



360 Treatment Tools & Tips

An ADHD 360 3T's paper

Life In The Fast Lane

When we deal with ADHD day in day out, we inevitably have to work hard to not see ADHD as a negative all of the time. Naturally with the requirements of medicine, the DSM (our manual) and the NICE guidelines, we are expected to gather data on impairment. But there is another side to ADHD, and there is nothing that states that people with ADHD cannot have skills, a 'flair' for something or be naturally artistic.

The Directors of 360 decided to do something completely different this year for our employees, across all of our teams. We have, as a leadership team, invested in tickets for the Silverstone F1 Grand Prix. The team had to write and submit an article on the links between F1 and ADHD if indeed any exist. Questions were posed such as 'what are the parallels between F1 and ADHD', 'what can you draw from F1 that may have a bearing on understanding ADHD'? The submissions were collated and independently judged and this T3 paper is based entirely on the winner's papers.

Archie Read, himself neurodiverse, wrote the first paper. His words are powerful and knowledgeable of ADHD, and we hope you can 'feel' his perspective, from being neurodiverse as well as being an F1 fan.

The second paper was written by one of our clinical team leaders, Jen Lewis-Neill. Jen writes with an authority that comes from her position as a clinician. In her paper she describes herself with humility as an ADHD specialist, she is, without any doubt, an ADHD expert.

As an organisation we recommend you read this T3 paper with an open mind, and hopefully, see the positive strengths and parallels our team have found behind ADHD and the fast-paced world that is F1.



Life In The Fast Lane

by Archie Read

“Life in the fast lane”. What a great analogy when writing a paper about Formula 1 racing. The fast-paced lifestyle, travelling from circuit to circuit, media rounds, interview to interview, sponsor to sponsor, not to mention the speed and excitement of driving magnificently engineered cars at speeds most can only imagine, the hype, the misinformation, the drama!

So, what of the parallels between F1 and ADHD? Could the same analogy be used when describing what day to day life feels like for those challenged by their ADHD?

In this next section, let us explore those potential parallels.

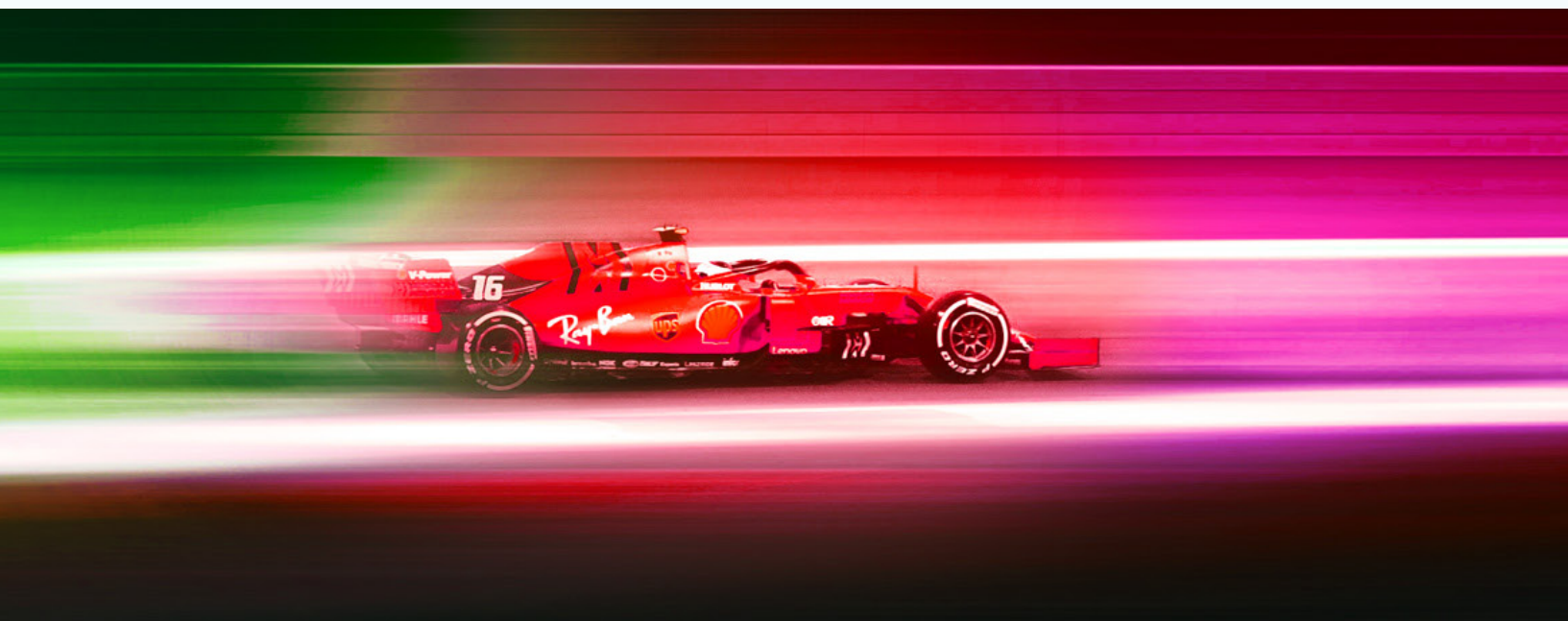
The most cited phrase we hear at ADHD 360 from patients is that of focus



From not being able to focus on anything to hyperfocus or being “stuck in the zone” this can be either a challenging impairment if the focus is a destructive one, commonly classed as addictive behaviours such as gaming, gambling, illegal drug use, or conversely if channelled the hyper focus can be an asset; driving you to deliver the very best outcomes for the activity that excites and motivates you. How similar is that level of commitment to the successful F1 driver? It’s all a matter of chemicals in the brain for both the F1 driver and those challenged by ADHD, get that chemical balance right and you are on the road (or track) to success.



F1 drivers frequently talk about being “in the zone”: They know the circuit in every detail, they trust the car and the team and the driver’s job is to guide the car and team to success. Their sole focus, their hyper focus, is their commitment to win.



Relationships



F1 drivers have been quoted to say that it can be difficult to establish and maintain relationships in such a competitive arena, but when a relationship is established, the bonds are strong and supportive and those relationships are strong and life lasting.



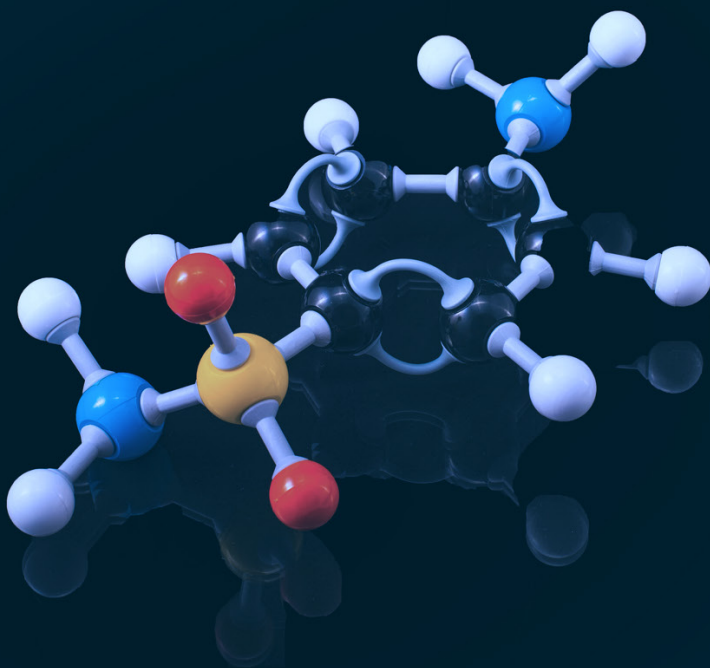
Drivers have to balance being self-focused with being a team player which for some can be difficult.



Similar challenges present for some with ADHD: Establishing relationships when feeling socially insecure, maintaining those relationships when planning and time management are not your most successful skills is hard and this often leads to internal conflict like that of the F1 driver, however when friendships are found they are strong and true.



Although coming from very different perspectives the challenges in developing and maintaining relationships is evident in both.



Treatment for ADHD - Let's look at it this way



A driver of an F1 car is like the medication used to treat ADHD.



The F1 team is like the scaffold, structure and coping mechanisms employed by those with ADHD

Put it all together and you achieve success.

Without the driver, there would be no one to drive the car, and without the medication the pathways for the chemicals to deliver the right information across to the relevant parts of the brain would never arrive.

Without the team, the driver wouldn't have a car to drive, and equally without scaffolding the medication would have less chance of helping to affect positive change in life goals.

The driver is only as good as the team around them, and equally successful treatment for ADHD is only as good as the best bespoke medicine and best bespoke support structure.



Exercise, sleep and Diet



F1 drivers and the team must be fit and healthy to deal with the rigours and demands placed upon them in their roles. Carefully crafted individual exercise programs and excellent sleep hygiene are vital for success.



Diet, good sleep hygiene and exercise are key components to supporting successful ADHD treatment. I invite you to read our T3 paper available in the resource section of our website, discussing the importance of this, like the F1 team, investment in the health and well being of the individual is all part of a successful package.

Attention to detail



The drive for some with ADHD and co-occurring ASD's such as autism is to deliver a level of work that is highly skilled in its level of attention to detail, a key attribute to any success especially in the complex demanding world of F1 where every mechanics workstation is pristine, every component tested, every process perfected: the perfect environment for a motivated focused mind.

The Team



No car gets over the finishing line without a team. In F1 that's physios, nutritionists, engineers, PR, coaches,



In the world of ADHD that's a support structure from family and friends, work or school, coaches, nutritionists, clinicians, and teamwork is such a vital part of success in both worlds.

Looking a little deeper let us explore:

Personality traits



From the lively, talkative, energetic, bouncy personalities that thrive in the people facing aspects of F1 to the quiet deep thinkers, many personality traits and skill sets can be embraced in such a demanding world and succeed, given the right workplace opportunities. The team at ADHD 360 embrace, recognize and support this principle enabling the individual to develop and grow into a confidence that allows them to step into a suitable workplace environment where they can flourish.

Evolution / Research and development



Constant developments in the industry of F1 are a marvel and fast paced.



Equal groundbreaking developments in the assessment diagnosis and treatment of ADHD are being driven forward and embraced.

Safety



As the technology in F1 grows and the performance expectations increase the need for safety protocols is vital, governance and regulation are a strong common feature between ADHD treatment and F1.



So how do we conclude?

"Life in the fast lane". Indeed there are similarities, not just the obvious fast paced, thrill seeking, risk taking, dynamic high energy presentations that shout out F1 and ADHD but the far more important subtleties, of teamwork, focus, skill sets, relationships, determination to succeed, excellence in performance, the desire to be not defined by an analogy but to be defined by being the best version of self that one can be.



Life In The Fast Lane by Jen Lewis-Neill

Let's be honest, who doesn't like to drive fast? The adrenaline, the exhilaration, the thrill of the chase...but the chances are, at some point...You...Will...Crash.

A crash can occur whether you're a Formula One driver, or someone with ADHD. Ultimately the thrill seeking, risk taking and mental exertion will result in your tyres (or mind) burning out because you didn't take that pit stop which was needed to win the race.

Impulsivity and fearlessness are considered part of the evolutionary process. Without this gene code (DRD4, in case you were wondering!), humans may not have migrated out of Africa 50,000 years ago. It is referenced that great explorers such as Captain Cook had this gene, explaining why it has since been coined 'the explorer gene'.

It is this that leads one to wonder, is this gene code present in one of the most dangerous competitive sports of our generation: Formula One?

Lewis Hamilton and Michael Schumacher are undisputedly household names, whether you're a fan of Formula One or not. To F1 fans, they are the epitome of excellence, excitement, and racing performance at its best, but, to an ADHD expert, curiosity lingers. How and why have they achieved such great success; sheer luck? Chance? Privilege? I think not.



In an interview in 2021 Hamilton described himself as 'always being a doodler'. Peel back the layers of this great sportsman and he has many hobbies: art, astronomy, fashion (the list goes on). This is also typically noted in those with ADHD, a 'hobby magpie' if you will. Imagine being the best in the world at what you do and still having the curiosity and mental energy to explore new and interesting things...



To many who watch Hamilton on the big screen he is not what you may assume as 'ADHD'. He often appears at times introverted, withdrawn and isolated from the 'egos' of his peers. This is an example of why ADHD is so misunderstood by many.

Hyperactivity doesn't necessarily mean 'running around like a headless chicken'. It can mean internal restlessness that is only quelled by doing something that is of great interest to you (in Hamilton's case, racing).

Impulsivity doesn't necessarily mean making poor choices. It can be, in some cases, making such an intricate move on the track that it takes you from second place to first place, honing your skills to perfection. Using this trait as a superpower, is how many other elite athletes (Michael Phelps), inventors (Thomas Edison), and Artists (Pablo Picasso) have made history.



As an ADHD specialist and an F1 fan I have watched as a bystander, often wondering (and sharing with anyone who will listen), about the possible link between ADHD and the high-octane world of Formula One. From the mechanics, to the team principles and of course, the drivers. Formula One is, 24-7, all-consuming and most importantly from an ADHD perspective, (dopamine hitting) rewarding.

Hyperfocus appears to be a key element in F1. This trait of ADHD is a little less known to those outside of the ADHD community, it isn't all inattention and poor focus as many are led to believe. F1 is a perfect example of this.

The hypervigilance and mental skill the ADHD brain can perform is considered a super-power under the right circumstances. Problem solving, quick thinking and taking risks can be the difference in winning a (your) race.

In the right environment with the right attitude and determination, you can win whatever race you're in... Just remember to take the pit stop when you need it.

"I'm a bit of a misfit; I have my odd things and my odd ways of doing things, I'm ADHD"
(Lewis Hamilton 2021)



Continued overleaf...



Whether we agree or disagree with Jen and Archie's words, one thing is for sure, they stimulate the thought process and add a 'breath of fresh air', allowing the reader, maybe the patient with a smattering of neurodiversity, to think differently for a moment.

Maybe the focus on impairment does need a change every now and again, and maybe we should keep an eye out for skills, passion and competence in things we wouldn't typically expect of someone in treatment medically for their ADHD.

As a popular and famous American Psychologist Bob Brookes said to me once: *"We need to look for the island of competence, once we have that, watch the motivation overcome impairment, and watch the patient 'fly'."*



ADHD 360 Mobile & Desktop App

The ADHD 360 app is designed to help you keep yourself and your clinical team up to date with your ADHD symptoms and includes many useful tools.

It's free on the Apple App Store for mobile and desktop.



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