

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS: ATTENTION-DEFICIT-HYPERACTIVITY-DISORDER (ADHD)

ADHD is a developmental disorder which is usually present from birth and not acquired. It is a clinical condition and must be diagnosed through a clinical assessment.

The main symptoms are:

- Inattention
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsivity

There are three types:

- Predominantly inattentive
- Hyperactive Impulsive Type
- Combined Type

The main facts:

1. ADHD is a developmental disorder affecting between 3-5% of the population
2. More boys than girls are affected in a ratio of roughly 4:1
3. It cannot be identified through a test or blood test
4. Diagnosis depends upon the frequency, duration and severity leading to a significant impact upon daily living
5. A formal diagnosis can only be made by a doctor, ideally a specialist in neurodevelopmental paediatrics
6. There is a significant overlap with other specific learning difficulties, particularly relating to dyslexia and/or dyspraxia
7. In adolescence, many individuals (between 15-35%) develop mental health conditions, such as
 - a. Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
 - b. Conduct disorder (CD)
 - c. Depressive Disorder
8. The condition is not a result of poor parenting but intervention must focus upon behaviour modification in addition to medication therapy
9. There is little research into the overlap with Autism, but generally accepted that there is a significant overlap between ADHD and Autism

The main difficulties associated with ADHD:

Main area of difficulty	Things to look for:
Inattention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late developing speech • Often has difficulty in sustaining attention for long periods • Tends to move quickly from one activity to another without completing it • Easily distracted by others around them • Does not seem to hear or listen • Easily forgets information or instructions • Difficulty in organisation of a task • Often forgets what they were going to do, say or write • Loses or forgets things • May appear distant or to switch off • May appear hypersensitive to stimuli, such as sound
Hyperactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears driven, cannot sit still • Fidgets when seated – with items around them • Talks excessively and doesn't listen or engage in conversation • Leaves seat often, appearing unable to remain seated • Often runs about or climbs over things in situations where it would not be expected
Impulsivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blurts out in class • Interrupts a conversation • Difficulty with turn taking