



Finding a treatment

by Amy Tennery, BostonNOW Correspondent

January 28, 2008

Insomnia, headaches, diarrhea, blurred vision are all side effects of common Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

medications, like Ritalin, and they are enough to dissuade many from pursuing drugs as a solution to their learning differences.

But with the increasing popularity of non-medical adult ADD treatment, alternatives to behavior-altering drugs have become accessible to the public.

"We have a saying in the industry: the pills don't build the skills," says Jennifer Koretsky, author of *Odd One Out: The Maverick's Guide to Adult ADD*. "Those pills aren't going to teach you to become organized or manage your time."

Today, more options for adult ADD management are becoming available at a rapid pace, perhaps because this learning difference has become more apparent in recent years.

"I think that it's just now coming to light that there is such a thing as adult ADD. People who are adults now might have been told they would grow out of it, but they're not growing out of it," says Gail Parrott, lead program specialist with the Dore Center's Needham facility.

Koretsky says adults with ADD should be "using [their] own natural tendencies and making them work," rather than fighting their ADD. Traditional means of organization, for example, are not accessible to the adult ADD mind, says Koretsky. She helps her clients learn new organizational skills rather than try

to conform to those that they find challenging to maintain.

"We have a saying in the industry: the pills don't build the skills."

- Jennifer Koretsky, author of *Odd One Out: The Maverick's Guide to Adult ADD, on treatment options.*

Parrott also approaches adult ADD management with a non-medical approach. Her physical-based exercise program is designed to target the

cerebellum and help clients manage their ADD symptoms.

A typical exercise involves "standing on one foot, on a cushion," which promotes balance and body awareness, says Parrott. "At the same time you might be asked to toss a bean bag from hand to hand. With practice and repetition you are actually training the cerebellum."

Although vast amounts of research to support the efficacy of many ADD medications exist, Parrott argues that pairing a physical-based therapy with medication is essential.

"Ritalin and Adderall are only effective as long as they are in your bloodstream," says Parrott, which is a "permanent, effective solution."