HELP! We have a Boy Scout with ADD or Autism – what do we do?

While these are two different diagnosis, they share many outward traits! What is contained here are some tips that will help the Scoutmasters working with these boys – but they are good tips for ALL boys!

It is important to familiarize yourself with the outward traits and coping skills but remember – no two boys will be alike or have the exact same problems. To avoid being caught unaware at meetings, while camping, or leading other Troop activities consider these signs and ideas – and again, the tips will work great for ALL the boys in your Troop!

Some Signs of Hyperactivity

1. Tapping fingers or toes.
2. Bouncing a leg or in a chair.
3. Rocking in his seat.
4. Restlessness/inability to sit still.
5. Excessive talking - tells you every thought that crosses his mind.
6. super fast speech - like an auctioneer.

Signs of ADD or Autism:

There is usually a combination of many, varied symptoms that can include:

1. Appears moody.
2. impulsive in thought actions and speech.
3. Easily distracted.
4. Forgetful, loses items.
5. Sometimes appears to have an attitude.
6. Hyperfocus, unaware of outside activities.
7. Challenges with sequencing.
8. Low frustration threshold.
9. Procrastinates.
10. Low self-esteem.
11. Appears disorganized / careless.
12. Social interaction challenges.
13. Appears to have a hearing problem (says “what?” or “huh?”)

One of THE most important things to remember is that the Scout can't HELP his behavior. It is part of his disorder. It is up to YOU to help him learn ways to enjoy Scouting and to advance, it is not up to you to "make him better."

Coping Skills for Leaders:

1. Structured schedules really help.
2. Give the Scout a laminated copy of the schedule (or post a LARGE copy somewhere where he can check it frequently)
3. Give a 5 minute warning before activity changes.
4. Post laminated posters listing multi-step tasks.
5. Rotate activities so Scouts don't get bored.
6. Give directions slowly and clearly – repeat as needed.
7. Give lots of praise and encouragement - these Scouts need it!
8. It is important for the Scout to get plenty of rest while camping.
9. Quiet time instead of rousing activities just before bedtime is a good idea.

The Scout's Responsibilities:

1. He should ASK questions when he needs to understand an activity better.
2. He should feel able to state his needs without fear of ridicule.
3. He should respect the others in the Troop.
4. He should expect to have the best time of his life!
5. IF he is on medication, He should take his medication without any hassle. (But remember, medication is NOT the cure, it will only temporarily help a specific problem.)

The Scout's parents will be your most valuable resource for what tips work best for their own son – don't be afraid to ask!