

# ADHD & PDD are Cultural Problems

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We know that primitive cultures don't have the problems of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and other PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder) difficulties. There are many responses to this information, ranging from non-reporting to nutritional differences. We have a unique perspective about why this difference between modern and primitive culture might be true.

We think that PDD (including ADHD) is a timing problem. We believe that certain timing circuits in the basal ganglia of the brain are not functioning properly. We believe that primitive cultures tend to solve this timing problem in their children and that our modern cultures tend to cause this problem in their children.

## Timing Problem

These timing circuits control motor planning and sequencing. All voluntary muscles are controlled by these circuits. Walking, standing, sitting, talking, and anything a person does are managed and controlled by these circuits. When these circuits are smooth and precise, then that person's movements are smooth and precise.

These timing circuits also control mental processes. When these circuits are smooth and precise, then that person's mental processes are smooth and precise. When these circuits are erratic or not stable, then the person's mental processes and behavior will be erratic or not stable.

We have technology which permits us to measure a person's timing circuits. Those with PDD and ADHD tend to have poor, erratic, and/or not stable timing and those without PDD and ADHD tend to have better, smooth, and stable timing.

When those who have poor, erratic, and/or not stable timing are taught how to be rhythmic, the PDD and ADHD go away. When we have made those circuits precise, smooth, and stable, there is not PDD and ADHD.

## Cultural Impact

When we look at primitive cultures which exist in parallel to modern culture, we find interesting data about PDD and ADHD. For instance, native Hawaiian children who are mostly integrated into modern culture, have ADHD at 20% of the rate of those non native Hawaiian children. These children go to the same schools as white and Japanese children. They eat at McDonald's. They watch

MTV. They shop at Wal-Mart. They are integrated into our modern culture and yet, they have ADHD at 20% of the rate of the other children around them.

The main difference is that the native Hawaiian children start hula classes at an early age (at 3 or 4 years old). The native Hawaiian families insist that their children learn hula. The children take these classes for years. Hula is highly rhythmic, so the native Hawaiian children start taking lessons in rhythmicity (the ability to maintain a steady beat) well before they start public school.

In all primitive cultures rhythmicity is pervasive in the whole culture. Adult ceremonies are rhythmic. Children's games are rhythmic. Many tasks are rhythmic. I recently saw a video documentary about a new type of high-yield tomato. African village women were showing their tomatoes for the camera, and they were dancing in unison as they showed their tomatoes. Being rhythmic is natural for their culture.

One African culture has a great game for boys. They stand in a circle, facing the back of the boy on their right. They put their hand on the right shoulder of the boy in front of them. They stick their left foot back and take the left foot of the boy in front of them. Now they are standing in a circle, balanced on their right foot. The game leader starts the chanting song that goes with this game and they all start jumping in unison to the beat of the song. They continue jumping in unison. If one of them has any form of poor timing, the group falls (usually falling on the person with the poor timing). So, there is strong peer pressure to have good rhythmicity.

I recently interviewed Teachers in an Amish school. They assured me they don't have PDD or ADHD in their school. The school principal did not even know what ADHD was. But, this culture does not have hula classes or other rhythmicity training opportunities for the children. What they have is a lack of technology. They have to walk everywhere. All their farm chores are manual and most manual farm tasks are rhythmic, such as hoeing a garden, or mucking out an animal stable.

### **In our culture**

Girls have some rhythmic games they play during their pre-school development. They play jacks, patty-cake, hopscotch, and jump-rope. These games teach rhythmicity. But, boys don't play these games. There are four times more boys with ADHD than girls. Girls have activities which grow rhythmicity; boys don't.

Not all children need to be taught rhythmicity. Most children get enough rhythmicity so that they can operate in the world at an okay level. Only a few children at the fringe (of the bell shaped curve) need extra exposure to rhythmicity to be able to succeed in school and in life.

By the time our children get to school, if they have not learned rhythmicity they will not be exposed to activities in the school which teach rhythmicity. If they needed to learn rhythmicity, and they did not get the exposure during their pre-school years, they will not get what they need in our culture's school systems.

In fact, if they needed rhythmicity training and did not get it, the school system will not help them. The school system will label them with PDD or ADHD and set them aside as a problem. They might have gotten help from the school's music or physical education program. But, these areas of our schools have had their budgets cut so much in the last couple of decades; our schools rarely have music or physical education programs.

Our culture does not understand the need for early childhood rhythmic activities. We have systematically reduced the volume of rhythmic activity in the name of better technology. We ride in cars instead of walking. We put our infants in strollers and buggies instead of walk with them on our hip. At home at night, we watch TV instead of having rhythmic family activities. We play videogames instead of playing patty-cake games. We have taken away the natural rhythmic activities and replaced them with non-rhythmic activities.

Our culture has left out the rhythmic activities needed for appropriate development for all the children.

We need to install rhythmic activities in our family life, in our church life, in our pre-schools, in our day-care facilities. We need to recreate the rhythmic activities we have systematically taken from our culture.