

WHAT IS ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurological condition that affects a person's behaviour. An individual with ADHD may have trouble concentrating, seem restless and may act on impulse

There are two main areas of difference associated with ADHD:

Inattention - This involves forgetting things, difficulty concentrating, organising themselves or focusing on what another person is saying.

Hyperactivity and Impulsivity – Symptoms include struggling to stay still, fidgeting, interrupting people, speaking without thinking about the consequences or a lack of danger awareness.

Many people with ADHD will have symptoms of both of the above, although around 3 in 10 people have problems with concentrating and focusing but not impulsivity or hyperactivity.

Lots of individuals might have some of these symptoms at some point in their lives, however for a diagnosis of ADHD to be made:

- The symptoms must be causing significant difficulties, occurred over a long period of time and across different environments.
- Other conditions are ruled out as a cause for the behaviours.

Common Symptoms

ADHD is a developmental disorder, which suggest there must be signs of the disorder in a person's childhood even if they are now an adult seeking diagnosis. Symptoms often continue into adulthood but may start to present differently. Below is not an exhaustive list but some of the things that adults with ADHD are likely to struggle with:

- Hyperactivity tends to decrease while inattentiveness tends to stay the same.
- Symptoms can be more subtle but often include:
 - Carelessness and lack of attention to detail
 - Starting new projects or tasks before completing an existing one
 - Difficulty with organisation
 - Difficulty with prioritising
 - Often losing or misplacing things
 - Forgetfulness
 - Restlessness
 - Interrupting others
 - Mood swings or irritability
 - Challenges coping with stress
 - Taking risks in activities which might compromise their safety or others.

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Strengths

It is important to focus also on the strengths of those with the condition, and the ways in which adults with ADHD are able to be extremely productive and strong candidates for the workplace;

- Having higher energy levels
- A tendency to be self-reliant
- Resilience in difficult situations
- Creativity and idea generators
- Hyper-focus on topics that interest
- Have an eye for detail
- Optimistic
- Spontaneous and flexible

Gender Differences In Diagnosis

It is known to be more common that males are more often diagnosed with attention hyperactivity. Females are more likely to display the in-attentive sub-type and less likely to show hyperactive behaviours that might draw attention to their ADHD. This can result in many women and girls not getting diagnosed early or at all, as the traits are not as obvious.

Related conditions

Some individuals with ADHD may have signs of other conditions including

Anxiety disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorders, Depression, Sleep Problems, Autistic Spectrum Condition, Dyspraxia, Epilepsy, Tourette's syndrome, Dyslexia

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Telephone: 0114 384 0284 Email: employmentsupport@autismplus.co.uk