

New parenting program benefits ADHD children

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A new program for treating the emotional health of mothers of children with ADHD has shown significant benefits for the children themselves, finds a new study by University of Maryland researchers. The program combines treatment for a mother's stress/depression with behavioral parenting skills training. The study's findings were recently published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

More than 50 percent of mothers with children who have ADHD have a lifetime history of [major depression](#). When mothers are stressed or depressed, they often have difficulty being positive, patient, and consistent with their challenging children. In turn, less optimal [parenting style](#) may have adverse effects on their children, which can lead to conduct problems, depression and even suicide attempts.

The research, led by UMD associate professor of psychology Andrea Chronis-Tuscano, uses a new method of intervention for mothers of children with ADHD, which not only teaches mothers to manage their children's behavior but also teaches them to manage their own mood and stress by engaging in enjoyable activities, maintaining a positive attitude, and learning [relaxation techniques](#).

"Psychologists and therapists often only focus on the child with ADHD—they often don't look at the parents," says Chronis-Tuscano. "By paying attention to the mental health needs of mothers, we have found that we can effectively improve outcomes for the child with ADHD."

The parenting interventions integrated a cognitive-behavioral course in coping with depression with behavioral parent training, which includes topics like praising positive child behaviors, creating house rules, maintaining structure and routines, and implementing consistent non-physical consequences for misbehavior. The group sessions were primarily instructive but also incorporated group discussion, modeling, role play and home exercises that involved practicing the [parenting skills](#).

"By teaching moms to take care of themselves, they can be better parents to their children with ADHD," says Chronis-Tuscano.

Provided by University of Maryland

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