

Recognizing & managing Adult ADHD

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Signs & symptoms

- Running late
- Going to the wrong place
- Both “A” and “B” above
- Risky driving, driving violations
- Distraction
- Outbursts, poor self-control
- Trouble organizing space and time (messy desk)
- Multi-taskers
- Hyperfocus / trouble with boredom
- Restlessness
- History of childhood inattention, restlessness, distraction, impulsivity, missing deadlines, trouble organizing homework
- Inconsistent sleep
- Self-esteem struggle

Symptoms include thinking skills and emotional symptoms:

Thinking (cognitive):

- Focus
- Distractibility
- Impulsiveness
- Hyperactivity
- Keeping track of time
- Working memory

Emotional:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Job & relationship problems

Understanding ADHD

- Not so much “attention deficit” but rather “un-even attention” or “non-linear attention”
- “ADHD” vs. “RIDD” (Response Inhibition Deficit Disorder)
- Executive function: focusing, prioritizing, employing “working memory,” tracking time, diverting & re-deploying energy
- A disorder of self-esteem (emotions) as well as processing (executive functions)

Causes of ADHD

- No single “cause”
- The evolving environment brings out ADHD symptoms
- in the future, research into the ADHD brain may yield an answer

Why your doctor might not recognize Adult ADHD

- Your doctor may assume that an academically or occupationally successful person can't possibly have ADHD
- Hyperarousal & insomnia may be misdiagnosed as a primary anxiety disorder
- The self-esteem aspects of ADHD may be misdiagnosed as a primary emotional disorder
- Your doctor may not realize that ADHD is a serious condition worthy of treatment
- Your doctor may not be comfortable prescribing stimulant medication (controlled substances)

Treatment of ADHD

- Insight & education
- Structure:
 - Day planners
 - “To do” lists
 - Checklists
 - Routines
- Exercise
- Medication
- Coaching & psychotherapy

Overcome core symptoms

- **Inattentiveness**
 - Reduce distractions
 - Amplify relevant stimuli
- **Hyperactivity**
 - Seek situations that allow for safe hyperactivity
 - Minimize or avoid sedentary situations (meetings)
- **Impulsivity**
 - Defined as acts occurring BEFORE rational thought
 - Train yourself not to interrupt others
- **Time management**
 - “work backwards” from deadline to present

Management of ADHD

- Learn to say “NO” (don’t overcommit)
- Write down your priorities
- Know what makes you feel good
- Develop healthy routines (eating, bedtime, exercise, de-cluttering)

Medications for ADHD

NAME	TYPE	COMMENT
Ritalin, Ritalin SR	Methylphenidate stimulant	Ritalin lasts 4 - 6 hours
Adderall, Adderall XR	Amphetamine stimulant (“mixed amph. Salts”)	First used for ADHD in 1937
Concerta, Focalin XR, Daytrana	Methylphenidate family	Duration of action 10 - 12 hours
Vyvanse	Amphetamine “pro-drug”,	Pre-cursor of dextro-amphetamine, less abuse
Daytrana patch	Methylphenidate family	Absorbed through skin
Strattera	Non-stimulant family	Must be taken every day
Intuniv (Guanfesine)	Non-stimulant	Lowers blood pressure



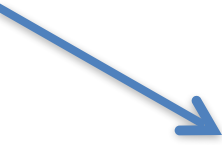
ADHD & Self-esteem

- 16,000 more negative messages by the age of 20 than non-ADHD'ers
- Self-statements ...
- Rx:
 - Re-framing
 - Humor
 - Self-acceptance
 - Self-knowledge

The silver linings of ADHD

- Energy
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Creativity

Why you want an ADHD'er on your team

- Team is stuck  • CREATIVITY: ADHD'er has an innovative idea
- Team is fatigued  • ENERGY: ADHD'er brings in re-vitalizing energy
- Team is negative  • EMPATHY/HUMOR: ADHD'er brings a burst of humor

ADHD at work: what the ADHD'er needs in the work environment:

- Physical movement
- Autonomy in how to accomplish a task
- Variety
- Ability to work alone at times
- Flexible deadlines
- Absolute deadlines
- Ability to limit stimuli and distractions
- Recovery time
- Frequent and gentle feedback
- Settings that allow acts of brilliance with occasional screw-ups, vs. constant steady routine

Circumstances that augment ADHD'ers' focus:

- Competition
- Urgency
- Time limits
- Engagement

Famous, successful people with ADHD

- Michael Phelps - athlete
- Karin Smirnoff - DTWS dancer
- Howie Mandel - entertainer
- Ty Pennington - extreme makeover
- Justin Timberlake
- Will Smith
- Britney Spears
- Glen Beck
- Richard Branson - entrepreneur
- Terry Bradshaw - athlete
- Jim Carrey - comedian
- Katherine Ellison - journalist
- Dean Kamen - inventor
- Adam Levine
- Greg Lemond - cyclist
- Paul Orfalea - Kinko's founder

Careers for those with ADHD

- Sales
- Acting
- Military
- Athletic coaching
- Photography
- Graphic arts
- Entertaining
- Dancer or athlete
- chef
- Writer
- Police/fire
- ER medicine
- Park ranger
- Entrepreneur
- Mechanic
- Journalist

Poorly fitting careers for ADHD (and why)

- **Regulatory or contracts lawyer** (detail, monotony, lack of movement)
- **Events planner** (organization, timing, deadlines, filing, scheduling)
- **Customer service rep** (scripted speech, lack of spontaneity, patience)
- **Accountant** (no movement, detail-oriented, repetitive, forms & paperwork, deadlines, lack of social interaction)
- **Records custodian** (risk of misplacing things, media storage & retrieval, declass deadlines)

ADHD in the workplace: Productivity & Procrastination

- Time: know that “everything will take longer than you think it does”
- Make a “to do” list
 - Write it down
 - Keep it with you
 - Refer to it often
 - Cross off what you’ve accomplished
- Use visual cues
 - Post-its
 - Place things to take with you in front of the door
- Minimize distractions
 - Occupy an office at the far end of the hall
 - Not starting a distraction is easier than getting out of one

ADHD in the workplace: Productivity & Procrastination

- Getting started: make a small commitment
- Build in extra time: don't plan on a "best case scenario"
- Arrive early - and take something to fill the time
- Carry your planner everywhere & never commit to ANYTHING unless you have the time

ADHD in the workplace: Productivity & Procrastination

- Capture loose thoughts: if distracted by an idea for an unrelated project, write it down
- Use “active learning” techniques:
 - Repeat information out loud - or mentally
 - Imagine using the information in a meeting or conversation
 - Imagine how the information might relate to project or activity of yours
 - Share the new information with someone
- Finish things: accept that a lot of life consists of boring but necessary tasks & make a push to do it

Parenting Skills & ADHD

- Organization
- Scheduling
- Repetitive chores
- Sitting still / waiting
- Moving slowly
- Paperwork
- Patience
- Routine
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Calm
- Enthusiasm
- Creativity
- Sustained dedication
- Multi-tasking
- Variety of practical skills
- Flexibility & tolerating the unexpected
- Joy of chaos

Self-monitoring in ADHD

- What are your successes?
- What are your goals?
- What are your cautions?
- Maintain exercise and other healthy routines
- Check planner 'thrice' daily (time mgmt)
- Straighten up on a daily basis (space mgmt)
- Develop a creative outlet
- Learn the art of self-acceptance
- Follow treatment principles

Rules for surviving ADHD

- Every Brain is unique and different
- We all have to live with the brain we're born with
- Every Brain has strengths as well as weaknesses
- Brains tend to normalize, mature, and compensate over time