

Hello Your Honors, my name is Isabel Ebrahimi and I am a Certified ADHD Coach. I want to thank you for inviting me here to speak before you today regarding this suicide crises we are facing. I am both grateful and honored to have this privilege as this issue of suicide is dear to my heart. The name of my practice is Help Is Here Coaching. It is my personal mission to help improve young people's quality of life, and help them reach their potential and their purpose. I help both young and old people alike who are impacted by ADHD. For those of you who are not familiar ADHD is now the term used instead of ADD. ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. As an ADHD Coach I am on the ground working with all kinds of people, hence I come before you today as someone who works with both parents of young children and teens, and I work with adults of all ages. It is my personal mission to help improve the quality of life for anyone impacted by ADHD.

I coach people of all ages who have been diagnosed with ADHD and help them achieve their goals, and reach their potential by teaching skills, tools, and strategies on how to manage their ADHD. I help families, individuals and

organizations of all kinds learn about ADHD and how to work with one who has it.

I come before you with both professional experience but more importantly personal hands on experience that drove me to become an ADHD Coach so that I could prevent tragedies such as a young person taking their life. And I am a mother of two with ADHD, and the older one now is nearing graduating college. And have two cousins who died as a result of this spiral.

One out of eleven has ADHD, regardless of socio economic, racial, and ethnic or any other factors. ADHD does not reflect ones intelligence. Joel Nigg in Clinical psychology review wrote that "The documented percentage that suicide is the second leading cause of death in children ages 10-18, and young adults. Accidental injury is number one. All of this is relevant because children with ADHD have a 3-fold risk of serious, life threatening accidental injury and when depression, ADHD and substance abuse are combined suicide risk can be increased by 10 Fold"!! Lastly "one quarter of suicidal children under twelve years of age had ADHD"

found in a Systematic Review of 26 research studies published in World Journal of Psychiatry” when ADHD has a comorbid factor such as Depression or anxiety then the risk.

In fact, the more intelligent the individuals are the more they suffer, as they are aware of what they cannot do, which is control their ADHD. They are aware of how they cannot control themselves. Their ability to attend is impacted. What does the ability to attend mean? It is about being able to focus. In brain scans show the lack of activity in the brain. Executive Functioning is the ability to plan, organize, and coordinate and that’s impacted by ADHD. Rarely is ADHD seen on its own, and there is what is known as a comorbid factor, which means that there is another challenge that is also at play. It could be a learning challenge or anxiety that often goes hand in hand with ADHD, and as such both have to be addressed. As I mentioned I am not a Doctor but I am on the ground working with people who have ADHD and see their struggles and coach them.

I want to point out hope and determination and a sense of self and how they play a huge role in determining outcomes. As an ADHD Coach I provide Professional Development training to those working with youth and I also teach young people and their families what helps and what worsens the symptoms.

Impulse control, it is a huge issue with ADHD. What is impulse control? It is the ability to stop ourselves from doing what we want now, and or blurting out what we think. Dr. Ned Hallowell says ADHD patients have “the brain of a Ferrari and the brakes of a bicycle”, which I think is brilliant. It is important to realize that years of admonishments over time lead to destroyed self-worth. Why? Because, when a child is told all day long what they are doing wrong when they cannot help themselves, and are told they are not trying hard enough, or are lazy, this erodes their sense of self. I want to give you an example of a young child whom I observed be repeatedly admonished for his impulsive behavior, by the end of the day this child’s head was literally hanging low he had lost hope, because he was not able to meet the expectations that were set before him. And he was made to feel he

was doing it on purpose. Imagine this feeling of not measuring up, compounded over years and years!

What I do is educate parents and people who work with kids who cannot control their behavior. So when they are told they can and they are not trying hard enough what happens? They give up. They become angry.

Then what happens when they are teens and are exposed to drugs? Well they try it, and that leads to self-medication. What is self-medication? If an illegal drug causes them to feel equilibrium or stops the pain they will continue to use it even if it means that they can get into trouble doing so. And the lack of impulse control makes them not consider the risks and consequences. And then addiction and overdose and sometimes suicide follow. I am pained to tell you that my cousins died this way.

Helping these children is a worthy investment on your part, and prevention is the key. I have a multi-level plan that is ready to hit the ground and create positive results. The children need to be identified. Their families, teachers and care givers must be made aware of what they have and how to help them. The parents and

children and early childhood centers need to know that what they are experiencing has a name to it, so children will be given the help they need at a young age. These children need to be taught tools and actual skills and strategies. Simply talking about it doesn't help them, they need to be Coached and shown what to do. It is important to note that prescription medication will not fix it on its own. ADHD medication helps but they need tools skills and strategies.

It is important to note 1-11 children and adults has ADHD, and girls present differently but often go unidentified. Girls with ADHD have access to their prefrontal cortex and therefore can socially override, unlike boys. So girls do not get diagnosed, but are called shy and or wallflowers or social butterflies, or clowns. I know a mother whose daughter died at age 21. This mother spent years advocating for her daughter to get an IEP and Services. And attended publicly funded special education schools which cost NY State thousands upon thousands of dollars. Well, she is now dead, and so is her father, who had a full academic scholarship to college. Why because of self-medication and ultimately he committed

suicide. I have worked with a parent of an 11 year child who tried to overdose on a bottle of Tylenol and Advil. I have a cousin whose father committed suicide through self-medicating and whether it was an accident or not the end result is that their life was wasted and they are no longer with us. Illegal drug addiction and alcoholism compounds the problem.

What is important to know is that I have worked with teens that have begged their parents for help and were told to try harder and they need to have control. It is important for you to know that no matter how hard someone with ADHD tries they cannot will their brain to be controlled. ADHD impacts the brain.

I speak before you because I have met and worked with parents of young children who have been expelled by Day Cares and Early Childhood programs because they are too much to handle and their behavior is regarded as willful and intentional. Their parents have been shamed into thinking it is their doing, and then the parents and extended families have turned on their children believing that their child is bad. No child is bad. All children want

to please their parents. It is critical to know that I am not talking about the parents who have the resources to pursue help and get support and tutors counselors etc. for their Ivy League bound kids. Research shows that jails and prisons have an extremely high percentage of inmates with learning challenges, and what got them to break the law was lack of impulse control.

Society is paying a very high price. And in our public Schools, a teacher is trained to teach, but not to coach, or be a social worker. When most of the Teachers attention is going towards two children, all the children in that class pay the price. I believe that NY State should be proactive in identifying and helping children with ADHD. It is a net loss to the state when funds are spent on incarceration, drug addiction, rehabilitation, mental health issues, unwanted pregnancies, police involvement and school systems because these children are not being identified and they and their families are not being helped early on. These children need diagnosis and direct teaching of skills and strategies; their families must be trained on how to work with them, and their teachers

taught must be taught how to help them. The tertiary list of areas impacted is extremely long as every area of society is impacted. I had two hundred Guidance counselors attend one of my workshops and was told they need to be coached on how to work with these children. I have been contacted by Early Childhood centers that had children in their program that they didn't know how to deal with these children. so who pays the price in this situation? The child who spends 8-10 hours a day in that child care center five days a week, for 52 weeks a year. And the other children in the group. It is devastating to hear a parent say that their 3 year old has been expelled. And, to watch a family begin to believe that their child is bad. Or to be told by a day care that they do not have the money to hire me to train them! I collaborated with Child Care resources of Rockland on a grant to help bring my workshops to parents and staff of early childhood centers. But unfortunately we did not receive the Grant. So it is painful to know that these children and families are not receiving the help they need.

I am here before you to demonstrate the desperate need of these children with ADHD. A condition that impacts that Childs life 24 hours a day, every day of their life, and which causes a great deal of emotional pain. That pain is preventable if parents are coached, and children are taught tools, strategies, self-awareness, and self-advocacy skills to help them navigate the chaotic nature of their condition, and they can become productive, fulfilled members of their communities instead of another suicide statistic.

I want to point out that when recognized and helped they can be extremely successful look at Michael Phelps, he is a perfect example.

Teens that end up dead or incarcerated due to not having received help and fall into the trap of a life not fulfilled due to the lack of impulse control is a tragedy. I was asked to run a support group for families but asked to find the funding to do so. I ask you for the financial support to implement the program which will change outcomes.

I ask you to consider how many millions of dollars the state will save by recognizing this correlation and the desperate needs in our communities. Because it is clear that I am not talking about the kids who already have the parents with resources, and the kids who are getting the help they need, like IEPs and 504 plans. I am talking about all the thousands of children who are not being identified, and not being helped, but rather labeled as lazy stupid trouble makers who are just bad. Or the girls who are not being identified or reaching their potential. The net economic loss and drain on society is preventable and in the end an investment in these people will save NY State a lot of money. Investing in coaching of these children, specifically 1 out of 11 children, will give them the opportunity to become active, productive, contributing members of society and prevent thousands of suicides. The ADHD coaching I am proposing will produce active skills and strategies both for the individuals and their family, and because ADHD is known to have a significant genetic component, and hence you will be preventing the multi-generational reality of suicide- as in the case of both fathers and later their young adult children from committing suicide.

In closing I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak before you, but most importantly thank you for recognizing that we are facing a crisis and prevention is the key! As they say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In this case it cannot ring more true! You have the ability to bring about change in these tragic statistics and to reverse the course of these statistics. And it is irrelevant whether the suicide was intentional or not, because they are actions of someone who is trying to alleviate their mental anguish. And you have seen how ADHD drains society's resources. And while we are here speaking of the full economic impact of not diagnosing and addressing ADHD. Investment in identification and support, and ADHD Coaching will in fact save the New York State millions in tertiary expenses it has incurred. So I beseech you to implement these changes.

1. Joel Nigg in the Clinical Psychology Review, doi:10.1016/i.cpr.2012.11.005
2. The World Journal of Psychiatry on March 22,201 published 10.5498/wjp.v7.i1.44
3. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) says that 5 percent of American children have ADHD. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) puts the number at more than double the APA's number. The CDC says that 11 percent of American children, ages 4 to 17, have the attention disorder. Oct 11, 2017

ADHD Numbers: Facts, Statistics, and You – ADD Resource Center

<https://www.addrc.org/adhd-numbers-facts-statistics-and-you/>