



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND

Provincial
ADHD Program

What do you know about ADHD?



How can you help?

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared by the Adult ADHD Clinic at the UPEI Health and Wellness Centre to provide education on Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) for family members and friends of individuals with ADHD. Our hope is that this information will benefit you by giving you a greater understanding of how people with ADHD think and act and provide you with ideas for how you can support your loved one with ADHD.



DEFINING ADHD

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder. In other words, it is a condition that affects how the brain functions.



ADHD is a chronic, lifelong disorder that is present from childhood into adulthood, so it can require ongoing monitoring and treatment.

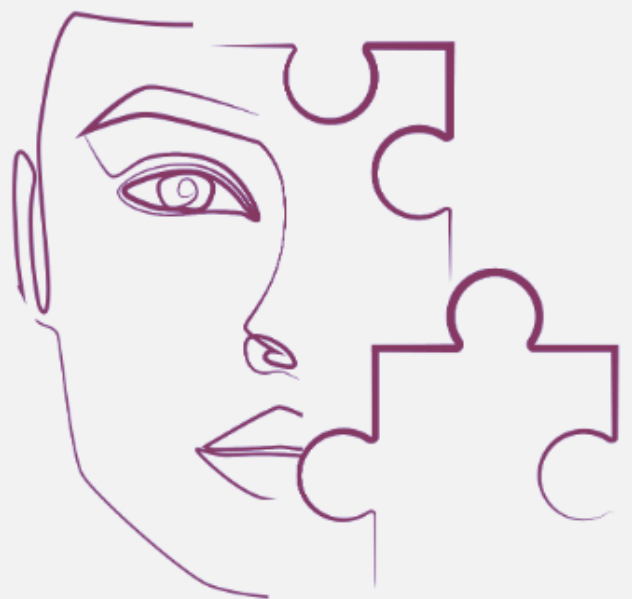
ADHD AND ADULTS

ADHD is often seen in early childhood, however it is not always diagnosed at that time.

50% of individuals diagnosed with ADHD in childhood continue to have significant and impairing symptoms in adulthood.

ADHD affects adults in every area of their lives including:

- Work
- School
- Relationships
- Social Life
- Personal Habits
- Decision Making
- Emotions



MYTHS ABOUT ADHD

ADHD is Overdiagnosed.

- FALSE - Over the past thirty years, the prevalence of ADHD has remained consistent.

ADHD is not Real.

- FALSE - It is a known brain developmental disorder.

Allergies, Sugar and Food Additives Cause ADHD.

- FALSE - There is no evidence that these factors cause ADHD.

ADHD is related to laziness or a lack of intelligence.

- FALSE - Individuals with ADHD are able to hyperfocus on activities they find enjoyable. If they can't concentrate on other things, people might assume they don't care.

Everyone has ADHD.

- FALSE - ADHD symptoms, such as difficulty focusing, can affect anyone, but they are more severe and persistent in individuals with ADHD and can be dangerous to their health.

TYPES OF ADHD

Inattentive

Hyperactive/Impulsive

Combined

INATTENTIVE SYMPTOMS

- Careless mistakes
- Trouble focusing
- Difficulty listening
- Trouble following instructions
- Unorganized
- Avoid mentally taxing activities
- Lose items
- Distracted by surroundings
- Forgetful while performing daily tasks



HYPERACTIVE/IMPULSIVE SYMPTOMS

- Fidgets
- Difficulty remaining in seat
- Moves excessively
- Difficulty doing quiet activities
- Constantly on the go
- Talks excessively
- Blurts out the answers
- Difficulty waiting turn
- Interrupts



M S W C K Z E N I T
F A B J X U O D L P R V
H Q Y

DIAGNOSIS

When considering diagnosis there is no
one test for ADHD.



Primary care providers will use a clinical
interview with standardized assessment
measures to diagnose.

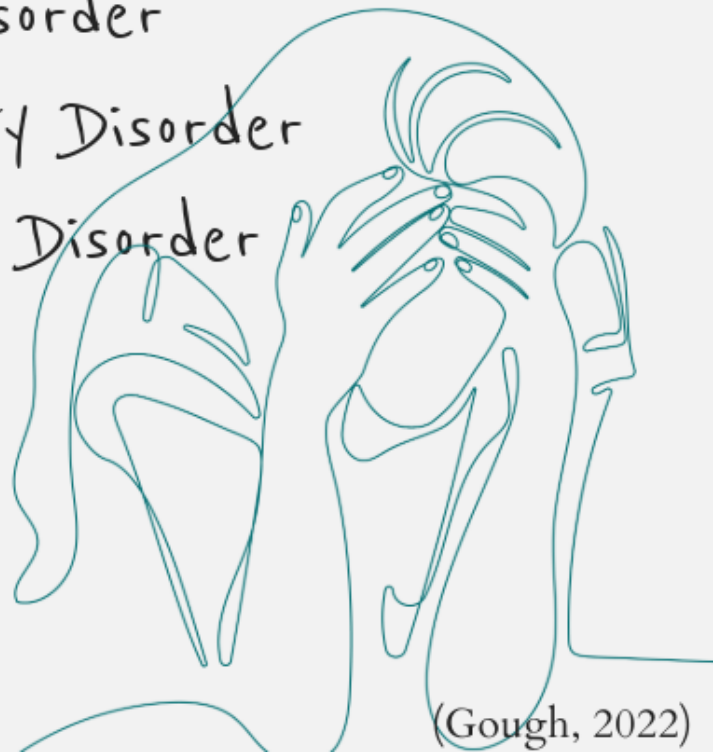
COEXISTING CONDITIONS

85%

of adults with ADHD have a coexisting condition.

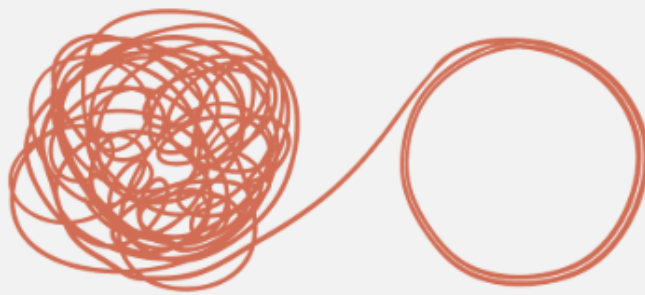
This could include the following:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Learning Disabilities
- Substance Use Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- And More...



TREATMENTS

Treatments of ADHD include psychosocial treatments and medications.



Which one is better? Medications and psychosocial treatments are best used together to treat ADHD.

PSYCHOSOCIAL TREATMENTS

What can these include?

- Learning about ADHD.
- Lifestyle changes including the following:
 - Ways one can modify school, work, home and relationships.
 - Ways one can modify thoughts, speaking and behavior.
- Programs that teach about:
 - Social and executive functioning skills
 - Psychotherapy
 - Mindfulness



MEDICATIONS

Medications should target the impairing symptoms (i.e., difficulty focusing).

Side effects of these medications usually occur when starting or changing a medication but often fade after consistently taking the same dose for a few weeks.

Benefits of ADHD medication include the following:

- Decreased hyperactivity
- Improved focus
- Improved self-regulation
- Decreased impulsivity



A DAY IN THE LIFE LIVING WITH ADHD

PART 1

Calling someone
and hoping they
won't answer
your call.

Having the
fuel tank
constantly on
"Empty"
because you
forgot to fill
the tank
AGAIN.

Regretting that
you made plans
after work.

Constantly
forgetting the
reason why you
entered a room.

Boiling the
water for
your tea for
the 7th
time.

Buying a new
phone charger
because you lost
yours AGAIN.

(Brown, 2023)

A DAY IN THE LIFE LIVING WITH ADHD

PART 2

Wondering if you forgot to take your ADHD medication.

Working late because you didn't get anything done all day.

Losing track of what you were doing in the first place.

Finding one dirty spot in your home and doing a whole deep clean.

Forgetting to bring the lunch you made at home.

Having to return home because you forgot your wallet
AGAIN.

(Brown, 2023)

WHAT IS COACHING?

ADHD Coaching consists of 3 Modules (10-12 sessions) in which the person with ADHD will build effective skills. These skills can be applied to their daily lives where ADHD symptoms often interfere.

Module 1 Organization and Planning

Module 2 Coping with Distractibility

Module 3 Adaptive Thinking



MODULE 1

Organization and Planning

Goal of these five sessions:

- Establish systems for organizing and planning. This includes a calendar and a task list.
- Use the calendar and task lists EVERY day.
 - Learn problem solving skills.
- Learn to break down large, unmanageable tasks into smaller tasks.
 - Learn Organizational skills.

MODULE 2

Coping with Distractibility

Goal of these two sessions:

- Acquire skills to cope with distractions.
- Learn how long one's attention span is. Then break tasks down, so they will fit that time frame.
- Learn a skill called distractibility delay. This skill includes writing down distractions, so they will not be forgotten but remaining focused on the task at hand.
- Learn to modify one's environment, so that tasks can be done more efficiently.

MODULE 3

Adaptive Thinking

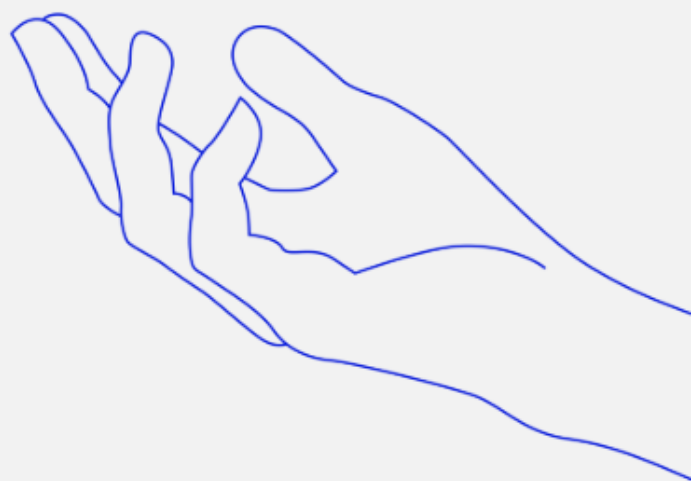
Goal of these three sessions:

- Learn to think about a task more flexibly.
- Learn to recognize one's thoughts and how those relate to other thoughts or one's mood.
- Determine the reason for thoughts and then change the way one thinks about the task.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Family and friends have the ability to provide both support and encouragement throughout coaching.



- Support can be shown in acceptable ways that both you and your loved one with ADHD agree upon together.
- It is important to find the balance between negative and positive social interactions with one another. Negative interactions are not beneficial towards your loved one obtaining their goals in coaching.

IDEAS FOR SUPPORT

PART 1

Set a weekly meeting:

- An agreed upon meeting can avoid negative social interactions. i.e., nagging
- Talk to your loved one about what they can add to their organizational systems.
- Discuss how coaching is going.
- Ask how you can support.

Provide POSITIVE feedback

Better educate yourself on ADHD:

- Resources can be found on the UPEI website:
<https://www.upei.ca/adhd-clinic/resources>

Communicate and Listen to your loved one:

- Individuals with ADHD can have difficulty processing what others are saying.
- Ensure the lines of communication are open.
- Practice active listening.



IDEAS FOR SUPPORT

PART 2

Reflect on your behaviors:

- Are there things that you do that might make your loved one's symptoms more difficult for them to manage?

Establish a routine:

- Having a routine can be very beneficial for those with ADHD.
- Discuss what kind of routines may be added into your family's week.

Practice self-care:

- Supporting a loved one with ADHD may become overwhelming, tiring, or frustrating at times.
- Take time for yourself.
- Enjoy your hobbies.
- Join a support group. Find information on the ADHD PEI website:

<https://www.adhdpei.ca/>

(Healthline Media, 2021)





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