Challenges at school

Jay: Hi, Emma!

Emma: Hey, Jay.

Jay: Are you OK?

Emma: Yeah, I guess.

Jay: You looked kind of frustrated in maths today.

Emma: I was. I just find it a bit hard to focus. My brain keeps thinking about other things. It's really annoying.

Jay: Yeah, I know what you mean. That happens to me too sometimes. Is it like this in all of your classes?

Emma: Well, some of them, but especially in maths because the teacher talks so fast.

Jay: Yeah.

Emma: She gives so many instructions! Because of my ADHD, it's difficult to listen to everything, and I get confused.

Jay: Hmm, I'm afraid I don't know very much about ADHD. What exactly is it, if you don't mind me asking?

Emma: It's a condition that, well, affects how a person's brain works, so it makes it difficult to focus sometimes, sit still or control your impulses. It's like your brain is always bouncing between thoughts or activities, which can make it tough to concentrate on schoolwork or stay organised. Some people might feel super restless, but others mainly struggle with paying attention. It's not their fault, though. It's just how their brain works!

Jay: Wow, I didn't know that. That sounds tough. Do your teachers know about it?

Emma: Some do. My English teacher is nice. She gives us short breaks, and it helps. But in maths and geography, the teachers think I'm lazy or not trying hard enough. They always tell me to 'focus more', but I *am* focusing!

Jay: I know! We're trying our best. I think it's normal that we all learn in different ways. I have problems too, but I don't really talk about them. Like, I get super nervous before exams, and my brain feels like it's blocked. I find it *super* stressful to study at home.

Emma: Right? I get this too. But there are some small things that help me, like making lists so I don't forget. And I use a timer to tell me when to take breaks. You could try that!

Jay: I take too many breaks! I just sit and scroll on my phone, but I don't think it helps.

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Emma: Yeah, I do that too, but I realised that physical breaks work better for me. Like, sometimes I'll just get up and stretch or walk around for five minutes. You could even try something fun, like dancing for a few minutes. It really helps.

Jay: Hmm, OK. Maybe I'll try it out.

Emma: Yeah, go for it! And another thing … something that helps me is having a study buddy. I focus better if someone is working next to me, even if we're both doing different things. It's called 'body doubling'. We don't have to talk the whole time, but just having someone next to me helps me focus.

Jay: Really? I didn't know that had a name! That sounds good! Maybe we can do it together some time.

Emma: Sure! And don't be afraid to ask your teachers for help. I asked mine, and some of them really understand and know how to help me. Mr Parker really helps me plan my homework.

Jay: Yeah, that's a good idea, actually. I should talk to my teachers. Thanks, Emma!

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