A Teenager's Guide to ADHD

Information Guide and workbook for teenagers living with ADHD



Healthy London Partnership



ADHD Foundation
The Neurodiversity Charity

CONTENTS

3 Introduction

4 What is ADHD

9 ADHD and Girls

10 Two further characteristics of ADHD

15 Learning to manage ADHD successfully

17 Managing your school or college work

22 Managing your work in class

24 Revising for tests and exams

27 Medication

29 Thanks



Dear Reader,

This booklet is for teenagers who have ADHD or for anyone who knows a teenager who has ADHD. This booklet will help you learn about what ADHD is, how it affects us, and ways that we can achieve our potential and thrive.

Have you been told that ADHD is simply about being forgetful, disorganised, hyperactive or impulsive? There is so much more to ADHD than many people realise. Often young people with ADHD will say that they feel misunderstood, especially in school. Do you feel you are constantly being told you are not trying hard enough? That you are not listening?

There are many intelligent, talented and successful people with ADHD - you will find out about some of them in this booklet. Too often ADHD is described in a negative way, emphasising what you cannot do rather than what you can do. Teenagers with ADHD are described as being hyperactive, impulsive or inattentive. What do these words actually mean? Should they always be seen as difficulties or can they also be positive qualities? Simply looking again at the language we use to describe ADHD can help us to understand our unique, amazing brain and see it for what it is, a different way of experiencing the world.

This is the start of an exciting journey for you as you learn more about yourself, what is important to you and what you are good at. This booklet has been created with contributions from other young people and adults with ADHD. We hope you enjoy reading it and, more importantly, grow in confidence as a teenager with ADHD.

Colin Foley
ADHD Foundation

WHAT IS ADHD?



ADHD and girls

Challenges and advantages

Key ADHD characteristics

Potential and possibility

What is ADHD?



Potential and possibility

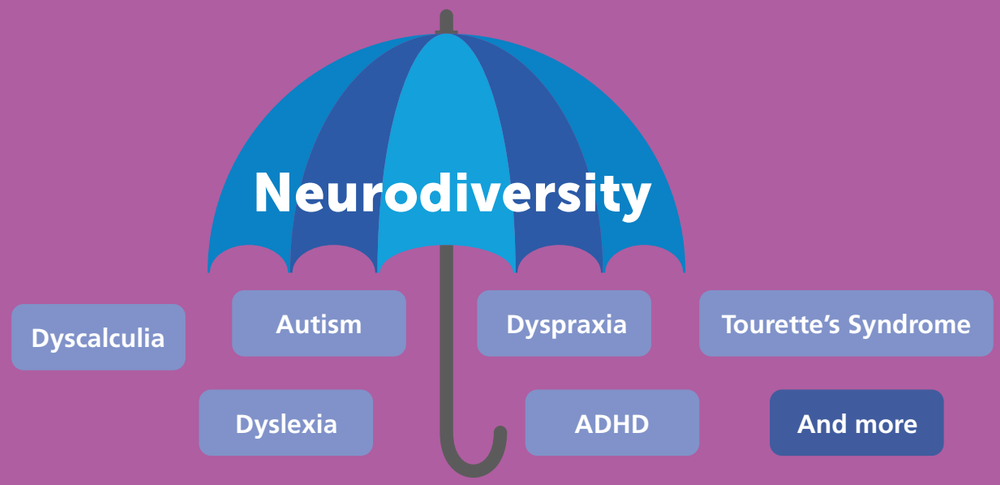
ADHD stands for ‘Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder’. An estimated 1 in 20 of us have ADHD. Our brains work slightly differently. This can be an advantage in some ways or a disadvantage in other ways. This depends on what you are doing at the time and, of course, what your natural talents and abilities are. ADHD is about potential and possibility.

ADHD is one of a group of learning differences – this is what we call ‘Neurodiversity’.

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition. It is an umbrella term that describes a range of differences in the way we understand information from the world around us and learn.

Other learning differences you may have heard of include:

Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Autism, Dyscalculia and Tourette’s Syndrome.



There are many famous people who have ADHD and who have talked in the press about how having ADHD has helped them to become successful in their particular field. This is a good place to start.

Try searching on the Internet for celebrities with ADHD and you will be surprised, I’m sure, by some of the famous people you will find there.

So what is it that makes some people with ADHD achieve their potential and become who they want to be, but others find it so much more difficult?

Some young people think of their ADHD as a positive thing. Though ADHD has its obvious challenges, we know that ADHD can make you a creative thinker, good problem-solver, empathetic and understanding of others; determined, quick-thinking, artistic, athletic, hard-working. Equally, it can sometimes make it difficult to make a decision because we see so many possibilities and so many things that might go wrong. ADHD can make it difficult for us to get motivated when it comes to tasks or activities we don’t like. In a nutshell, ADHD is about potential and possibilities. It is about understanding how it impacts on you as an individual and then learning how to deal with it in a way that helps you be the person you want to be.

Simply put, people with ADHD have a difference in our brain development and brain activity, compared to someone without ADHD. This may mean that you will learn in a different way and may even act in a different way than those around you at times.

Young people have described having ADHD as:



"ADHD is my superpower."

"I can think of original ideas and solutions – and forget them just as quickly."

"There are too many tabs open on my brain's computer browser."

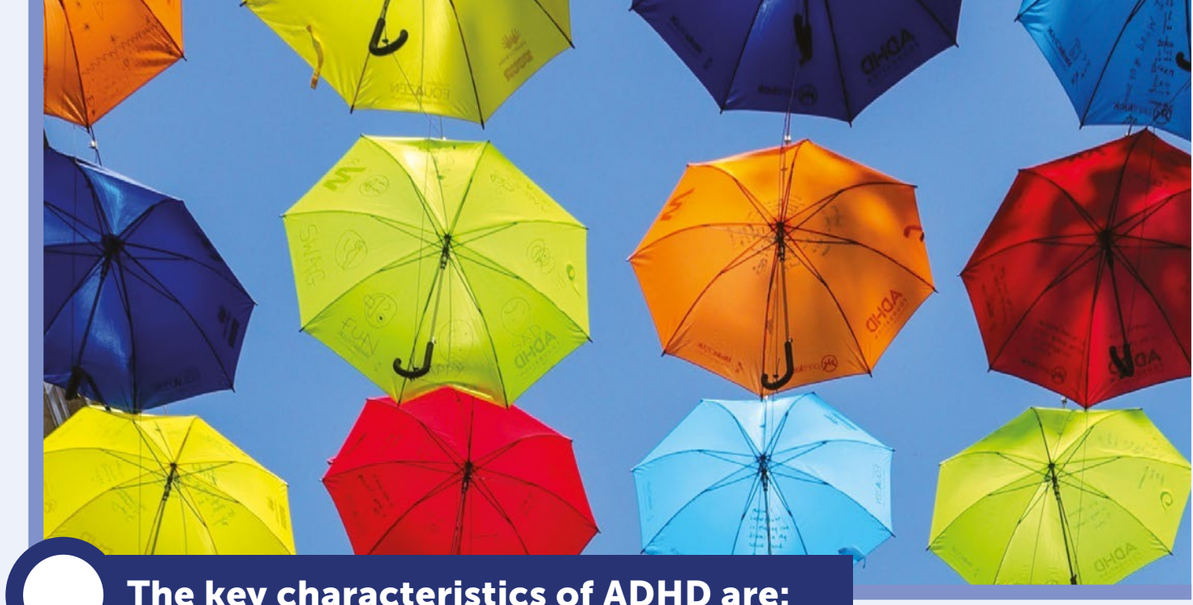
"I enjoy activities where I can move and talk."

"It feels having a 'Ferrari brain, with bicycle brakes."

"My mind is racing all the time, going a hundred miles an hour."

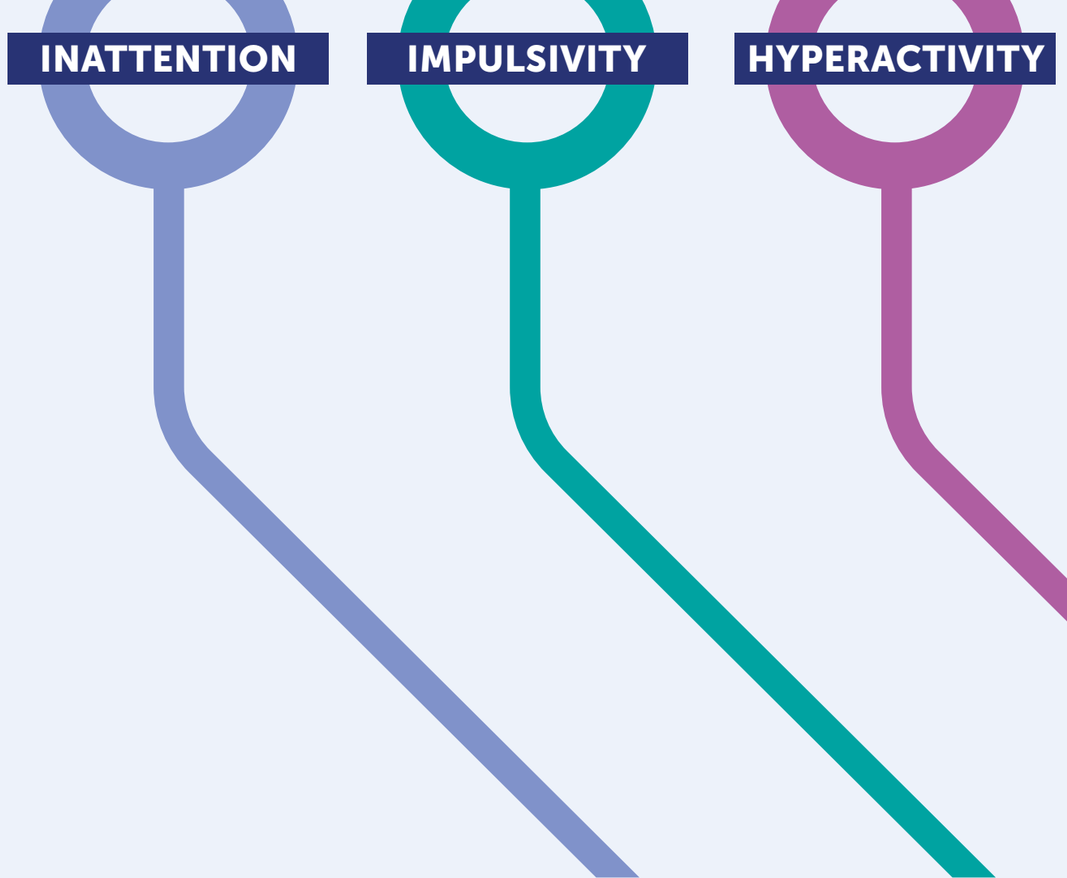
"ADHD is like being in a room with 6 television sets – I can't focus on one TV because there is too much distraction!"

"With things I really enjoy, I can concentrate, forget about my worries and lose track of time."



The key characteristics of ADHD are:

Everyone can be **inattentive**, **impulsive**, or **hyperactive** at times. These characteristics are true of every young person. For a young person with ADHD, these characteristics are stronger, and remember, let's not think of these three main characteristics as negatives, each characteristic has both challenges and advantages



Underline any of the challenges and advantages that you see below that you recognise in yourself.

THE THREE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF ADHD	CHALLENGES	ADVANTAGES
INATTENTION	• Difficulty concentrating • Forgetful. • Mind wandering – daydreaming and easily bored. • Difficulty following a logical. • Sequence of thoughts or actions. • Easily distracted. • Procrastination – difficulty making a decision or starting a task. • Poor short and long-term memory.	• Imaginative. • Needing lots of stimulation. • Enjoys new experiences and novelty. • Good 'visual imagery' – thinking in pictures. • Creativity. • Thinking outside the box.
IMPULSIVITY	• Saying or doing things without thinking through the consequences. • Disorganised. • Interrupt others.	• Curious. • Enthusiastic. • Adventurous. • Creative thinkers. • Solution focused.
HYPERACTIVITY	• Fidgeting. • Difficulty staying still. • Needing to move about.	• Energetic. • Drive. • Hard working. • Enthusiastic.

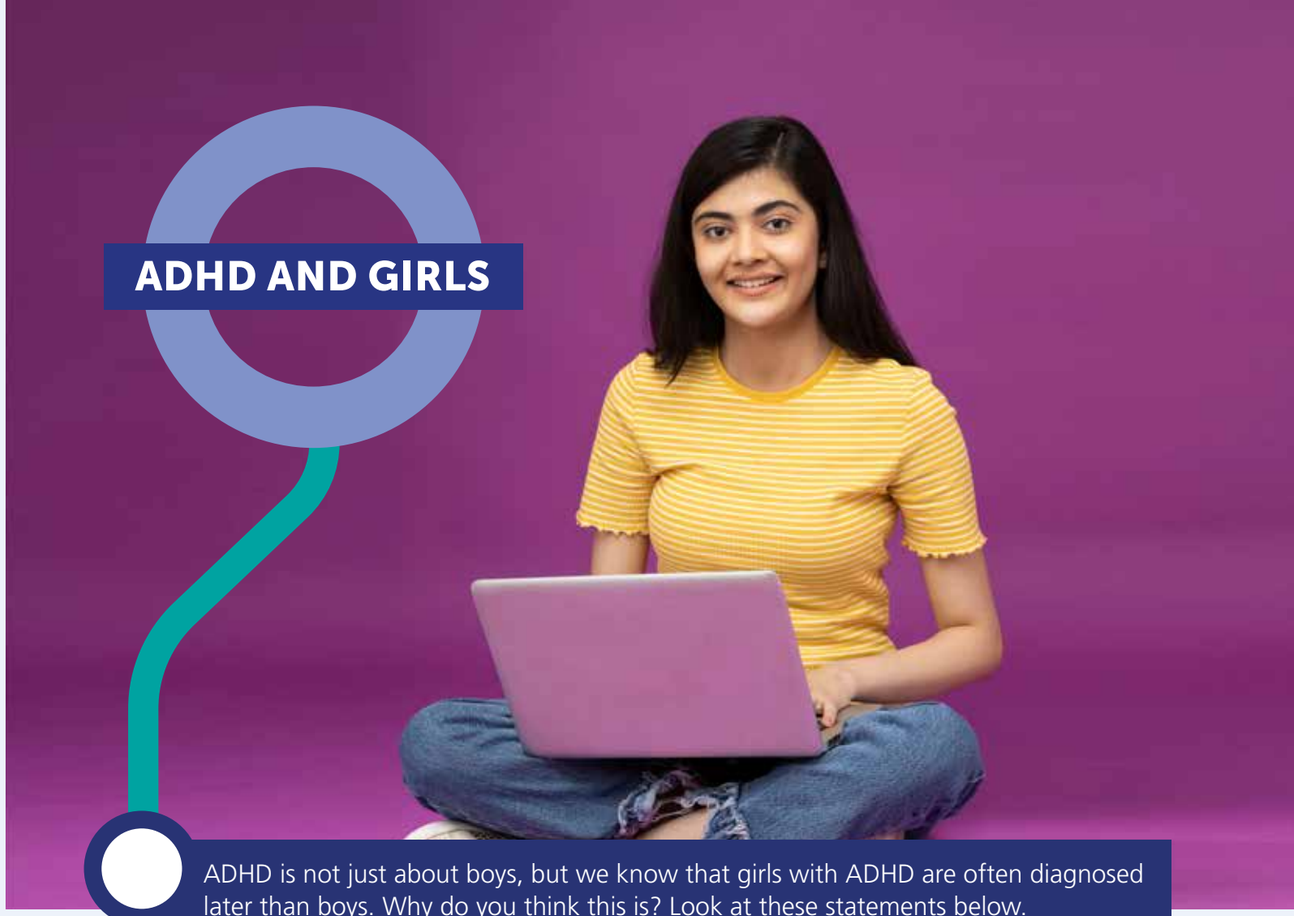
Not everyone will have all three main characteristics of ADHD. Some will have only two of the key characteristics and others will have all three. Did you know there are three different 'types' of ADHD?

1. Mostly hyperactive and impulsive type

2. Mostly inattentive type

3. Combined type with all three main characteristics

Doctors also consider things such as your levels of anxiety, sleep patterns, and your general physical health when assessing you for ADHD. ADHD isn't exactly the same in everyone.



ADHD AND GIRLS

ADHD is not just about boys, but we know that girls with ADHD are often diagnosed later than boys. Why do you think this is? Look at these statements below.

Do you think these statements are either True or False?

"Girls are not hyperactive like boys"

TRUE OR FALSE?

"ADHD is about bad behaviour and girls behave better than boys"

TRUE OR FALSE?

"Girls are more likely to try to 'hide' their ADHD, especially in school"

TRUE OR FALSE?

All of the above statements are both true and false, and they are the three main reasons why girls with ADHD can be overlooked, particularly in schools. Girls are more likely to be diagnosed with mostly Inattentive type of ADHD.



Understanding and managing our emotions

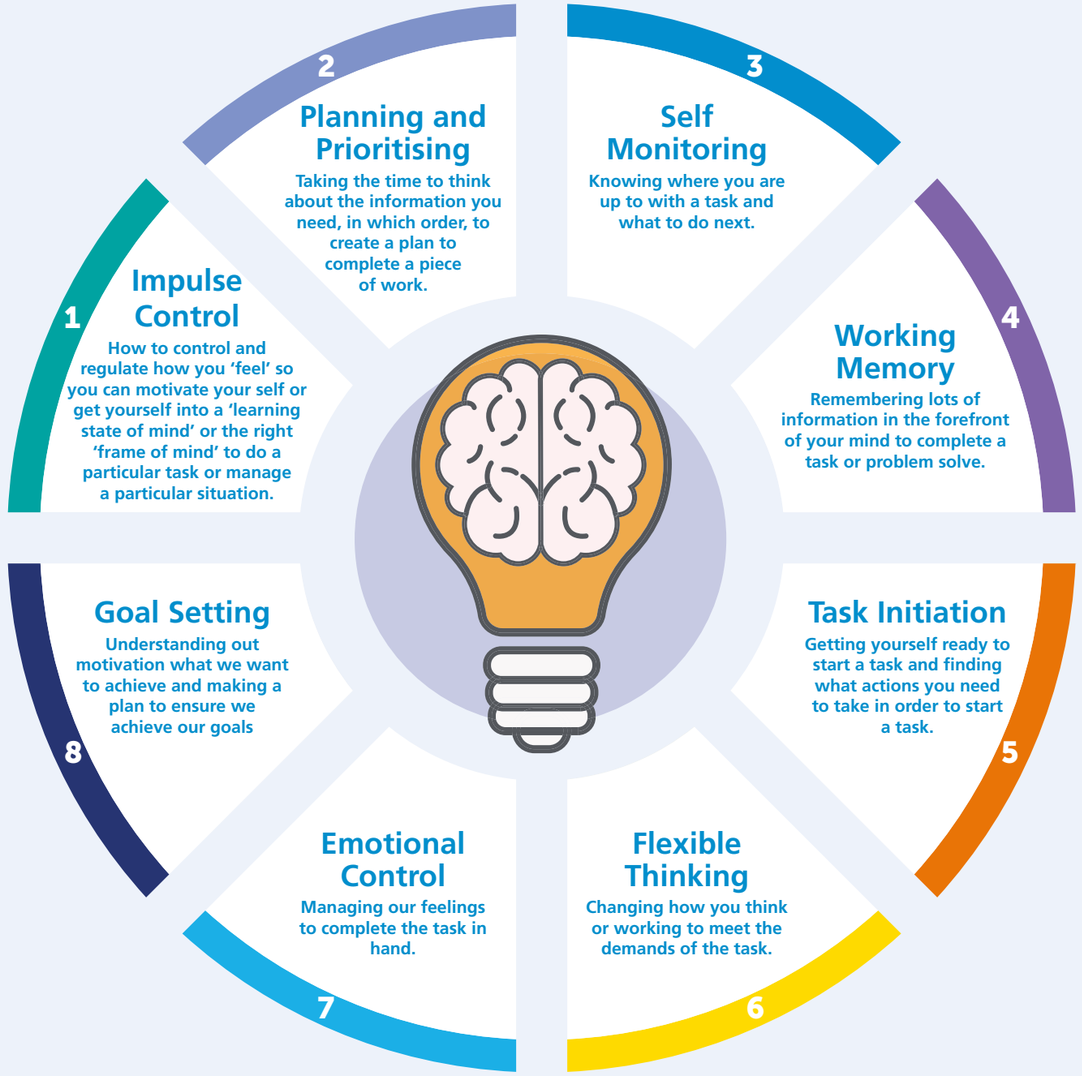
Executive functioning Quiz

Executive functioning

Two further characteristics of ADHD

Now that we have explored the three main characteristics of ADHD, inattention, hyperactivity an impulsivity, did you know there are two more?

1. Executive Functioning



Did you recognise any of these executive functions? Do you find any of these functions difficult in school? Let's find out, by taking this simple executive functioning selfassessment.

Read each statement and tick "yes" or "no"

1. Emotional control	Yes	No
I find it difficult to motivate myself about certain tasks.	○	○
I get annoyed easily.	○	○
I often get embarrassed with myself because I overreact.	○	○
I sometimes get so excited I forget what I am supposed to be doing.	○	○
I am more motivated to do things if I like the people involved.	○	○

2. Planning and prioritising	Yes	No
I often start a task without thinking what comes next.	○	○
I often work through tasks without an overall plan.	○	○
I often don't know where to start.	○	○
I often forget the "big picture" of a piece of work and get sidetracked with smaller details.	○	○
I am disorganised and my work space at home and school is messy.	○	○

3. Self monitoring	Yes	No
I am often surprised by the marks I get in schoolwork.	○	○
I don't know which level I am on in the courses I am studying.	○	○
I rarely review my schoolwork.	○	○
I make frequent mistakes in my work by not checking what I have done.	○	○
I am always late, I lose track of time and don't know what to say when my teacher asks, "Where are you up to?".	○	○

4. Working memory	Yes	No
I often forget which part I am up to when doing extended projects.	○	○
I get confused when there is too much information to take in.	○	○
I forget important information if I don't write it down.	○	○
I need to create mind maps and posters to help remember information.	○	○
I don't follow instructions sometimes because I have forgotten what they are.	○	○

5. Task initiation	Yes	No
I often feel anxious at the start of a project.	○	○
I often begin to work before realising that I have forgotten something important.	○	○
I often leave tasks until the last minute.	○	○
I often avoid tasks I am not confident about.	○	○
I don't always think about what resources I will need to start a task.	○	○

6. Flexible thinking	Yes	No
I often feel anxious if I am asked to work in a different way.	○	○
I sometimes find it difficult when everyone has different opinions or ideas.	○	○
I find it difficult moving from one task to another.	○	○
I find it difficult when I have made a plan and have to change it.	○	○
I sometimes find it difficult to change my mind about something.	○	○

7. Impulse control	Yes	No
I am easily distracted.	○	○
I interrupt people or shout out answers in class.	○	○
I often act without thinking.	○	○
I often don't think about consequences.	○	○
I forget to think how other people may be feeling.	○	○

8. Goal setting	Yes	No
I don't set myself goals because I think I won't achieve them.	○	○
I often forget the overall goal because I get distracted.	○	○
I change my mind so much that sometimes I don't know what I want.	○	○
I sometimes set myself a goal but don't create a plan to achieve it.	○	○
I give up too easily.	○	○

2. Understanding and managing our emotions

Sometimes known as ‘emotional regulation’, managing emotions is something that many teenagers with ADHD find difficult. Here are some quotes from young people with ADHD talking about their emotions.

“I have been told many times that I am ‘too sensitive?’” Charlotte aged 13

“I often feel that I am more emotional than my friends” Harry aged 16

“My friends tell me I worry too much that things will go wrong” Rashad aged 12

“I get angry easily and always regret it afterwards” Marcus aged 14

“I find I really can’t motivate myself to do anything” Safi aged 15

“I just can’t deal with critisism of any kind” Jason aged 15

Learning to understand and control how we feel is tough for every teenager. ADHD can make emotional regulation even more difficult. Why do you think this is? There may be several reasons why it’s more difficult for teens with ADHD.

1. Some parts of the brain develop at a different pace than others and our executive functioning skills rely on many different parts of the brain to work together, or to synchronise.
2. Another reason is that, as teenagers, we realise that we can’t always do what we feel like doing. As our brains develop, we are more able to think ahead, learn from our past successes and mistakes, so that we make better choices in the future.
3. We also learn when to say and do nothing because we have to consider other people’s feelings, views and opinions even if we don’t agree with them.
4. As teenagers, we become more motivated by friendships. Friends become very important in our lives. We want to be liked, we want to be appreciated, we want to belong to a friendship group. We begin to realise what we value in life and we realise that what we value is also what motivates us. In fact, as teenagers, we become increasingly motivated by the people we like.

Therefore, it is important for teenagers with ADHD to find ways to manage their emotions in order to maintain and sustain healthy relationships with friends and still achieve our own personal and academic goals.

LEARNING TO MANAGE ADHD SUCCESSFULLY



Top 5 tips

Managing ADHD is about playing to your natural strengths and abilities.

Everyone is good at some things and everyone struggles with other things. Making mistakes is an important part of learning! Sometimes we can all be discouraged and fed up when we keep making the same mistakes – so we need to learn how we overcome the difficulties we might have in a smarter way.

Developing strategies and finding clever tools like assistive technology to help you overcome those tasks and parts of daily life that ADHD can make more challenging. Emotional regulation is a key executive functioning skill, so how we do control how we feel?

5 top tips for helping manage your feelings

1. Maintain good physical health – get plenty of sleep, eat a nutritious diet, avoid a diet with too many carbohydrates, and exercise every single day.
2. Talk about how you feel with an older trusted adult – school counsellor, parent, teacher who can help you understand yourself and help you stay focused on what you want to achieve.
3. Develop daily habits of self-care; for example, practice stress reduction strategies that make you feel well, for example, five minutes of slow deep breathing four times a day – you can do this on the school bus, walking, or even during class. Other strategies include mindfulness, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation or a hobby that has a calming effect on you. Learn to spot the signs in yourself when you are feeling stressed, tired or overwhelmed and act on them. Understand your triggers - what makes you feel anxious or angry? Think about ways to distract yourself or extract yourself from difficult situations. This will enable you to become resilient, stay calm and cope in general.
4. Devise a daily and weekly routine and stick to it. Having structure in your life can reduce a lot of anxiety when trying to juggle conflicting demands on your time.
5. Relationships impact on our feelings and help us to stay connected with others. Make time to socialise and nurture your key friendships, including family members. Be creative in finding ways to spend quality time together. Appreciate all the people in your life and tell them so.

MANAGING YOUR SCHOOL OR COLLEGE WORK

9 ways that you can support your planning, organisation and memory



As you move into secondary school or college, there are more demands made upon you as a student with more teachers and subjects. These demands include being able to organise your work and plan your time successfully.

9 ways that you can support your planning, organisation and memory

1 Ask for help

Instead of leaving work undone and missing deadlines, let your parents/ carers and teachers know exactly where you are up to. It can be difficult, at times, to ask for help from teachers. It may be worth talking this through with your parents/ carers and rehearsing the first few lines of the conversation. Also, imagine a close friend was having difficulties with their work in school. What would you say to them? What advice would you offer and apply your advice to yourself.

2 Use the evening before to get ready

When you wake up in the morning and maybe still feel tired and have to shower, have breakfast and leave the house in time to catch a bus or train, it is not always the best time to organise yourself for the day ahead. Preparing yourself during the evening before will help you to start the day feeling less stressed and anxious as well. Create an evening routine, including time for homework, sorting out school uniform and packing your school bag. Write your routine down as a check list and hang on your bedroom wall to check each evening.

Do the same in the morning for a final check before you leave. Hang this near to the door.

Example of a morning checklist

- Shower
- Glasses/ contact lenses
- School uniform
- Breakfast
- Make lunch
- Pack bag
- Homework due in that day
- Equipment for each lesson, including books and stationary
- Pen
- Wallet/ purse
- Keys

3 Set reminders

Use your phone or PC to set reminders of homework to be done, equipment to pack in your school bag and set another timer 15 minutes before you leave the house in the morning as a final reminder.

4 Create your own office or workspace

Find a space at home that suits you. Remember to avoid as much distraction as you can.

Try to avoid the following if you can:

- Near windows or close curtains/blinds before you start working.
- Near to a heater.
- Away from a television or other computers/ screens or ensure, they are switched off before you start working.
- If you share a bedroom with a brother or sister, negotiate quiet times for school work or use headphones to reduce noise.
- Leave your phone in another room before you start working.

Ideas for a clutter-free workspace:

- Use boxes or drawers to store stationary and schoolbooks etc, so that your work surface can be clear at all times.
- Label folders clearly and use different colour labels for each subject.
- Alphabetise books and folders if they are on shelves.
- Create an admin folder for everything that doesn't belong in a specific subject folder.
- Schedule time once a week to tidy and sort your home office or workspace.
- Tidy up the workspace after each evening, so you start the next day again with a clear space.

Make sure that you know where you can find everything quickly. Constantly searching for resources or equipment can take time and can lead you to become distracted.

5 Set realistic goals for yourself

One of the main reasons for people not achieving goals is that they aren't set properly in the first place – they may be too much, take too long to achieve, or are too generalised. Setting realistic goals is a starting point and comes with many advantages.

Top tips include:

1. Clarity – it is important to establish goals that are meaningful and clear to you.
2. Motivation – having a choice of goals should increase your motivation for you to succeed. Any goal should include the ability to monitor your progress as you work towards it.
3. Start with small, achievable goals for example – saving money for a game. This can help you to work up to bigger and longer-term goals, such as an application for college or a job.
4. Look for opportunities to reward and reflect when tasks are completed. This will help you to stay positive and motivated.

6 Record what you must remember throughout the school

Writing down information that we need to remember as soon as it happens can help us to reduce stress and to plan and prioritise successfully. Use one list not several. This can be done either using a small notebook that you carry with you constantly or through exploring Apps on the App Store.

Remember to include:

- Dates or times when pieces of work have to be completed or handed in.
- Sections for school, extracurricular activities and other important information, for example, upcoming birthdays or social events.
- Try checkboxes or writing "finished" next to tasks that you have done.
- A Notes section so you can add extra information to a task as you go along.
- Decide upon a top three each day. The top three are those tasks that need to be done as soon as possible. Prioritising as you go along will help you to get started each day.

7 Keep a reading log

Secondary school will involve much more reading every day than in Primary School. This reading can be in several different subjects each day and will include subject specific vocabulary that is important to remember. It can help to use a reading log to remember the range of texts that have been read, and where you are up to when you return to reading. Use the sentence starters below as a guide and answer each one in short sentences whenever a piece of reading has been completed.

This will help with your memory:

1. This connects to my life because...
2. I wonder…
3. This made me think about…
4. I didn't understand… because…
5. I really liked… because…
6. The top three pieces of information that I have read are...

8 Reward yourself

Include in your planning and on your Reminder lists, time to do those activities that you enjoy. Remember to include spending time with your friends as well as exercise and games. This will help you to stay motivated overall. Small rewards, for example, spending twenty minutes gaming or watching television after working for two hours can also be an effective incentive.

9 Investigate assistive technology

Give yourself a project to look into Assistive technology. Share this project with a friend or family member. The number of programmes, adaptations and software designed to support young people with ADHD is increasing all the time. You owe it to yourself to find out what is out there, try a few of them and see what would help you. Start by looking at Speech to text or Text to speech software, Mindmapping programmes and organisational tools for your PC and phone.



MANAGING YOUR WORK IN CLASS



Classrooms can be busy, noisy places that can be very distracting and students with ADHD can often feel overwhelmed by this. There are some strategies you can use to help yourself:

Four tops tips for working successfully in classrooms

1 Talk to your teacher

Explain to your teacher what you might be finding challenging, for example, what is the best space for you to work in? What helps you to concentrate? Which activities help you to become more involved or remember more or concentrate for longer? Ask your teacher how you can work together so that you are prepared for each lesson, for example, your teacher may be able to remind you at the end of the lesson of tasks to be done or equipment to bring in for the next lesson or may be able to give you notes or pieces of writing for the next lesson in advance so that you can be fully prepared.

2 Calm yourself

If the classroom environment is overwhelming at times, how can you calm yourself? Let your teacher know what techniques work for you and work together to find opportunities within a lesson to use these techniques when you need to. Try Deep breathing. Breathe in deeply through your nose for four seconds, hold your breath for four seconds and then breathe out through your nose for four seconds. Have you heard of Grounding techniques? Take a few seconds to look around or out of the window, focus on specific details to slow your mind. Combine this with Deep breathing. When you're ready, turn back to your work.

3 What is the task? How to remember the "big picture"

Sometimes, we can get very caught up in the detail of something, for example, how do I spell this word or accurately draw this shape? We can then lose track of "the big picture" for example, "what am I supposed to be writing or what is the purpose of this diagram?"

Try these ideas to help us to keep the task in mind:

- Write the title at the top of each piece of work and follow this with a couple of bullet points to explain this. Keep looking back at these as you are working.
- Use a Graphic Organiser to write down your ideas and tick them off as you get to them. Ask your teacher to help you to find the right Graphic Organiser for you or create one yourself.
- Plan to review your work. Give yourself time to look back again at what you have done. This will help to correct any mistakes but also to check that you have not lost sight of the overall task.

4 Writing an essay

- Start by writing the title at the top of the page and place any notes or instructions from your teacher next to you on your desk.
- Using a blank document, write down any ideas or information that you feel will be relevant to the title. Write down every idea, there are no bad ideas at this stage. This will help you to get started.
- When you have finished this, take a minute. Read over your list slowly and look again at the title. If appropriate, talk to your teacher, a friend or family member if this is a homework piece. Ask their opinion and talk about what you have already included and why. Talking will help you to organise your thoughts.
- When you are satisfied that your list is ready, begin to consider how to structure this into a piece of writing. A Graphic Organiser will help at this stage. Think about which ideas should be at the beginning. Which ideas do you need to include to introduce the title and which ideas will make sense when you have written the introduction? Which are ideas and which are examples that explain the ideas? Include a symbol by each point in your list for either idea or example. Number your ideas and match the examples to each idea. You will then have the start of an essay plan which includes a lot of your ideas. Remember not every idea will be needed and you can delete some at this stage.
- When you have recorded your plan on a Graphic Organiser, begin to write. Remember to take breaks and include time to read over each section. If you are working on a screen, use Spell and Grammar Check to correct errors as you go.



Young people with ADHD often underachieve in exams because they may struggle with remembering information in high-pressure situations like exams. More so than your classmates, you need to get into the habit of regularly revising because you may struggle with remembering what you have learnt.

'It's not uncommon to find yourself remembering the answer to a question you couldn't recall while in the examination hall after you have finished the exam. This can be really frustrating when you have worked so hard to prepare for the exam.

'Performance Anxiety' affects all of us in high-pressure situations. This is why it's so important to practice daily stress reduction strategies to help you stay calm and in control in stressful situations.

Stress isn't always negative – we have this amazing capacity to turbo-charge our minds and bodies in stressful situations; it is part of our natural survival instinct and our ability to adapt to our environment. When the stress is every day, then we need to learn how to control how we react to it.

Here are 9 tips that will enable you to achieve your potential

1. Preparing for exams is an all-year-round activity – not something that you simply cram into the last few weeks of term. So start straight away – make mindmaps and revision posters that you can keep on your bedroom wall so you can do 'snapshot' revision every time you walk into your bedroom. Pictures, Posters, Bullet Point Posters, and small flashcards that will fit in your pocket that you can look at on the school bus or on 'revision walks', make it easier to remember information than pages of notes.

2. Create a revision timetable. Make sure that it is realistic and includes exercise, breaks, mealtimes and sleep. Include a daily mixture of subjects that you enjoy and feel confident about, as well as those that you find more challenging. This will help you to feel more confident overall.

3. Set targets for each subject and tick them off on the timetable when you have completed that section. Ticking them off the list will help you have some sense of progress and achievement.

4. Convert your class notes into revision notes. Number the points and colour code sections or blocks of information. Draw small pictures or create your own symbols next to each section which depicts what the notes say, this will help you to remember them. Use a highlighter pen and mark key areas with different colours.

   Ensure that your revision notes are short and to the point. Use one side of paper or post it notes which can be placed around your home for easy recognition.

5. Think about using mnemonics or rhymes to remember blocks of information and repeat them regularly. Repetition is the most important technique for helping you to remember. You can record the notes onto a voice memo on your phone and play them back on headphones when you are out walking or travelling to and from school.

6. In addition to revision notes, look at examples of graphic organisers on the internet. There are examples there that could help you to structure and organise blocks of information. A variety for different subjects may help you to recognise information quickly.

7. Work with a friend or family member to test you regularly. Aim to do this without looking at the revision notes. Somebody else will help to fill in the gaps of anything you have not remembered.

8. Agree with friends to all prepare a revision presentation on a different subject then teach one another. Stay on task and don't get into talking about something other than the curriculum exam topic. The best way to learn and remember anything is to teach someone else. Group revision like this adds an element of team support to help motivate you when you really don't feel like revising!

9. Get yourself into a 'learning state of mind'. Think for a moment about how much time you spend preparing to go out with friends at the weekend. How do you get yourself in the mood to socialise? Think about a little ritual you can develop that allows you 10 to 15 minutes to get into the mood for homework or revision. Go for a walk, prepare your workspace with all you need, switch off your phone, TV or other distractions, get yourself a drink, snack – and remember you don't always have to be sat down to revise.

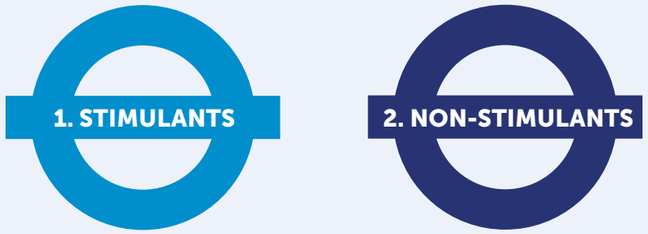


MEDICATION

Types of medication

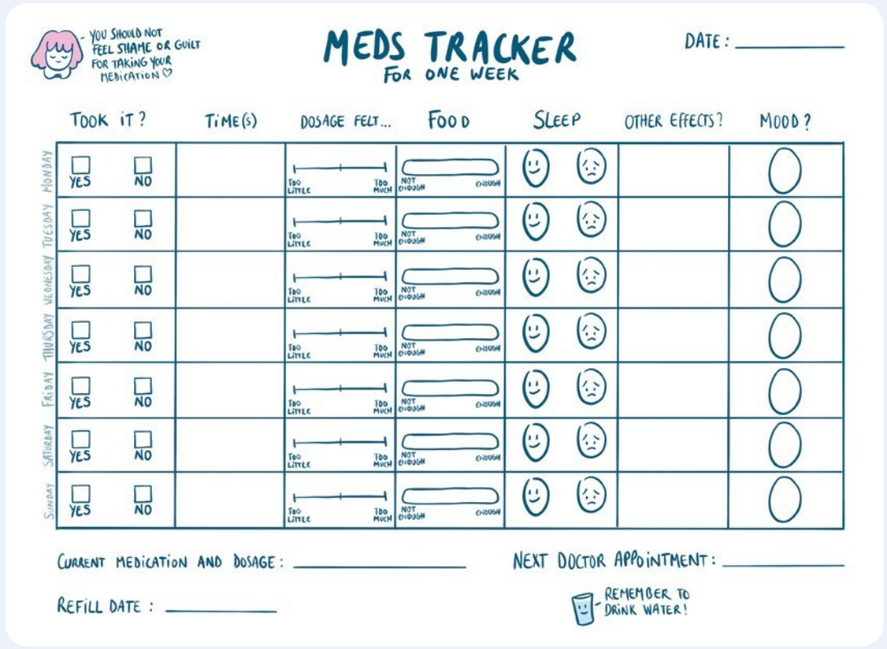
Many young people use medication as part of their 'ADHD Toolkit' of strategies to help them. The best advice here is to listen to what your doctor has to say and follow their guidance. You may decide that medication helps you and want to continue using it while you are at school, college, university or even when you start your career. Medication is only one tool – you need to be using the other strategies we have mentioned such as daily exercise, stress reduction strategies, good sleep routines and planning and organising tools to support you with managing your ADHD successfully. If you find yourself struggling, you can talk about your concerns with a teacher or adult you trust and with your doctor. How you manage your ADHD is a personal choice that has to be right for you. You are not alone, there are people around you such as parents, school counsellor, or family doctor you can talk to.

There are two types of medication:



Both types of medication are designed to help you with the challenges you experience with your ADHD. Your doctor will reassess your treatment regularly so be honest with them about how you are managing. Your feedback is very important because as you grow, they may need to make changes with medication. Remember they are there to help you so please don't miss your appointments with your doctor. If you do use medication, this 'Meds Tracker' may be helpful.

Print off extra copies of the Meds Tracker below if you need to.



Here are some amazing young people who were involved in creating this booklet for you.

A special thanks to some of our Neurodiversity Young Ambassadors who contributed to this booklet.



JOSH GRENVILLE-WOOD AGED 21

Josh has ADHD, Dyslexia and Autism. He struggled at school but loved sport – so much so, he gained confidence in being successful in golf. He is now ranked in the top 1000 World Professional golfers. Josh found his passion and became a Neurodiversity Young Ambassador with the ADHD Foundation in 2017.

MARCUS WILTON AGED 14

Marcus has ADHD. He struggled in primary school and was excluded at age 8. By age 11, Marcus had achieved one of the top 10 highest SATS scores in the UK. He is taking 10 GCSEs and has earned himself a National Citizenship Award for his work campaigning for better understanding of ADHD among teachers and family doctors. Marcus is a keen gamer and a computer genius.





J GRANGE AGED 19

J really struggled in school, was excluded and became depressed and disengaged with his education. Eventually discovering he had ADHD at age 13, J reached a turning point in his life. J is a talented artist and rapper with two single releases to his credit and a regular speaker at schools and at conferences. Like all our young Ambassadors – 'The Umbrella Gang' as they like to call themselves, J is passionate about educating other young people about living successfully with ADHD. J believes ADHD is the power behind his creativity as an artist.

CHARLOTTE DOWSON AGED 17



Charlotte struggled through school, getting into trouble for constantly talking and walking around the classroom. Charlotte was frequently frustrated because her schoolteachers thought she just was not trying hard enough and her grades were below what they expected of her. That might sound familiar to you?

Charlotte also struggled at the thought she had 'something wrong with her'. Charlotte realised that there was nothing 'wrong' with her; she just learned differently from a lot of her classmates. Soon Charlotte learned how to manage her ADHD in a way that worked best for her and learned different learning strategies to help her through school. Drama and dance were her favourite subjects. Charlotte joined a local theatre group, attended dance classes and won a scholarship to a famous performing arts school at age 16. Charlotte now has several acting performances and even a television commercial to her credit and plans to study acting at University.

SIENA CASTELLON AGED 18



Siena has ADHD, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia and Autism. Siena is the founder of 'Neurodiversity Celebration Week'. Since 2016, thousands of schools have taken part and the celebration has now spread across the globe involving thousands of schools, universities, and businesses. Siena has won several awards for her work and has recently been appointed a UNESCO Ambassador. Siena struggled through school and experienced bullying because she was different, Siena also found some curriculum subjects difficult because of her learning differences. Her school were reluctant to enter her for her exams as they thought she would fail. Siena achieved 3 A* Grades at A Level and has won a place at the prestigious Harvard University in the USA.

CATHERINE MILLAN



Catherine has ADHD and Dyslexia. Catherine was a Young Ambassador for the ADHD Foundation when she was a teenager. Having completed her Degree in Education and completed her postgraduate Master's Degree in Third Sector and Volunteer Management at the ADHD Foundation, she is now working at Manchester University as their Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator.

ANDY SMITH AGED 21



Andy has autism and works as the Neurodiversity Inclusion Officer for Bury Council in Greater Manchester. Andy is a tireless campaigner for improving understanding of what life is like for young people with neurodiverse minds such as ADHD, Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia and Tourette's syndrome. He is also one of the authors of The Adventures of the Neurodiversity Umbrella Gang - a series of six educational illustrated comics written by neurodiverse young people for neurodiverse young people.

THANK YOU

We hope you have found this booklet helpful. You can also have the booklet read back to you by viewing this electronically on the following website links:

www.adhdfoundation.org.uk

www.borntobeADHD.co.uk

www.healthylondon.org/cyp-adhd-resources

Healthy London Partnership



ADHD Foundation
The Neurodiversity Charity