**Reflection 3 - Understanding ADHD and Related disorders**

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**Understanding ADHD and Related Disorders**

For this last reflection I chose to look more into ADHD and related disorders. My daughter having ADHD and listening to Noella speak and share about her experience was my reason for wanting to dive into this topic a little more. I found the articles from Understood and the CRDDA Language Guide had valuable information into the complexities of ADHD and how it can intersect with other disorders like disruptive behavior disorder.

Some key takeaways for me from the Understood article on ADHD provides a foundational understanding of ADHD as a common neurodevelopmental disorder. It emphasizes how ADHD affects focus, self-control and executive function. The article highlights that ADHD is often hereditary, requiring thorough behavioral assessments for diagnosis. Reading these highlights made me think of my daughter, Lexi and myself. I see a lot of both of us in these points. Another takeaway for me is about the treatment. The article recommends using a combination of medication, behavioral therapy, and support strategies. Again, I think of Lexi and how I want to do more for her, but it is hard with her dad not supporting her. The last key takeaway, and most important one, is the emphasis on ADHD as a manageable condition, reinforcing the idea that individuals with ADHD can lead successful lives with the right support. I think Noella is a great example of a young adult getting the support she needs and having success in school and life.

My main takeaways from the CADDRA Language Guide is that it stresses that ADHD is not a behavior disorder but a condition requiring respectful and accurate language. This makes me think of my daughter and many students, most of them having a “behavior plan” because of having ADHD. I question whether the language we use in schools needs to change. I like that the guide advises against using stereotypes and encourages highlighting the strengths of individuals with ADHD. I think it encourages empathy and acceptance, and promotes a more inclusive environment for the students with ADHD. This article has great information about recognizing the power of language in shaping perceptions and experiences.

The last article I read from Understood looks at the differences between ADHD and disruptive behavior disorders, including conduct disorder (CD) and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). I do not know a lot about CB and ODD so I found this article informative. It was interesting to learn that ADHD, CB and ODD share symptoms like impulsivity and emotional control issues. While ADHD is more often characterized by slower brain maturation and chemical imbalances, the behavior disorders involve defiance and aggression. I like that I now understand these differences. This knowledge will help me support my students. I can see the importance of accurate diagnosis, different interventions and ensuring individuals receive appropriate care.

After reflecting on what I have read and learned from these articles, it is clear that having a better understanding of ADHD requires ongoing education and advocacy. By challenging stereotypes, using respectful language, and recognizing the unique challenges and strengths of those with ADHD, teachers need to create a more inclusive and supportive environment. What I have learned, and these articles confirm, is that it is important to approach ADHD with empathy and an open mind. We want to empower individuals to thrive despite the challenges they may face.