Think
Mental Health

Fact Sheet

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

What is ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD, is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects a person's attention and hyperactivity. It can make it harder for a person to focus, control impulses, and manage their behaviour. ADHD is usually noticed in childhood, but sometimes it is not recognised or diagnosed until later in life, such as in adolescence and/or adulthood. With the right support and strategies, people with ADHD can manage their symptoms and live happy, successful lives.

Three Main Parts of ADHD

1

Inattention
Trouble focusing or finishing tasks, getting distracted easily, or forgetting things.

Example: Not being able to focus on a work task or forgetting to bring necessary things to school.

2

Hyperactivity
Being very restless, fidgeting a lot, or having difficulty staying still.

Example: Constantly moving around, even when it's expected to stay calm.

3

Impulsivity
Acting without thinking, interrupting others, or having trouble waiting for a turn.

Example: Saying something without thinking or making quick decisions without considering the consequences.

What Causes ADHD?

ADHD is caused by a combination of factors. It may run in families, which suggests that genes play a role. The brain structure and how it works also affect ADHD. Other factors such as exposure to difficult early life experiences can also contribute.

How to Support Your Child with ADHD

If your child has ADHD, here are some things that can help:

Be Consistent

Keep routines and rules the same. This helps your child know what to expect.

Encourage Physical Activity

Exercise can help your child release energy and focus better.

Practice Self-Care

Taking care of yourself is important. Parenting can be hard, and you deserve to feel supported too.

Teach Emotional Regulation

Help your child manage emotions, like frustration, by using calming techniques or coping strategies.

ADHD Diagnosis: What to Expect

- DSM-5 Diagnosis Criteria: For ADHD to be diagnosed, a child must have at least 6 symptoms of inattention or hyperactivity/impulsivity for at least 6 months. For adults (17+), 5 symptoms must be present.

- These symptoms must show up in multiple settings, such as home, school, work, or with friends.

- ADHD usually shows up before the age of 12, but some people may not get diagnosed until later.

Where to Get Help for ADHD

For Children (Ages 3-12)

1. General Practitioners (GPs)
The first step in seeking help. GPs can provide guidance and refer to specialists.

2. Paediatricians
(for children and young people under the age of 18 years)
These doctors specialise in children's health and can help with diagnosing and treating ADHD.

3. Psychologists
Psychologists use particular assessment tools and clinical interviews to diagnose ADHD.

4. Psychiatrists
These specialists can conduct a thorough assessment and offer specific medications for management of symptoms.

All ADHD assessments may use external resources who are not healthcare professionals such as parents, caregivers, family members, and teachers.

Tips for Managing ADHD

- **Stay Organised:** Use lists, calendars, or reminders to stay on top of tasks.

- **Break Tasks into Steps:** Divide big tasks into smaller parts to make them more manageable.

- **Create a Calm Environment:** Reducing distractions at home or school can help improve focus.

- **Be Patient and Positive:** Encourage your child with praise and understanding. Focus on their strengths.

ADHD can make it harder to focus, sit still, and control impulses, but with the right support and strategies, children and adults can manage their symptoms successfully. Getting help from professionals like doctors, psychologists, and psychiatrists can provide the assessment and treatment needed. Remember, consistency, understanding, and patience are key for both children and parents.

Resources for ADHD Support

- **Raising Children Network:** ADHD – Helping Children

- **National Institute of Mental Health:** ADHD Information