

## Workshop: ADHD and Music

### Sean's story

It is a typical morning in the Devlin family. Fourteen year old Sean awakes at 7am and hurls himself into the day. When his mother calls him for breakfast he stomps into the kitchen, grabs a box of cornflakes and spills the cereal all over the table. Then he crunches the cornflakes into little pieces all the time kicking the kitchen table. He can't sit still.

His mother orders him to get a dustpan and brush and clean up the mess. He rushes to get them but then can't remember what he is supposed to do with them. So he examines all the cleaning materials in the cupboard until his mother shouts a warning to him. He storms back into the room, slamming doors behind him and spends the next fifteen minutes playing soccer with anything he can kick. Sean has an extreme form of ADHD.

Sean's behaviour doesn't improve when he gets to school. He's restless, constantly on the move, squirming in his seat. He annoys his teachers and classmates by blurting out answers to questions even before the questions have been completed. He interrupts conversations and talks incessantly. Instead of concentrating on the blackboard, he's looking out the window looking at a bird and conjuring up an incredible fantasy. Sean is not mentally present in the classroom. As far as he's concerned, he's flying with a blackbird on an adventure searching for hidden treasure in some mystical kingdom far beyond the mountains.

Sean won't wait until it's his turn but barges ahead of the other children. He frequently engages in dangerous and reckless behaviour such as jumping from high places, rushing into traffic-all without considering the consequences of to himself or others. He throws caution to the wind, acting first and thinking later when it is probably too late and someone has been physically or emotionally hurt or something has been destroyed.

*(Adapted from The remarkable nutritional treatment for ADHD, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia by Jacqueline Stordy and Malcolm Nicholl))*

Sean's mother and father are both musicians and are keen that he makes the most of his excellent singing voice. He attends your classes in the local parish hall with five other teenagers. Sean loves to sing in public but is not so keen on practice. He finds waiting his turn difficult and frequently uses waiting time to distract and annoy other students. He finds the theory 'boring' and struggles with sight reading.

**How would you adapt your teaching to include Sean more successfully in your sessions? Identify the three strategies you would try first. State your reason for choosing these strategies.**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**