

What is ADHD?



**A Guide for
Children and Young
People**

What is ADHD?

People with ADHD are often describes as being:

- Restless and overactive - that is, they do not stay for very long with one activity or in one place.
- Fidgety - that is they may chatter and interrupt people.
- Inattentive and having poor concentration, that is easily distracted and don't finish tasks which need thinking through.
- Impulsive, that means suddenly doing things without thinking first, and not able to wait their turn in games, in conversation or in a queue.

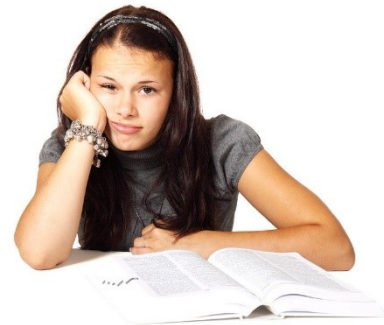
Does this sound like you?

These behaviours will have been obvious since you were very young.

They will affect most areas of your life - home, school and friends.

You may also find that the behaviours described cause you other problems such as:

- Being slow to learn to talk
- Find reading difficult
- Getting disappointing results in your school work.
- Thinking that you are stupid and no good.
- Behaving badly.



Without treatment and support, the person with ADHD may develop (or have already developed) other problems.

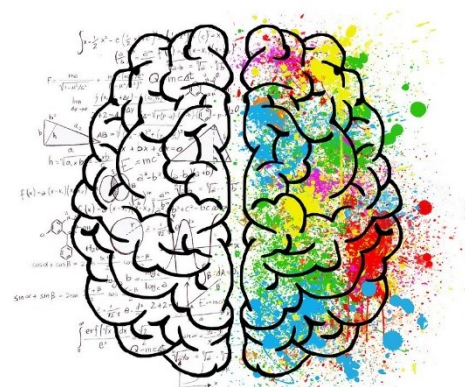
For examples:

- Problems with concentration makes it difficult to learn new skills.
- Feelings of frustration and anger.
- Feelings of failure lead to loss of hope.
- It is difficult to make friends and easy to get drawn into antisocial behaviour.
- Young people who receive specialist treatment tailored to their needs can improve a lot. Some problems with restlessness, attention and impulse control may continue into adult life. However, with help, most hyperactive young people will eventually settle down, catch up with their learning, improve their school performance and make friends.

What causes ADHD?

We don't know for sure.

We do know that ADHD is common. You are probably not the only person in your class with problem.



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ADHD seems to run in families so you may have inherited it from your parents (like the colour of your eyes).

We know that boys are more likely to have ADHD than girls.

We also know that there are things that can be done to help you.

Getting help

If you have been diagnosed with ADHD you will have had a full specialist assessment. This will have enabled your needs to be clearly identified. The assessment will have looked at the factors that are relevant to your strengths and difficulties. It will provide the basis for an effective treatment plan.

Psychological Management:

- A full explanation of the condition to you and your parents/carer
- Advise about how to manage your behaviour.
- Involve teachers about how to support you in school, using carefully structured activities often help and you may need special support and teaching. Help for difficulties, which have developed as a result of your ADHD, for instance low self-esteem, difficulty with friendships, temper outbursts and aggression.

Stimulant medication:

Methylphenidate or dexamphetamine may calm your hyperactivity and improve your concentration. They are medications that affect the action of chemicals in your brain. They will be prescribed only after you have been assessed by the specialist and may be worth trying if you are having serious difficulties.

Medication does not work for everyone. There are side effects, such as reduced appetite and staying awake longer. You will see a doctor to talk about trying medication.

Handy Hints

- Have a routine for things around the house so you don't get distracted as easily.
- Some places are too noisy and busy for homework so do your homework in a quiet space.

- Have a routine for your homework and try to do it at a set time so you get into good study habits.
- Encourage your parents/carer to keep rules in the house simple and clear to avoid any confusion.
- Teachers will need to know why you find it hard in their classroom. They may be able to help.
- If you have ADHD it helps if you sit in front of the class so your friends are less likely to distract you.
- Be doing things step by step and following directions you can show and use your talents.
- ADHD gets better as you get older and most people with ADHD do well in a lot of things as they get older but it can be really hard when you are young.
- Accepting life with ADHD may be difficult but if you stick with it, the ADHD will cause a lot less trouble, fewer hassles for you, and life will be a lot easier.

Benefits of ADHD



Many people with ADHD have developed an appreciation for the way ADHD helped them view the world and would not trade places with someone who did not have ADHD. As one young person said , “it’s part of who I am and what makes me unique”.

Recognising the advantages of ADHD is a powerful way to focus on the unique strengths and resilience of each individual. This can make a crucial difference in those who thrive with the condition and those who let it negatively define them.

ADHD Advantages

- ✓ **The ability to multitask**
Many people with ADHD can manage several projects, tasks or activities at once. In fact, they tend to thrive and excel at it.
- ✓ **Ability to focus intensely**
Hyper focus is an aspect of ADHD that can be highly beneficial. Even if the intense focus only lasts for a short time, a great deal can be accomplished. The trick is for the person with ADHD to be interested in the task, this way their focus can actually last for a long time.
- ✓ **Creativity and idea generation**
The rapid fire mind of a person with ADHD can often blurt out five great ideas before you even get a chance to analyse the first. This is because people with ADHD process information faster. People with ADHD view the world differently and this makes them great problem solvers. The trick is to learn to pause long enough to gather and articulate their many ideas.
- ✓ **Abundant energy**
People with ADHD tend to be highly active and talkative. This can sometimes be exhausting to people who don't have ADHD but such energy can be positive! People with ADHD can often do the work of two people and as adults can work long shifts. The trick again is for the activity to be interesting, rather than boring and repetitive.
- ✓ **Great in a crisis**
High energy and highly focused people are great in a crisis! People with ADHD thrive on the stimulation and chaos that would scare many other people.
- ✓ **Entrepreneurial spirit: Risk takers**
Impulsivity is one of the hallmark behavioural symptoms of ADHD. By definition, impulsivity involves taking risks and being action-oriented. This can be advantageous in the world of technology, or in the life of an entrepreneur. In fact, many CEO's and successful business people are diagnosed with ADHD and they often attribute their creativity and success to ADHD.

So remember, while some people with ADHD may appear disorganised or chaotic, they are filled with great potential. The advantages of ADHD should be recognised and valued, not only to tackle prejudice and discrimination but also to highlight the advantages and benefits that those people with ADHD offer the world.

30 Good things about having

ADHD

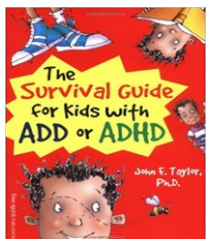
1. Unlimited energy
2. Will try anything



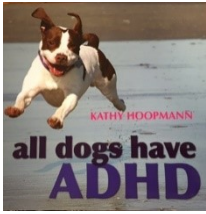
3. Good conversationalist
4. Need less sleep
5. Good sense of humour
6. Very caring
7. Spontaneous
8. Notice things that other people don't
9. Understanding of others
10. Can think of new ways to do things
11. Like to help others
12. Happy and enthusiastic
13. Imaginative and creative
14. Sensitive and compassionate
15. Eager to make new friends
16. Great long-term memory
17. Life and soul of the party
18. Charming
19. Warm and loving
20. Protective about people they care about
21. Inquisitive
22. Don't hold a grudge
23. Quick to forgive
24. Genuine
25. Never boring
26. Find perceptive ways to do things
27. Playful
28. Honest
29. Optimistic
30. Inventive

Sources of information:

Books:



The hidden Handicap: How to help children who suffer from Dyslexia, Hyperactivity and learning difficulties - By Dr Gordon Serfontein
Understanding Attention Deficit Disorders - By Dr Christopher Green.
Teenagers with ADHD/ADD A parent Guide - By Chris A Zelgler Dandy.
The Survival Guide for Kids with ADD or ADHD - By John Taylor



All dogs have ADHD - By Kathy Hoopmann

Websites:

Highly recommended: www.adders.org.uk
www.youngminds.co.uk

Other links you may find useful:

CHADD - <https://chadd.org/>

ADDERS - <http://www.adders.org.uk/>

Mental Health Foundation - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

Royal College of Psychiatrists - <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health>

Young Minds - <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

STAND NW Facebook link <https://www.facebook.com/STAND-NW-2083227195247150/>

ADHD Foundation - <https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/>