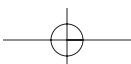
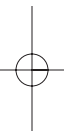
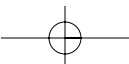
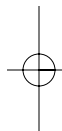
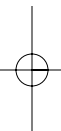
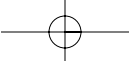


Part One

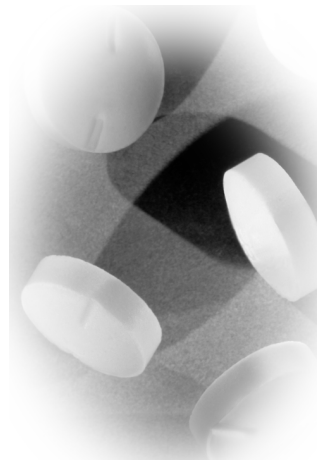
PREPARATION FOR THE CAREGIVERS' SKILLS PROGRAM





I

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR



You may have read several books about ADD or ADHD and as a result are thoroughly confused. As a parent you want to do everything possible to help your child. Along comes Dr. Stein, and you're now reading new things that differ from most of what you have read before. Whom should you believe? To help with your decision I've created a lighthearted one-act play. Recognizing how burdened your heart may be at this moment, I've written this little play in a tongue-in-cheek, comedic fashion that I hope will ease your discomfort. I am fully aware of the seriousness of the issues.

The play is written to expose the folly of currently popular beliefs and to show how little the professional community knows about the issues. It assumes that many of you are at the stage where your child has the problems listed in the Introduction section, and you have been advised by your teachers or guidance counselors at schools to undergo a battery of tests to determine whether your child has ADD or ADHD.

Before beginning our play, please complete these homework assignments:

- *For the parent(s):* You are required to ask your doctor all the questions our fictitious parents ask of their doctor performing the evaluation. Take this book with you when you make your own visit, and make certain you don't miss

any questions. To help, check the boxes provided alongside each question. On the lines provided just below our hypothetical doctor's answers, write the answers given by the psychologist who tests your child. Compare your recorded answers with the ones given by our play's doctor. I believe you will have two reactions: (1) you will be amazed by the similarities between our imaginary doctor's answers and your recorded ones, and (2) you will be surprised by how much the answers reveal about how little the professionals truly know about ADD and ADHD.

- *For the psychologists, other mental health professionals, educators, and physicians who are reading this book:* You are required to be open-minded and to carefully explore your hearts and minds about what you thought you knew and what you are doing to our children. You are required to be brutally honest with yourselves. I'm on your side; I am not the enemy. My wish is to help you clarify critical issues and point you in the direction of more healthy treatment alternatives.

YOUR KID IS SICK

(A One-Act Play)

Scene: The psychologist's office.

Cast: Mr. Ed Ipal Socrates and his lovely wife, Electra
The psychologist, Dr. Noah Lott

The doctor enters with a serious look on his face. He is carrying a package of official-looking documents.

DOCTOR

Well, Mr. and Mrs. Socrates, it's good to see you. I have the results of your son Rex's tests.

Mr. and Mrs. Socrates squirm nervously.

It appears that Rex has ADHD. That's attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Mrs. Socrates begins to cry, pulls out a handkerchief, and blows her nose. She turns to her husband.

MRS. SOCRATES

I knew it. It's been in your family for years. None of you can ever remember anything. All you and your family do is ask questions, over and over again. You never get anything right the first time. You never even pay attention to me.

(Parent-reader: pay attention, check the boxes on the left for the questions to ask your doctor. Record your doctor's answers on the lines below Dr. Noah Lott's answers.)

MR. SOCRATES

Doctor, what do you mean, Rex has ADHD?

DOCTOR

It means that your son has a neurobiological disorder—a disease of his brain and nervous system that prevents him from paying attention and from being able to control his behavior.

Mrs. Socrates cries louder.

MR. SOCRATES

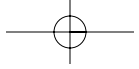
Oh my. Well doctor, where exactly is this disease?

DOCTOR

Well, we're not certain. Research shows that it could be a chemical imbalance or a defect in his brain's metabolism or a problem with some of the anatomy or parts of his brain.

MR. SOCRATES

Oh goodness, doctor. Which of the tests that you gave Rex indicate that he has this disease?



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DOCTOR

Actually, you see, none of the tests show that he has a disease.

MR. SOCRATES

Well, which of the tests indicate that he has ADHD?

DOCTOR

Actually, there is no test for ADHD.

Mr. Socrates glares at Dr. Noah Lott.

MR. SOCRATES

Well, what tests did all those researchers do to find all of these ADD and ADHD diseases?

DOCTOR

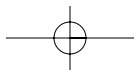
They found these diseases using other, different tests: CAT scans, MRIs, EEGs, PET scans, and blood tests.

MR. SOCRATES

Good. Now we're getting somewhere. When can we schedule Rex for one of those tests?

DOCTOR

Well, we can't. There are no such tests available for office or hospital testing.



MR. SOCRATES

Are you telling me that all those researchers have made claims of discovering the things that cause these diseases called ADD and ADHD but that none of these tests are good enough to test my son here in the real world? Are you telling me that you can't repeat these tests to confirm my son's diagnosis?

DOCTOR

Well, yes, we can't repeat these tests.

MR. SOCRATES

You sure do say "well" a lot.

DOCTOR

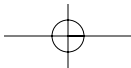
Well, I guess so.

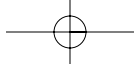
MR. SOCRATES

What tests did you give my son to make this ADD-ADHD diagnosis?

DOCTOR

The doctor takes out his handkerchief and begins wiping his brow. His hands are beginning to tremble slightly.





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DOCTOR

The battery of tests included an intelligence test, some tests for his reading, writing, and math skills, some personality tests, and the questionnaire that you filled out.

MR. SOCRATES

Well, which of those tests show that he has ADHD?

Dr. Noah Lott starts to sweat profusely. His voice becomes soft and meek.

DOCTOR

The questionnaire that you filled out.

MRS. SOCRATES

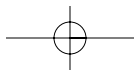
Doctor, how much are you charging for this battery of tests?

DOCTOR

One thousand dollars.

MR. SOCRATES

- Are you telling us that your entire diagnosis is based on that questionnaire?
- What the hell were all those other tests for?



DOCTOR

Yes, to your first question. And, uh, well, the other tests were given to measure Rex's overall intelligence, to rule out any learning problems, and to make certain he has no comorbid diseases.

MR. SOCRATES

- We already know the child is intelligent. He can read the instructions to fix things better and faster than I can, and he reads the sports section in the newspaper every day. He can name every player on every baseball team in the country. He plays video games like a pro for hours. He beats me all the time. How can he do all that and be ADHD?

Dr. Noah Lott appears to be becoming more and more agitated. He starts to stutter.

DOCTOR

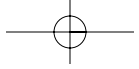
Well, you see, uh, well, ADHD is a selective disease. It doesn't manifest itself when a child does tasks that he likes or that are immediately reinforcing, but it seems to appear when a child does tasks he doesn't like or that aren't immediately reinforcing.

MR. SOCRATES

- Hell doctor, I do that myself, all the time in fact, and I'm a professor of philosophy. Do I have ADHD too?

DOCTOR

Well, it is genetic. It does run in families.



MRS. SOCRATES

There you go, doctor. That's the first thing you said today that makes any sense to me. My Edgar here is a bit of a featherhead, and so's his whole family. Edgar doesn't pay much attention to me, you know. Isn't that a sign of an attention deficit disorder? Can you fix that doctor?

MR. SOCRATES

Please don't call me Edgar, honey. You know I hate that name. Doctor, you said you were testing to see if my son has any comorbid diseases? How could he have comorbid diseases if you can't tell he has the first disease?

DOCTOR

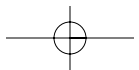
Now, now Mr. Socrates, let's not get snippy. I gave your son two personality tests, the House-Tree-Person test and the Rorschach Inkblot test, and they indicate that Rex has depression and oppositional-defiant disorder.

MR. SOCRATES

When I minored in psychology in college, I was taught that these types of tests are not valid. I was told that they are inaccurate and that they cannot predict behavior of any kind. Is that true?

DOCTOR

Well, yes that's true. But the tests help get an overall picture of things.



MR. SOCRATES

- Of what use are any of these tests if none of them are accurate?

DOCTOR

Well, the intelligence test is accurate. I never thought about that. It's what I was trained to do, and it's what the literature tells us to do.

MR. SOCRATES

- OK doc, you got me for a thousand bucks. Now tell me what are we going to do about my son?

DOCTOR

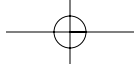
We find that a combination of treatment approaches works best for children with ADD or ADHD. I'll teach you a behavioral program called a token economy program and a few other behavior modification techniques to help you work with your son. I'll also refer you to Dr. Notso Sober, a psychiatrist, for medication.

MR. SOCRATES

- How well do these behavior modification treatments work?

DOCTOR

They really don't work well at all. They usually don't work without the medication.



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MR. SOCRATES

Then why are you recommending them?

DOCTOR

It's what I've been trained to do, and it's what the literature says to do.

MR. SOCRATES

Does the medication work?

DOCTOR

Yes, indeed. Works about the same whether or not you use the behavioral methods. In fact, we really don't need the behavioral methods.

MR. SOCRATES

You just put my mind at ease. For a while there I couldn't make up my mind if you were dishonest or just plain ignorant, and I just ruled out dishonest. Now, dare I ask about these medications? What are they?

DOCTOR

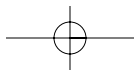
Well, there are several different drugs; they are all related to the family of drugs known as amphetamines.

MRS. SOCRATES

What?! You want to put my son on amphetamines?

MR. SOCRATES

Now calm down, honey. What do these drugs do?



DOCTOR

They restore the chemical imbalance.

MR. SOCRATES

They restore a chemical imbalance that you don't even know is off balance to begin with?

DOCTOR

Yes. No. No. . . . I . . . think so. You're confusing me!

MR. SOCRATES

I've read in the papers that these drugs are listed as controlled substances because they are habit forming or potentially addictive.

DOCTOR

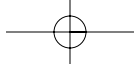
Well, yes. But lots of research says they're safe.

MR. SOCRATES

Who funds this research?

DOCTOR

The pharmaceutical companies.



MR. SOCRATES

- Do you think that might constitute a wee bit of a conflict of interest?

DOCTOR

They do the same thing for all other types of drugs.

MR. SOCRATES

- As far as I know, don't other types of drugs work on clearly identifiable diseases? Today have we not been talking about some imaginary diseases that no one can clearly seem to find?

DOCTOR

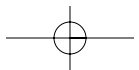
There are diseases where we can't find the causes, such as headaches, back pain, and joint pain.

MR. SOCRATES

- Aren't these people in pain, and doesn't that indicate something is wrong with their bodies? These ADHD kids ain't in pain. Their parents are! Maybe it's the parents that have the disease?

DOCTOR

I never thought of it that way. Actually, I recently discovered that I have ADD, and I started on Adderall, and I've been feeling much better. It calms me down and helps me deal better with people like you.



MR. SOCRATES

- Aren't these drugs habit forming or addicting?

DOCTOR

Well, they can be but not if they are taken in the prescribed way.

MR. SOCRATES

- Don't we have a youth and teen drug culture out there? Aren't kids grinding Ritalin up and snorting it? How can you tell which kids will always take these drugs in the prescribed way? And why are kids snorting it if it's so safe?

DOCTOR

Well, the literature says these drugs are safe. We can't tell which child might abuse these drugs. We don't have any psychological or medical tests to tell us which kids might abuse drugs or become addicted. So some kids snort it because it acts just like cocaine.

MR. SOCRATES

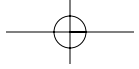
- Who funded this research that says these drugs are safe?

DOCTOR

Well, the pharmaceutical companies.

MR. SOCRATES

- Did you know that when he was a young man, Sigmund Freud used cocaine



to help with his hectic schedule? Made him feel better too for a while, but then he realized it was no good for him. Why don't you try cocaine?

DOCTOR

What a splendid suggestion. It's important to feel good, you know.

MR. SOCRATES

What's Adderall? And why didn't you take Ritalin?

DOCTOR

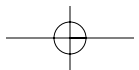
I tried Ritalin, and it didn't work for me. But Adderall makes me feel real good. It has a combination of two amphetamines in it, you know—Benzedrine and Dexedrine.

MR. SOCRATES

Maybe your diagnosis isn't ADD; maybe it's A-D-D-I-C-T! Seems to me that you're taking a pill to make you feel better in order to make it through a tough day. Would it be OK if I used whiskey to make it through the day? Whiskey isn't even considered a controlled substance, and I don't even need a prescription. Would it be OK for you to stay high on your Adderall, and I can stay high on whiskey? We can give my son Ritalin, and then the three of us can have a party. What's the difference which drug we take?

DOCTOR

Well, I never thought of it that way.



MR. SOCRATES

- Are there any other bad things we need to know about these drugs?

DOCTOR

Well, they stunt children's growth while they're on the drugs. But they catch up when the drugs are stopped. I think. Some kids get some real nasty side effects like stomach problems, blood pressure and heart problems, sleep problems, depression. And they may even act crazy.

MR. SOCRATES

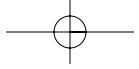
- I'm beginning to figure out who's crazy here! Will these drugs help my child's grades improve?

DOCTOR

Only for a short while, and then the grades usually start going down again. Actually, the drugs only help with simple tasks like adding two plus two, but they interfere with learning more complex things like understanding poetry or deciphering a short story. Mostly they keep a child high and make him sit still.

MR. SOCRATES

- Let me sum up what we've gotten for our money. You tell me my son has a disease called ADHD, but none of the tests you gave can actually tell us that he has this disease. There are no medical tests and no psychological tests for it! But you tell us parents that our child has a disease? Then you tell us that you don't have any psychological treatments that really work, so we should put him on amphetamines, which can be potentially addictive and harmful to his health—and which don't really help him with his learning but only zone him out, make him sit still. Tell me something, doctor, is



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there something about taking a degree in psychology that makes people like you lose all common sense?

DOCTOR

Well, it's what I've been trained to do and what the literature says to do.

MRS. SOCRATES

I'm truly glad we met you doctor. We'll pray for you.



This draws our little play to an end. What have you learned? I ask this question of both parents and professionals. What have you learned?

