

ADHD in ADULTS

Updated June 2018



The Mecca of Black Wellness



Did you know that adults can have ADHD? Do you seem to have a difficult time sitting still or paying attention? Do you frequently misplace your keys, phone, or credit cards? Do you have to double check that you have completed certain things? Is it difficult for you to manage your time? Do you have a hard time meeting your work deadlines? Do you frequently interrupt others or have a difficult time being quiet? Are you losing attention even reading this fact sheet? If you have noticed a consistent display of extremely active, inattentive, and/or impulsive behaviors, it is possible that you have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

ADHD is not a choice. ADHD is a neurobiological disorder, which is often first diagnosed during childhood, but also impacts many adolescents and adults. Having ADHD does not mean that you are not smart. It is not caused by a poor diet, too much sugar, or the use of too much technology although those things can increase the severity of the ADHD symptoms. Some adults with ADHD display primarily inattentive behaviors, while others display more hyperactive and impulsive behaviors, and yet others display behaviors that are a combination of the two so ADHD can look different in different people. There has been limited attention given to adult ADHD which can result in underdiagnosis. What is consistent with ADHD, is that the concerning behaviors usually begin before the age of twelve. In adults, diagnosis requires a thorough history and accurate self-report. As a result of ADHD, academic or work performance and relationships with friends and family are often negatively impacted.

As people with ADHD age, hyperactive symptoms tend to decrease while the inattentive and poor concentration remains. Substance abuse tends to increase, specifically in marijuana and high levels of caffeine. Some providers are reluctant to diagnosis adults with ADHD because of the high rate of misuse of medications to treat ADHD. Inattentive symptoms tend to go undiagnosed in children so if an adult is primarily inattentive ADHD type, then they are also more likely to be undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. These issues make it critical for an evaluation for ADHD to be completed by a culturally competent provider skilled in assessment in adult ADHD.

There Are Three Types Of ADHD:

1. ADHD, Inattentive Type

Common Inattentive Symptoms:

- Failure to attend closely to details or frequently makes careless mistakes
- Difficulty paying attention
- Failure to follow instructions
- Does not seem to listen when being spoken to (e.g. daydreams often)
- Difficulty organizing tasks and activities or starts tasks but doesn't finish them
- Loses things easily
- Gets distracted easily
- Difficulty completing tasks that require a lot of mental effort
- Forgets things often

2. ADHD, Hyperactive Type

Common Hyperactive Symptoms:

- Fidgets frequently (e.g. taps foot or hand frequently) or has a difficult time sitting still
- Talks excessively
- Has trouble remaining seated when expected (e.g. in a business meeting)
- Feels restless
- Interrupts others often
- Difficulty participating in activities quietly
- Difficult time waiting for your turn (e.g. standing in line)

3. ADHD, Combined Type: includes a combination of the Inattentive and Hyperactive/Impulsive Types described above.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Use your phone to help you stay on schedule by setting reminders or creating checklists of things that you need to accomplish.
- Use phone apps developed for people with ADHD. Some helpful apps are Forest-Stay Focused, Routinist (helps to stay on schedule and create to-do lists), ADD Magazine (toolkit).
- Try to structure your environment to assist you with things that you routinely forget to do. For example, if you frequently misplace your keys, consider placing a key ring by your door and consistently place them there when you come in the door.
- If sitting still is a challenge at school or work, if possible, consider investing in a stability ball instead of sitting in a standard chair.
- If you seem to have an excessive amount of energy, try to increase your amount of physical activity by playing a sport or going to the gym.
- Try mindfulness and yoga which have been shown to be helpful in reducing ADHD symptom severity.

**“Don’t allow
your problems
to define you.
Every challenge
provides an
opportunity for
growth”**

**~ Dr. Dana
Cunningham**

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR ADHD

- Contact your primary care doctor or healthcare provider, to discuss your current symptoms and request a complete medical evaluation.
- Seek a mental health provider who specializes in behavior therapy. Through behavior therapy, you can get assistance with developing a plan to manage your symptoms, and help you reduce your feelings of stress.
- Participate in biofeedback.
- You will need to obtain a thorough psychiatric evaluation from a licensed mental health provider and you may need to follow up with a psychiatrist for medication management if your symptoms do not improve significantly through behavior therapy alone.
- Consider joining a support group for adults with ADHD. You will have an opportunity to get support, learn from others, and develop some helpful strategies to help manage the ADHD symptoms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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RESOURCES

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD) provides information and support for adults and children with ADHD, including support groups and online support. Go to <http://www.help4adhd.org/> or call 1-800-233-4050

Additude Mag

<https://additude.mag.com> has a wealth of resources for families impacted by ADHD including information about symptoms and effective treatment options.

Help Guide

Some tips to help adults manage ADHD are available at <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/add-adhd/managing-adult-adhd-attention-deficit-disorder.htm>

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