

FOREWORD BY
Edward M. Hallowell
author of *Driven to Distraction*

NOWHERE TO HIDE

WHY KIDS WITH **ADHD & LD**
HATE SCHOOL AND WHAT
WE CAN **DO** ABOUT IT

JEROME J. SCHULTZ, Ph.D.



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Praise for Nowhere to Hide

“As Schultz captures in his remarkable book, children with LD and ADHD often experience feelings of frustration, anger, helplessness, and low self-esteem—feelings that prompt them to avoid situations that they believe will lead to further humiliation. *Nowhere to Hide* describes how these disorders are manifested in the home and school setting, and, most importantly, offers a strength-based framework filled with many practical, realistic strategies that parents, teachers, and other professionals can use to help these youngsters become more competent, proactive, and resilient. Schultz’s understanding and empathy for students with LD and ADHD as well as their parents and teachers are evident on every page of this easy-to-read book.”

—**Robert Brooks**, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and faculty member, Harvard Medical School; coauthor, *Raising Resilient Children*

“It’s been said that kids ‘go to school for a living.’ It is their job, their livelihood—their entire identity. When you meet a school-aged child in your community, your first question inevitably is, ‘Hi, Jason. How’s school?’ For 10–15 percent of America’s kids, the answer to that question is, ‘Well, not too good.’ These students fight the battle of learning disabilities and attention deficits every day. Through no fault or choice of their own, they become a daily source of puzzlement and frustration for the parents and teachers in their lives.

“Enter Jerry Schultz. In his new book, *Nowhere to Hide*, Dr. Schultz brings his unparalleled experience, knowledge, background, and wisdom to this issue. He provides the reader with comprehensible explanations of the latest neurobiological research and translates it into practical

strategies that parents and professional can use to assist these students in reaching their fullest potential.

“By telling his story through the eyes of students he has evaluated, taught, and counseled, Jerry allows us a unique look at the day-to-day challenges faced by these kids and their families. His book will provide you with invaluable knowledge and insights that will assist you in delivering the quality services that these struggling students need—and deserve.”

—**Richard D. Lavoie**, M.A., M.Ed., educational consultant and author, *The Motivation Breakthrough* and *It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend*

NOWHERE TO HIDE

Why Kids with ADHD
and LD Hate School
and What We Can Do About It

Jerome J. Schultz, Ph.D.

Foreword by Edward M. Hallowell

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*I dedicate this book to my five wonderful grandchildren—
David, Eli, Sophia, Ava, and Leah. These little miracles
continue to enrich and expand my knowledge of child
development, and the joy they give me is indescribable.*

FOREWORD

Think of this book as the friend you've been looking for for the longest while. Think of this book as a wise companion, a source of reassurance in the midst of uncertainty, clarity in the midst of confusion, and solutions where you've had only problems.

Jerry Schultz has got game! He knows the field of learning problems and ADHD inside and out. He has worked in the trenches for three decades. You have no idea how much that matters, but I do, because I have been working in those same trenches for those same years. It makes all the difference in the world. You cannot find a guide with more hard-won knowledge than Jerry Schultz.

That means you can trust what Jerry has to say as if he were your knowing pediatrician or savvy first-grade teacher. It means Jerry is not going to try to hustle you with pat answers or patented remedies. It means Jerry understands your pain, and the pain of your child or student. It means Jerry also knows a host of possible answers ... not *the* answer but many answers.

One value of this book is that it distills much of what Jerry has learned into a single volume. Beyond providing knowledge, however, this book provides hope. It provides the kind of emotional uplift all of us so urgently need. And Jerry provides the best kind of hope: hope that grows out of the rich mine of real-life triumphs. Jerry has helped thousands of teachers, students, parents, and others triumph. He has helped them turn what seemed at first a shortcoming, even a disability, into an asset. He has mined the treasures embedded in what can seem like impenetrable rocks in the brain. But Jerry knows how to find the treasures. He is indeed a master of his trade.

Savor this book. Read each page slowly. Take in all that it has to offer. After you've digested it, keep it nearby, like a best friend. Like a best friend, it will always be there for you when you need it.

Edward Hallowell, M.D.
Sudbury, Massachusetts
New York, New York
May 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this book represents the fulfillment of a very important personal and professional goal. Included in the long list of people to whom I owe a deep debt of gratitude are the many gifted and talented teachers, colleagues, and mentors who have freely shared their knowledge and wisdom, helping me to shape my ideas and hone my clinical and teaching skills over the years. The list is much too long to include here. I'm a big believer in thanking people and telling them how much I love them before their funerals, so most of these people already know how I feel about them.

In a way, this book is my thank-you note to those who have given me the privilege of working with them over the years. While colleagues and friends have provided me with support and encouragement during my professional career, it is to the children and the families I have worked with over the past nearly forty years that I owe the greatest thanks. It is they who have taught me about living, struggling, coping, and succeeding with LD and ADHD and other special needs. It is these individuals who have invited me into the private space of their lives, who have helped me shape the thoughts and ideas that have informed my teaching, guided my clinical practice, and helped me fill the pages of this book.

In the year leading up to the publication of *Nowhere to Hide*, my first book, several people have taught me much about writing and publishing and helped to make this an interesting and enjoyable experience. My literary agent, Janice Pieroni of Story Arts Management, has shown enthusiastic support for the idea behind the book since its inception. Her personal interest in and understanding of the need for its publication have fueled many conversations that have helped me bring this work to fruition. Janice

helped me build a bridge to the many people at Jossey-Bass and Wiley who have shepherded me along the road that took me from outline to oeuvre.

Acquisitions editor Marjorie McAneny initially sought me out to do this project because she felt that my interpretation of the challenges faced by kids with LD and ADHD would help parents and teachers appreciate the role that stress plays in their lives. It was Margie who graciously helped show me the ropes of the publishing business and became my home port and anchor as she ushered me through the stages of this project. My thanks go to Tracy Gallagher, her senior editorial assistant, who (among other important things) helped me track down the rights to the songs that I referenced in the book. Developmental editor Paula Stacey was both gentle and generous as she and Margie helped me get a better idea about how to turn my initial draft of the manuscript into something much more presentable. At that point, the manuscript and I were put in the capable hands of senior production editor Mary Garrett as she oversaw the copyediting process and the subsequent steps involved in getting this book produced.

Before writing this book, I had a pretty limited view about the role and value of a copyeditor. I want to extend a special thank-you to the incredibly talented Hilary Powers, who provided this final-stage review of my manuscript. I now see that this process is rather like submitting one's work for the literary equivalent of cosmetic surgery. Starting with a solid body of work, Hilary deftly wielded her semantic scalpel, making laser-like excisions of extraneous or confusing language, taking in a little here, suggesting a little filling in there—all of which helped me to create the finished product you now hold in your hands.

Although I know it will cause her to turn a little red, for although she deserves it, she never seeks public praise, I have to say here how grateful I am to my wonderful wife,

Marlene. Her training and skills as a social worker have not only brought comfort and guidance to many clients and students over the years, they have enabled us to have hours and hours of great conversations about mental health, schools, kids, and families. In the early days of our marriage, she would scour my professional journals, looking for training opportunities for me that would lead us to new places and allow me to explore new horizons. She has always believed in me and always supports me when I set out for new adventures or take on new challenges. This book is the most recent excursion, and Marlene, who is my inspiration and my muse, was with me every step of the way. She helped me find the time to write and found articles and highlighted passages in all sorts of places that were relevant to the book. Most important, she served as first editor on everything I put into print. I could always count on her for an honest, intelligent, and sensitive appraisal of my work, and my readers will be thankful that she was there.

Introduction

In this book, I share what I have learned over the past thirty-five years about how kids with learning disabilities (LD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) cope with the stress and frustration caused by constantly being asked to do what they cannot do very well, or what they *think* they can't do well. I hope that you, like thousands of parents and teachers who have heard me talk about this in workshops or at conferences, will come to understand the neurobiological reason that many kids with LD, ADHD, or a combination of these disabilities do not improve fast enough or often enough, and why, despite all the interventions parents and teachers put in place, so many of these kids actually get *worse* over time.

My goal in writing this book is to help you understand the cause of the problem and to offer you a model for intervention that will give you and your children or students renewed hope.

Here's the crux of this book: When children or adolescents have unrecognized, undiagnosed, or misunderstood LD or ADHD, these students encounter an unending stream of academic and social challenges that other students don't seem to have. Because they don't know why they have these difficulties and because their efforts over the years have not made the problem better, they have no idea what to do and have little control over the challenges they encounter. As a result, thousands of intelligent, competent students face frustration and failure, which results in anxiety and leads to unrelenting stress that ultimately causes them to do what any organism does to protect itself—to fight, to run, or to try to find a place to hide.

This book is written to help you understand the neurological basis for this stress response, and why much of the negative behavior you see in children with LD and ADHD is actually the evidence of their desire to avoid failure. Most important, I wrote this book to share with you a method of intervention that can break this cycle and put kids on a path to competence and confidence.

WHY READ THIS BOOK

I assume that if you are reading this, you have, love, or teach a child with LD or ADHD. That is, you may be a parent of a child or adolescent who has significant difficulties with learning or attention. You may be a teacher of children with these challenges. The child you care about or care for has probably had at least one evaluation, if not multiple evaluations, including testing by a school psychologist, a comprehensive neuropsychological assessment, or a consultation with a pediatrician or a psychiatrist. Despite the efforts of many qualified and talented professionals, you do not seem to have found the answer to this child's problem. Your son or daughter or your student might have been given a formal diagnosis of specific learning disabilities or ADHD and be getting services under the provisions of an Individual Educational Plan—called an IEP, as specified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law first enacted in 1990—or a 504 Plan (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

Let me guess what you've done that hasn't worked:

Parents: you have attended countless meetings at your child's school, where well-meaning professionals have talked to you about your child's progress but have not told you how to fix the problem. You may have been called into the principal's office to discuss certain behaviors that are getting in the way of your child's learning, and your child's

teacher's ability to teach. Perhaps you have taken your son or daughter to a psychologist for therapy. You may have hired specialized tutors to work with your child at school, or sent your son or daughter to a special summer camp offering interventions for children with disabilities or attention problems. You may be among the hundreds or even thousands of parents who have chosen to move to another town in order to get better special education services! You have done everything you know how to do, and although your child may be showing some progress, you know it's not enough, and you are worried.

Teachers: You and your colleagues have spent months or years trying to solve the mystery of why certain students resist your efforts to help them and spend much of their time trying to escape work that you believe they are capable of doing. Or you may be one of the growing number of teachers who have come to understand how extremely difficult it is to address the needs of severely learning disabled children or those with untreated ADHD in a regular classroom. In the days before "the inclusion movement," schools had many more resource rooms or self-contained classrooms for kids like those who are now in "full inclusion" programs nationwide. You may wonder how one special education teacher can address the needs of all the kids in a heavy caseload—when these students are located in classrooms all over the building. And while you may have become that special kind of hybrid teacher who has created a classroom that is inclusive both in spirit and in deed, and that adequately serves the needs of the kids this book is written about, you may have colleagues who are struggling to maintain sanity in a classroom filled with twenty-five to thirty-five challenging and diverse learners, let alone meet the intensive individual needs of children with significant LD or ADHD who have been placed there in the name of inclusion.

This all leaves us with a huge unanswered question: Why, despite the best efforts of so many professionals, is the current approach to education not having the intended effect on kids with LD and ADHD? The answer lies in the complex and miraculous workings of the human brain. While I'll offer a fuller explanation in subsequent chapters, the key point is that different events activate different regions of our brains. Because we're humans, stored information is always associated with some kind of emotion. Sometimes the associated feeling is positive, and sometimes it's relatively neutral (and therefore, more susceptible to forgetting). At other times, the memory is laced together with negative emotions, which as it turns out are very hard to get rid of. This is why (if you're old enough) you probably know exactly where you were when you heard the news about the explosion of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*. It's why you will probably never forget what you were doing on 9/11. Unfortunately, because of the terrors of war and large-scale tragedies that have befallen us as citizens of a complex world, most of us know what is meant by post-traumatic stress syndrome, or PTSD. It's easy to understand how horrific, traumatic events can stamp an indelible imprint on our brains. When this happens, the victim becomes hardwired to respond to any hint of the tragedy with a full-blown reaction, essentially reliving that event. This book addresses the chronic stress that is created by exposing a child to an unending flow of tasks that seem impossible to do, or do well. We know that stress, like bullying, changes the brain. Can't a book you find difficult to read, or a schedule you can't follow, harass you as unceasingly and as covertly as any bully? Like so many victims of peer abuse, kids with LD and ADHD can find no escape from this stressor: they have ... *nowhere to hide*. Although the factors that cause chronic stress cannot be considered traumatic in the same way as the horrific events that lead to PTSD,

research nonetheless shows that unabated stress can also be neurotoxic—harmful to the brain.

How You Know I Am Telling the Truth?

First of all, my mother always told me that lies always get you into trouble. I guess I was destined to be researcher when I was a kid, because I felt I had to test her hypothesis. The story about how I found out that she was right is too long to retell here (and dredges up many sad feelings from my limbic system). Let's just say that you and I might have different ideas about what "pain in the butt" means. (But that was long ago and far away.)

The other reason that you should (and will) believe me is that the ideas you read about in this book are absolutely supported by sound research carried out by some of the best minds in the country. Besides, they all have brain scanners and we don't, so how can we argue with them? An increasing number of highly regarded scientists have demonstrated that not only acute traumatic stress but also chronic unabated stress causes changes in the human brain that can rewire the way it deals with stress. That reorganization in the service of survival has a definite downside. It causes problems with learning and attention, and it impairs executive functions such as planning, memory, and organization.

Once I help you develop a basic understanding of the brain science that supports my thesis, I translate that scientific knowledge into practical, doable, and inexpensive strategies based on my many, many years of real-life experience with the kids you and I love and care about. I am certain that this will make a difference. My mother also told me to believe in myself, but she always added: "but you'd better be able to back it up." I guess she was a researcher too. I have four brothers and sisters. We were her lab mice, and we all lived, so I think she knew what she was talking about.

Have Hope!

Is your child's problem getting worse? Despite all the steps you have taken, and all the money and time you have spent trying to help your child, you may feel that the problem not only persists but may even be getting worse as your child grows older. Your son or daughter may not be as happy as in earlier years. The child who used to love school seems to be going into a tailspin of failure. Your daughter may say she hates school, or hates her teacher, or hates homework, or even that she hates *you*! Your ten-year-old son might be doing mean things to his little sister because she can read just about anything that she can put her hands on. A high school student may stop going to a particular class, or come to school and shut down for hours, or refuse to go to school altogether, retreating to an (all too often smoky) bedroom or basement lair. Your son may be spending more time slumped behind video games or computer screens, or texting incessantly, or doing just about anything he can to get out of doing schoolwork. Your little first-grader might have started to bite her nails or pull out her eyelashes, or your formerly sweet child may have started to get surly in the middle of fourth grade. Any of these sound familiar? To parody that famous Music Man ...

Well, if so my friends, Ya got trouble ...

Right here in River city!

With a capital "S"

And that rhymes with "Mess"

And that stands for STRESS.

As a parent, you have met with your child's teachers year after year, and despite their high level of skill, their genuine concern, and their efforts to give your child a successful learning experience, they may seem as frustrated as you by your child's lack of progress. As a teacher, you too are concerned about students who, despite the best efforts of

your school district, continue to have serious learning difficulties, and who are perhaps displaying an increase in challenging behaviors and fragile emotions. They may be talking back, refusing to do work, or acting surly. They may have been referred for a reevaluation to see if, in addition to LD or ADHD, they now meet the criteria for oppositional defiant disorder, or something more serious.

Why LD and ADHD Evaluations Are Not the Answer

LD and ADHD evaluations are necessary and helpful, but they don't help enough. Specialists in the field have developed many tools to help us diagnose and treat both conditions, and a lot of teachers, pediatricians, school psychologists, and neuropsychologists can do that very well. The real challenge lies in understanding and assessing the collateral damage to a child's sense of confidence and competence that can come from years of unabated stress created by these interrelated conditions. This book will help you reduce the impact of LD and ADHD by inoculating your children against stress by building a greater understanding of their particular kind of LD or ADHD. (Yes, there are different kinds.)

Some of the Practical Things in This Book

By teaching children how to more accurately appraise their products as well as the processes used to create those products, you will strengthen their will, their stamina, and, ultimately, their sense of control—the best anti-stress medicine there is. You'll learn how to help them make deposits into their own "self-concept account" (and how to get teachers and grandparents to make contributions to this fund too). You will help your children put their strengths and

weaknesses in their proper perspective. You will learn how to help your children understand that they actually *are* able to make a difference in their own life and not be so dependent on others to define who they are and what they can or can't do. By doing the things that you'll learn about in the chapters that follow, you'll give each child a feeling of purpose, agency, and control that can transform stress from a large, frightening, and immobilizing fire-breathing dragon into a source of energy that can fuel achievement and build self-esteem from the inside out, for today and for a lifetime.

Why You'll Be Glad You Read This Book

If you are the parent of a child with LD, ADHD, or both, an adult who cares for or about a child with these conditions, or a professional who works with these kids, you are about to learn some things that can help you change a young person's life. A better understanding of the relationship between stress, learning, and attention can help a child who lives with fear, worry, anxiety, and frustration transform into a child who views life with a sense of hope and optimism that can lead to academic and social success. If you want to look back on someone's life in five, ten, or thirty years and say, "I really did something to make a difference for that child," keep reading. You'll be glad you did, and so will your child or your students.

A Brief Word About Music

During my teenage years, music was the backdrop for my life. In high school, music was my sport. I played saxophone in every instrumental group I could, including "pep" band, concert band, orchestra, dance band, and marching band. While I was tooting out the fight songs of famous football colleges with the band, the music of the sixties and

seventies was playing on my car radio or a transistor radio (if that doesn't make sense—ask your parents!) and, almost incessantly, in my head. I learned a lot of things in high school, but the melodies and lyrics of those songs have stuck in my brain as if glued there. And the tunes and the lyrics of that period appear to be timeless. People of all ages seem to know the lyrics and the melodies even if they didn't grow up when the songs were originally sung.

I've woven references to that music into the chapters of this book for several reasons. If you know the lyrics or the tune of a song at all, your brain will start to sing or hum it as soon as you see the trigger of the lyrics—even if I've put in only a few words of it. This phenomenon makes a point that's relevant to this book: If you learn something when you (and your brain) are in a happy state (that is, relaxed, content, and not under stress), it's generally easier for you to remember it than something you learned while you were in a neutral or negative mood, or under a lot of stress. Who knows? Maybe the musical references peppered throughout this book will put you in a happy mood. If so, and if my hypothesis is right, the *"Good Vibrations"* (The Beach Boys, 1966) that you get may help you remember what you read.

It's not just because I love music—it's *all* about the brain.

Another reason I put the musical references in this book is that the lyrics help me tell my story about how brain function is affected by what happens to us. When your brain gets triggered by a printed word or phrase, or a song to hum or sing, it is using an intricate series of neural networks to cause the visual centers of your brain to communicate with the areas of the brain that have put these lovely little poems and their melodies away for safekeeping. On its way through this network, a flow of electrochemical energy passes through the areas of your brain that process your emotions. If the lyric is associated with a wonderful experience you had when you first heard the words and the

music, that song becomes associated with positive emotions. You might resonate, for example, to the opening lyrics of a song made famous by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons: “*Oh, what a night!*”

If, on the other hand, the lyrics or the melody of a song is firmly associated with an unhappy event, like the night you broke up with your first love, your brain registers and holds on to your negative emotional state at that time. Even after many years, you may tear up when you hear “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do,” sung by Neil Sedaka (#1 on the Billboard Hot 100, August 11, 1962), which includes those incredibly emotional lyrics: “Come-a, come-a down dooby do, down, down.” (Or, then again, you may want to fill in your own song here.) You might be interested to know that it was the hit recording “Nowhere to Run” sung by Martha and the Vandellas that found its way into my brain on a happy sunny summer afternoon in 1965 and remained there until it rose up from the depths of my memories to give me the inspiration for the title of this book, *Nowhere to Hide*.

Go ahead, sing it. Ya know ya wanna. Your brain can’t help but respond to what your body sees, hears, touches, feels, smells, or otherwise senses. As you read this printed page, the occipital lobe of your brain is picking up the visual images that your eyes are sending its way. These images are little more than meaningless combinations of curved and straight lines and angles. To make sense of these little symbols called letters, and the way they are organized into groups called words and then into sentences and so on, your brain needs to activate an incredibly complex network of neurons to find the centers of the brain (the auditory cortex, among others) that have stored the sounds and words that help the visual symbol make sense. People who live in remote villages with no access to print materials have the potential to learn this sound-symbol association, but unless it is taught to them, they do not become literate. In