



The A.L.I.G.N. Framework

Responding to “I saw this on TikTok” conversations

Disclaimer: This communication framework is adapted from principles of Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rollnick), health literacy best practices (AHRQ; CDC Clear Communication Index), and established ADHD clinical practice guidelines (AAP 2019; NICE NG87). Clinician discretion is advised.

What is ALIGN?

The ALIGN framework is designed to help you respond with empathy, structure, and clarity, to guide families toward evidence-based understanding of ADHD.



A - Acknowledge perspective



L - Link to lived experience



I - Interpret clinically



G - Guide with evidence



N - Navigate next steps



A - Acknowledge perspective

What to say:

"There's a lot of information online, and it makes sense that some of it would resonate"

"What part of the video stood out to you?"

"Many parents are asking similar questions"

Clinical purpose:

Listening lowers defensiveness while validation builds trust, without equaling agreement.





L – Link to lived experience

What to say:

"How did the video compare to what you're seeing at home?"

"Can you describe when you notice this behavior most?"

Clinical purpose:

This grounds the conversation in observable reality and promotes collaboration.

I – Interpret clinically

What to say:

"Many of these traits are common behaviors in children."

"We'll look for persistent patterns that cause functional impairment before making a diagnosis"

"We look at symptoms across multiple settings, like home and school, to see if these behaviors have a pattern"

Clinical purpose:

Families understand the difference between occasional behaviors and clinically significant ADHD symptoms.





G – Guide with evidence

What to say:

“Some behaviors can overlap with anxiety, learning differences, or sleep issues.”

“Diagnosis requires gathering data from multiple sources like parents and educators.”

Clinical purpose:

Parents understand clinical decision-making without feeling dismissed.

N – Navigate next steps

What to say:

“Let’s gather more information about your child’s behaviors.”

“We can track patterns over time to better understand what’s happening.”

Clinical purpose:

Keeps families aligned with your clinical workflow.

It supports continuity of care.



Supportive language vs discouraging language

Avoid ☒	Say this ☑
<i>"Social media isn't reliable"</i>	<i>"There's a lot of health information circulating online. Some, simplifying complex conditions"</i>
<i>"That's not accurate"</i>	<i>"Let's look at how ADHD is defined clinically"</i>
<i>"Everyone thinks they have ADHD now"</i>	<i>"Many ADHD traits overlap with neurotypical behaviors"</i>
<i>"You can't diagnose from watching a video"</i>	<i>"Diagnosis requires looking into patterns and behaviors across periods of time and multiple settings"</i>