

I'd always struggled, but I'll make sure my son won't have to

Lou Brown, 50, Perth, WA.

Rushing around the kitchen, I sighed as I noticed my son getting down from the table to play with his toys.

"Please eat your breakfast," I begged Jack, five. "We're going to be late for school."

"Sorry," he mumbled, as he continued to look at his book.

I shook my head. It was always so difficult to get him to do things. He wasn't naughty, just struggled to focus on any one task.

Admittedly, I'd been the same as a child.

Growing up, doctors had diagnosed me with hyperactivity and told my parents I'd eventually grow out of it.

It made my life hugely challenging.

At school, no-one seemed to get me. I struggled to make friends, even when I tried to bribe them with my pocket money to like me.

I found it impossible to pick up on social cues, unable to tell if I was annoying a classmate or entertaining them.

And I was always really

easily distracted.

It continued as I got older and I struggled with most parts of my adult life.

As Jack got older, I started noticing his behaviour mirrored mine as a kid.

So full of energy, he was constantly losing focus and getting into trouble at school.

"I didn't mean to do anything wrong, Mum," he'd cry.

I'd recently divorced Jack's dad and teachers believed the split was causing the behavioural problems.

But we'd put so much effort into ensuring Jack wouldn't be affected, I knew it had to be something more.

When he was seven, my GP referred

him to a specialist for tests.

"He might have ADHD and it's highly likely you have it, too," she said.

I was confused and told him about my hyperactivity diagnosis.

"The majority of kids still have it as an adult," she explained. "There was limited knowledge when you were a child."



"At school no-one seemed to get me"

Jack was diagnosed with ADHD.

And later, my doctor's suspicions were confirmed. I had it, too.

Hearing the news, I burst into tears.

I'd struggled with so many things in life, building relationships and forcing myself to focus, it was heartbreaking to think Jack would face the same challenges.

After a few months of wallowing in despair, I decided to take action.

I would learn everything I could about ADHD and do anything possible to make life easier for Jack.

Since then, he's been prescribed medication and it's amazing to see how much it helps him.

He's much more present and able to focus on what's going on around him.

Now that I understand his disorder, I know how to handle it when things get difficult and can understand why he's acting in certain ways in certain situations.

It's helped me develop strategies for dealing with my own traits, too.

I'm on a mission to support others with

ADHD. I've even set up a website - Thriving With ADHD.

I want everyone with this disorder to know they're never alone and they can go on to have a happy, fulfilling life.

Facts about ADHD

- The average age of attention-deficit hyperactivity diagnosis is seven years old.
- ADHD rarely exists alone - many with it also have other mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.
- Men are three more times likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than females.
- Celebrities with ADHD include actors Ryan Gosling, Jim Carrey and Channing Tatum.

October is ADHD Awareness Month. For more information, visit www.aadpa.com.au

My son and I are both doing better since the diagnosis

How can WE BOTH have it?