

# CALIFORNIA PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC RESOURCES, INC.

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**Patricia McTague-Loft** has undergone rigorous training in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in Marital and Family Therapy. In addition, she has completed the [Amen Clinics' Brain SPECT Course](#) on how to implement a brain system approach to diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.

Sincere thanks to **Dr. Daniel Amen** for preparing the information below.  
Please visit the [Amen Clinics website](#) for more information about their multi-modal approach to treatment that uncovers the root cause of your issues or challenges that are not discovered by traditional psychiatry.

## Barriers To Intimacy

*"You just don't pay attention to me."*

### **Boredom**

Chronic boredom is often a problem in ADD. Once the thrill of the chase is gone it is often hard to maintain focus on the relationship. They may get frustrated and restless when there is not enough action, not enough to do, not enough new going on.

### **Restlessness**

The need to move often causes a lack of intimacy because they can't stay in one place long enough to maintain the focus on their partner that is needed.

### **Impulsivity**

The rapid fire brain causes them to not reflect long enough on their behavior before they act. They are often pushed faster by uninhibited behavior, pushed by urgency even though it may not be taking them anywhere.

### **Too Many Things Going On At Once**

Intimacy requires focus. When too many things are happening at once it is hard to focus on the other person. Too many things get in the way.

### **Distractibility**

Intimacy requires the ability to sustain attention in order to make the other person feel that he or she is at the center of the world for their partner. Distractibility interferes with the focus needed for intimacy. Conversations are often cut short or left uncompleted, leaving the other person feeling unimportant.

### **Lack of Consistency**

Intimacy requires consistency and reliability. Because of the poor organization and planning, impulsivity and forgetfulness these are often an issue with people with ADD.

### **Lack Of Learning From The Past**

Often people with ADD engage in repetitive, negative arguments with others. They seem not to learn from the interpersonal mistakes from their past and repeat them again and again.

### **Chronic Procrastination**

The ADD person often waits until the very last minute to get things done (bills, buying birthday, anniversary or Christmas gifts, etc.). This may irritate those around them.

## **Social Isolation**

Many people with ADD have failed in relationships so much in the past that they avoid others. This may cause their partner to feel isolated as well when the ADD partner never wants to entertain or go out with other couples.

## **Fighting**

Fighting is typical for many people with ADD. It may be related to impulsivity (saying things without thinking), stimulating-seeking behavior, misperceptions, rage outbursts and chronically low self-esteem. Looking for turmoil is a common complaint of people living with someone who has ADD. They say that the person looks for trouble. Rather than ignoring a minor incident, he or she focuses on it and has difficulty letting it go. Things in an ADD house do not remain peaceful for long periods of time. Couples with ADD often give new meaning to the term “madly in love.”

## **Misperceptions**

Often the spouse of an ADD person has to spend an inordinate amount of time correcting misperceptions that lead to disagreements. Once, on the night before he was leaving on a business trip, a man told his wife, who had ADD, that he was going to miss her. She heard his words as “I’m not going to miss you” and she was angry at him for the rest of the night.

## **Problems Taking Turns**

The ADD person’s need to have what they want right away often causes problems in situations where they need to take turns, such as in conversations or games.

## **Speaking Without Thinking**

This is perhaps the most damaging problem with ADD in relationships. Just because a person has a thought doesn’t mean that it is accurate or that they necessarily believe the thought. Many people with ADD just say what comes to mind. They then get stuck in defending these statements, which causes further problems.

## **Problems Completing Chores**

This leads to much resentment.

## **Sensitivity To Noise**

When the ADD person is sensitive to noise they often need to escape from others to feel calm or peaceful inside.

## **Lack of Talking**

The partners of some ADD people complain that there is little talking in the relationship. “He seems turned off when he comes home” is a common complaint.

## **Takes High Risks/Thrill Seeking**

This type of behavior worries the partners of the ADD person. Partners often feel pressured to go along with dangerous behavior, causing a rift in the relationship.

## **Easily Frustrated/Emotional/Moody**

Many spouses have told us that they never know what to expect from the ADD person. “One minute she’s happy, the next minute she’s screaming,” is a common complaint. Small amounts of stress may trigger off huge explosions.

## **Tantrums/Rage Outbursts**

Some studies have reported that up to 85% of people with ADD have rage outbursts, often with little provocation. After this occurs several times in a relationship, the partner becomes “gun shy” and starts to withdraw from the person. Untreated ADD is often involved in abusive relationships.

## **Low Self-Esteem**

When people do not feel good about themselves it impairs their ability to relate to others. They have difficulty taking compliments or getting outside of themselves to truly understand the other person. The brain filters information coming in from the environment. When the brain's filter (self-esteem) is negative, people tend to only see the negative and ignore any positive. Many partners of ADD people complain that when they give their partner a compliment, they find a way to make it look like they have just been criticized. "I'm not worthy to be loved. There's something inherently wrong with me," is a common complaint.

## **Chronic Anxiety**

As mentioned above, ADD people often feel restless or anxious. This often causes them to search for ways to relax. They may use excessive sex, food or alcohol to try to calm themselves. I treated one man who had sex with his girlfriend over 500 times in the last year of their relationship. She left him, because she felt that their relationship was based solely upon sex.

## **Problems With Substances**

Feelings of restlessness or anxiety can often lead to drug or alcohol abuse. Steve drinks to calm his restiveness, but when drinking he is negative, irritable, ignores his wife, etc.

## **Failure To See Others' Needs**

Many people with ADD have trouble getting outside of themselves to see the emotional needs of others. They are often labeled as spoiled, immature or self-centered.

## **Difficulty Expressing Feeling**

People with ADD, especially men, have a hard time expressing or even knowing what they feel in a certain situation. This is often helped with medication.

## **Bottom Line People**

These people just want the answer rather than go through the process of getting the answer.

## **Lack A Sense of History**

Many people with ADD lack a sense of the past, a sense of history in the relationship. They can forget what went on last night and start all over.

## **Low Frustration Tolerance**

Because of the impulse control problems people with ADD often have a low frustration tolerance and tend to be very reactive to even minor situations.

## **Negativity**

Adults who have a long history of negative experiences can come to almost expect the world to be negative toward them. When neutral events occur they often react negatively toward them.

## **Disorganization**

This causes problems in a relationship because the ADD person often doesn't live up to their part of the chores or agreements. Disorganization of time can cause chronic lateness.

— *Dr. Daniel Amen*