



The Clutter Between Us: How Understanding ADHD Transformed my Relationship with My Mother

Jami Shapiro ([00:00](#)):

Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA. I am Jami Shapiro, the founder of Silver Linings Transitions. The host of the grandma has ADHD podcast, and I am joining you from my dining room table in San Diego. I am so excited to be asked to speak to you today because I believe that what I am going to share with you is going to transform That's right, which you, you heard me right. Transform your relationship with your adult parent. And if you are listening, you are likely an adult and you may or may not have an ADHD child. I am an ADHD child. I have two of my three children have ADHD, in case you couldn't tell I have ADHD. But while why we are here is that I am actually the adult child of two ADHD parents.

Jami Shapiro ([01:07](#)):

So that actually has been part of what brought me to, to ADDA and to this this whole new career with ADHD. So basically, I'm going to take you back and my, my oldest child Will uses they them pronouns. And they were in middle school when they insisted that they had ADHD. And I dismissed Will, and said, there's no way you have ADHD you have been reading since you were three years old. So for me, I could not sit still to read until second grade. And I actually have a half brother who had to be put on Ritalin in the eighties. So just like everybody else, I thought that ADHD was the little hyperactive boy. And my ex-husband kept insisting that I had it. And I was like, no, I don't. Well, when my child was being evaluated as the parent, I had to go into the room and the psychiatrist asks a series of questions, and I look at him and I'm like, I'm answering more yeses for me.

Jami Shapiro ([02:12](#)):

Do I have it? And he said, yes. But to be honest with you, I was in the process of going through a divorce, starting my business as a senior move manager with nasa. And that is relevant. So I am going to put a pin in that and hope I remember to come back to it. And I have three young children, so I kind of, I'm like, okay, I am 45 years old. I've lived with ADHD my whole life. I have ADHD like that was it. I didn't think anything more about it, but my business was called Silver Linings Transitions, and it's in San Diego, California. And we how we started is going into seniors homes who were going through the downsizing process and helping them make, doing their entire move. We were organizing all of it. We were helping them figure

Jami Shapiro ([02:58](#)):



Out what they could take, helping them sort through the belongings, doing their floor plan, helping them pack, putting everything away and unpacking, hanging their pictures, and then decorate. I mean, not just decorating, but also organizing. So we would not only unpack our clients, but we would also, you know, organize their closets, organize their pantries, and then we started to get more, you know, requests to work with clients. And I started to recognize that I was going into more clients' homes whose homes looked like my mom. And then I started doing presentations on downsizing and right sizing. And I would tell everybody that was at in the audience, you know, I come from a family with hoarding disorder. Well, I actually one of the things that we do for my business when we're not doing move management is we provide home organizing services, which is hysterical because the last thing anyone ever would've called me was organized.

Jami Shapiro ([03:48](#)):

But I enrolled in becoming an a professional organizer. And then I joined the ICD, which is the Institute for Challenging Disorganization, and ended up becoming a level two specialist in ADHD. So those are organizers who actually help people who struggle with chronic disorganization. It's not just enough to hire an organizer. You need to have somebody that understands an ADHD brain. So I'm listening to this podcast and they said something about people with ADHD having a lot an inclination towards migraine headaches and fibromyalgia, where it was like the light bulb goes off. And I'm like, oh my gosh, my mom has ADHD. So I called my mom, and by the way, I should tell you that my entire life I have battled with my mom. My mom was, was emotionally dysregulated as I am, and she was definitely putting a lot on me as a young child.

Jami Shapiro ([04:44](#)):

She was divorced young mother. She was using me as her sounding board. You know, now we know that there's a lot of emotional dysregulation with ADHD. And so she just put all of this heaviness on me, and then I felt this responsibility to take care of my mother. Well then after my grandmother passes away, my mom basically starts doing grief hoarding. And it, it just was, I was trying, constantly trying to fix the problem with my mom, trying to get her out of the clutter, you know, challenging why she was overspending, challenging, why she was buying another thing. And it got to the point that I didn't even go into my mom's home because I, I could not handle being there. I, I, we all have different clutter tolerance levels. And when you have a DHD, a lot of times too much visual clutter is just one more decision and just, it just causes brain fatigue.

Jami Shapiro ([05:33](#)):

So I start this podcast, grandma has ADHD because I've already been working with older adults, and I already am a senior move manager, and I'm a certified senior advisor. So I realized that nobody's really paying attention to older adults with ADHD. So as a parent myself, if I've got a child with ADHD, I'm spending a lot of energy on my child. And maybe I'm getting to my own issues, but we're not looking backwards at our parents. And that's a mistake. And I'm going to tell you why. So as I shared with you, I've had an ongoing issue with my mom. It's been really, really hard for me to accept her. And I basically



realized as I was doing the research for my book, I'm going to put a plugin for that. It is called, This Explains So Much. And it is about it.

Jami Shapiro ([06:22](#)):

It's understanding undiagnosed ADHD for people who have too much like my mom, for people who feel too much. That's pretty much all of us with ADHD. And for those of us who have been told we are too much. And that has been my experience. Like, Jamie, can you turn, you know, can you make it Jamie Light? Can you tone it down? Can you turn it off? So that's the book I start lurking about the history of ADHD. And I realize that, you know, ADHD has existed, you know, we can trace it back to biblical days and definitely in the Salem Witch trials. And I realize, you know, if I had been alive during the Salem Witch trials, I would've been persecuted. And I, you know, just like every, a lot of us with ADHD have had those negative messages coming at me, you know, why can't you get it together?

Jami Shapiro ([07:07](#)):

Why are you so much, you know, you have so much potential. And I realized that as an adult, as a child, I had been doing that to my mom my whole life. And I called my mom and I apologized, and I said, mom, I am so sorry that I was just one more person attacking you, because we all know when you have ADHD, you can be attacked. And I just went to visit my mom to finish the book. She needed some technological help. And old me would've been like, oh, mom, can't you just figure it out? But new me. Got on a plane, flew to Jacksonville, worked side by side with my mom, showed her how to use Google, but I gave her the biggest hug when I saw her, which I normally wouldn't have been able to do. And the best part was being able to sit in her apartment around all of her stuff.

Jami Shapiro ([07:56](#)):

I was able to interview her for the podcast. It's episode 50 if you want to tune in about, you know, all of her stuff and why she holds onto it and how we made peace. But I'm just going to encourage you that if you have been dealing with your own ADHD and maybe you're parenting an ADHD child, I'm going to invite you to look at your parents and see how their undiagnosed ADHD might have impacted your relationship and the way that you were raised. And just invite you to look for peace in your family, because peace is possible with acceptance. And just like you want people to accept you the way that you are, we need to accept our parents because they had to cobble it together and they didn't know that they had ADHD. And this is a generation of people who are discovering it. So anyway, I really hope that you enjoyed this podcast. I hope it added value to your life. And I would love for you to check out my podcast. Grandma Has ADHD, and if you want to email me directly, you can

Jami Shapiro ([08:54](#)):

Find me at Grandmahasadhd@gmail.com. I have really enjoyed this brief talk. I hope I stayed under my time. because You know, when you have adhd, you like to go and go. I am Jami Shapiro, the host of the Grandma has ADHD podcast. Thank you so much for listening.