. And I'm happy to say with almost everything we've talked about, I have been able to follow through because she understands my brain. She understands ADHD. She knows how to present it. She knows how to set me up for success.

Abbey: Sure. And it's been effective for you. You can take what you've absolutely take something out of that coaching session and put it to use.

Laurie: She doesn't make you feel bad about that. And I appreciate you've been dabbling a little bit.

Abbey: I've been dabbling a little bit with, um, ADHD coaching. I've only had three sessions, but what's really cool. What, what I've been really, just so surprised with is that I thought she was going to give me a whole list of strategies for me to implement that are going to help make me more motivated, more organized, more on task, more focused. And it wasn't that, but what it was. Something about her talking to me and coaching me and the way she coaches, she helped me come to my own realizations, which was really cool because I started, as we were talking, even after my second session, I have a whole. Different strategies that I've been implementing at home to help me stay more on task, to get me more organized so that I can see things through to completion. I'm checking in with a friend. So I have an accountability partner, but all of these different strategies that I've listed and that I'm working on and that I'm trying to improve. Trying is keyword. I'm not yet 100% successful in using them all, but they weren't all strategies that she gave to me and told me to do. I came to them on my own, but she coached them out of me. And so that was a really cool thing that like, wow, I came up with that idea all on my own and which in turn helped with a lot of those. Negative self-talk now I'm like, okay, I am capable.

Laurie: I came up with that idea.

Abbey: I came with that came up with that idea. I came up with several good ideas. So fishing can be really good for managing ADHD symptoms and learning a lot of great strategies and coming to that realization, but also just changing your mindset and giving you a B a big ego boost and some positive

encouragement and self esteem to take with you to move forward, to attack all those things that you are struggling with attacking well.

Laurie: And ultimately it's about finding what works for you. So, so I think that's the whole point, right? Is that they, they keep digging and getting you to generate it because if you generate it, that's something that you know, is how your brain works and it's probably going to, you'll be more successful with it. Um, the other thing that I feel like we get asked a lot is about diet. I'll give you my 2 cents. You can give me your 2 cents, because again, we are not medical doctors. We are not dietitians. We are not nutritionists. We can definitely tell you our experience. Obviously, when you eat healthier, you feel better. I don't care what you have, right. So that's across the board. So true. When you exercise. You feel better? I know for, for a fact with my son, when he was on the swim team and would swim in the mornings, he would have a better morning at school, regardless of medication, because he burned out some of that energy. It does help you focus. It's not, it doesn't last all day. And you know, obviously he isn't doing it now, so we've had to turn and rotate and find other things. But exercise helps. So it does, it helps even people who don't have ADHD.

Abbey: Right. It helps everyone.

Laurie: So, you know, giving up, um, carbs or giving up sugar is not something you have to do to manage your ADHD. Yeah, you're gonna feel better.

Abbey: You are going to feel better. You're going to be more clearheaded as well.

Laurie: Unless it just stresses you out because for me, Putting together a specific diet is completely overwhelming trying to follow a plan, follow up plan. I have to track it. I have to plan for a meal. I have to grocery shop a certain way. And then, and then what happens when I mess up, I beat myself up. Exactly. So I've learned over the long span of my life that I don't do diets because it's just, it's not nothing good comes from it. Um, but that's me, my brain.

Abbey: Do you make healthier choices overall? Absolutely. You and, you know, When you've made a lot of unhealthy choices and you've put unhealthy foods in

your body, you recognize how you feel terrible that you don't function as well. So then when you are about to eat those unhealthy foods and other time, Take a beat or a moment you still may make that unhealthy food choice, but at least, you know, Ooh, this is not going to make me feel good or I'm going to have a sluggish afternoon. I'm not going to be productive, but you at least are aware of it.

Laurie: Right. And I do also like that. I can. I can, I can practice moderation and the person who has ADHD, that's very difficult. So that's something I've had to really work on. And it's taken me a very long time and, and I'm kind of there, but not really.

Abbey: And my impulsivity causes me to grab a cookie, eat it in less than a minute before the thought has even processed my brain. And then I finish it. I didn't even want that. Why did I eat that? I don't even like oatmeal raisin cookies, but they were sitting there on the counter. So I ate one and now I regret eating it because I'm going to feel gross the rest of the day. And I just, you know.

Laurie: And if I'm gonna blow it I should have blown it on oreos.

Abbey: Exactly something I really love, but you know, the thing with exercise also, not only does it make everyone feel better and that rush of endorphins creates a boost in your, your mental functioning and an ego boost and mental health boost, it really does on individuals with ADHD, engaging in, in some sort of physical activity and movement. It does help your brain seem to slow down, be able to focus more. Focused longer. Um, so it really can, you know, just getting up and it doesn't even have to be major exercise, taking a walk, moving, moving, doing jumping jacks, stretching. Exactly.

Laurie: Um, the other thing too, I feel like. I've learned how to use this technology. Right? So sometimes technology can be a distraction, right? Totally. But I have learned like, you know, yesterday morning I was drying my hair and remembering I needed to call the vet. Well, I couldn't call it seven 30 in the morning. So I used my watch to set a reminder, just said, you know, set a reminder to call a bed at nine o'clock and boom had that reminder set. So learning how to use your technology in a way that can benefit you with reminders and timers. And I'm a big fan of timers. If you're going to take a

break from work or from a task, like a chore, set a timer so you come back yes. Or set a timer so that when at 20 minutes you, you know, okay, I'm done, I'm done with this much. I can take a break now. And so we talk a lot about that with studying.

Abbey: That's a, that's a very good point. There are so many great resources available, um, using technology and I don't have an apple watch, but I do set timers on my phone through and alerts on my phone throughout my whole entire day. Anything I need to remember to do, I have to put it in my phone and set an alert with it. And I also usually write it down somewhere. Also. I have kind of an old school paper pencil. Copy of a to-do list and I have everything in my calendar. So there are so many things, great resources. I encourage people out there that are struggling with organization, time management, remembering what to do when to do it. Um, look into the resources that are available. Go to the app store. Even on your smartphone, and search. It is a total rabbit hole. You'll get into, search, um, time management or organizational systems to do that. You won't even believe how many are out there.

Laurie: I think what you and I have figured out too, in our schedule is that the structure and consistency is key. So like every Monday at nine 30, we have a meeting about this and we do it every week and it keeps us on task and we get those tasks done every Tuesday at 10 30, we do this and doing that in your personal life is just as important that every Sunday at noon, I plan the week's meals or whatever, you know, like you, if you can start finding that routine, it feels really good. Believe it or not. What most people don't know is that, or don't understand or can't believe is that people with ADHD really, they crave that structure.

Abbey: We thrive that structure.

Laurie: It feels so good, but it's so hard. It is hard. And even though we've scheduled, we've said every Monday morning at nine, we're going to meet and talk about this. We still have to put it on the calendar with an alert to remind us, Hey, it's Monday at nine 30, go to this meet and what I've also started doing. I've started kind of rewarding myself for accomplishing things that I wasn't able to accomplish for so long, which I think is a great strategy for adults. We always think about rewarding kids and giving kids

gifts and rewards and positive reinforcement, but we need them to, I mean, just like we all go to work. And we get rewarded with a paycheck. So you are still getting rewarded so you can build rewards into your own life. If you like to go eat sushi, tell yourself that, you know, if I do X, Y, and Z, then I'll allow myself to go to dinner and have sushi. Or if I do my chores at home, then I'm going to take myself out for a pedicure or a massage.

Laurie: And start with baby steps. Don't set the expectations to where you'll never meet it. You know, if I just cleaned the bathroom, I'm going to go get a pedicure. Let's start small because you, attainable. We tend to set the bar too high. We have these crazy expectations. So be realistic with your expectations, right? And start to really again, with, with understanding, ADHD, know where your limits are, because what I can get done and what you can get done in a certain amount of time or on a certain project or task, it's going to look different. So you have to really be in tune. Your own brain. Right? And then it looks different on everybody. Um, one other thing I wanted to say too, that I dealt with a lot and, um, thankfully I've worked through it, impulsive spending.

Abbey: Mm. That is still something I'm working through, and impulsive shopping

Laurie: How do you not impulsive shop with Amazon and everything? In one click and it has taken a lot of years and a lot of just being old, I think just maturity, maybe, I don't know, or being...

Abbey: Having more self control.

Laurie: Right. It's but it's hard.

Abbey: It is very hard. I'm sure. Medication does help a little bit with the self-control piece and the inhibit inhibitory controls that are built into that, but maturity responsibility, I'm having a bad month where you spent too much. And then you're, you're poor. The last 13 days and you're counting down the days till your paycheck, having those negative natural consequences, um, that you've learned from hopefully can help. But that is something that I still struggle with a lot of spending and it's hard because I, I, I have spent a lifetime of it. So now I see my kids because they do like they see, right. And so having to unwind some of that with them has been hard, but, you know, I

love that we can talk about this kind of stuff. We have resources here at our office where we can talk. We're always talking to people, which I think is also very therapeutic when we have other adults come in and we can help them through some of this. I think every time we do that, it, it helps us kind of undo a layer of our own.

Abbey: It really does. And we, I think sharing our own stories when, when we're meeting with someone and they've just been diagnosed with ADHD, we give them hope. Right. And it helps them feel better when we share our stories and our personal struggles. And that we've been there. We've walked in your shoes for sure.

Laurie: I think it's so, so takeaways. Right? Cause again, we could probably ramble on about ADHD for another like three hours.

Abbey: Oh at least.

Laurie: Um, my biggest takeaway is talk to them. Talk to somebody, if it's your doctor, if it's your counselor, if it's your parent, your friend, your roommate start the process of getting out of what's in your head out to somebody, because the more you start talking about it and understand that. Then the help comes and then the, you know, the, the steps to improvement comes. So I feel like it's not something to be embarrassed about. It's not something that you need to blow off and say, oh, it's just over-diagnosed. Um, you know.

Abbey: It's very real.

Laurie: Talk to somebody, you know, if you have questions about ADHD in yourself, if you think maybe you've got it. Um, and you're, you've always wondered, or someone has said something. Yeah. Email us. We're happy. I mean, we like talking about it. Sure. We're happy to talk about it with you. You know, letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com, email us with your questions about ADHD adults. We are embarrassed. It's embarrassing that we can't have better self control at the age that we are. And so we stuff it down and then we create other bad habits on top of that. And it becomes just a vicious cycle. There is a way out of it. There is ADHD is a real thing. It's something that as an adult, it's not a childhood disorder. That's true. Which is why we,

um, Tim, my husband had read on Facebook that someone had said that their doctor had told them that they don't medicate adults because they should have grown out of it by now. I'm like, oh Lord, help us. That's just somebody who doesn't have it.

Abbey: It's a very real thing. And if you are an adult listening or, you know, an adult that has a lot of struggles, that sound like they're ADHD, it is real. And it can often be diagnosed in adulthood. And many, many times it has gone undiagnosed for numerous, numerous years and can look like other, other types of problems like depression.

Laurie: Well they're probably already getting treated for anxiety and depression. I feel like that's so many of the people we see that have already sought out treatment for that. Because that was easier to talk about. And it was the more obvious symptom were obvious, right. When really when you dig under again, especially in girls. It really is underneath. It's the ADHD.

Abbey: I think we fly under the radar for way too long.

Laurie: We do. So, so that's, that's my takeaway is just talk to somebody.

Abbey: Yeah. Yeah. I think that's a great suggestion. Definitely talk, talk to somebody, get it out there. And then. You know, seek out some resources that are available now with the internet. There's at your fingertips? You can spend hours and hours, but just Google strategies for time management strategies for organizational skills.

Laurie: Go to YouTube.

Abbey: Go to YouTube. How to ADHD show notes. Definitely. Um, seek out an evaluation if you want to get diagnosed. If you think that you might have it and then talk to your physician also about medication. With the medication and a combination of counseling, not be afraid to ask her. We've noticed that a lot of adults, when they go for medication, they're automatically given like an anti-depressant or a non-stimulant. A stimulant medication increases the, the, um, the chemicals in your brain so that you can be at a level where you can focus. It's not, um, and that's something we didn't even talk about was

like drug addiction and alcohol addiction. Many adults are already self-medicating, whether it's food or drugs or alcohol? A lot of them smoke a lot of marijuana because they want their brain to slow down. Like there are the, the, again, we could beat here for days. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are very happy to help. This is what we do. This is why we, this I truly believe is why we do what we do because of our own personal struggles, being able to help other people kind of come to some of the clarity that we've come to and see that there's hope on the other side.

Abbey: Right. See the light at the end of the tunnel. Yeah. Very profound. It does.

Laurie: It feels really good to know that there is some light there and to see the relief in somebody's face. Okay, this is a thing I'm not crazy. I'm not stupid. And I can there's. This is a thing I can do something about. Absolutely. So if you have questions again, letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com. You can go to our website and read about our evaluation process, which is ediagnosticlearning.com. Um, again, talk to your physician and family members. Um, and yeah, just let us know if we can help.

Abbey: Please do.

Laurie: You guys have a great day and we will be back, um, in a couple of weeks with our episode 21, we've hit 20. That's pretty good. This is one. You never thought we'd see this through 20.

Abbey: We're so excited.

Laurie: All right. Have a great day guys. Bye. Hi,

Thank you so much for joining us today. In our show notes you can find information about today's talk, as well as links to the resources and other episodes. If you have questions about today's talk, have ideas for future episodes or just want to stay connected, you can contact us through Diagnostic Learning Services on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. So, Let's Keep

Talking Learning Disabilities. This podcast is sponsored by E Diagnostic Learning. You can find more information at www.ediagnosticlearning.com.

Length of episode 45:51