

Strengths?

Impulsive?

Naughty?

Who's to blame?

Disorder?

# ADHD?

Information for Parents,  
Carers and Teachers

Lazy?

Anti-social?

Anxious?

Hyperactive?

Never going to change?

Troublesome?

Weaknesses?

Inattentive?

Oppositional?

Emotional?

Symptoms?

**Psychology**  
Services Limited

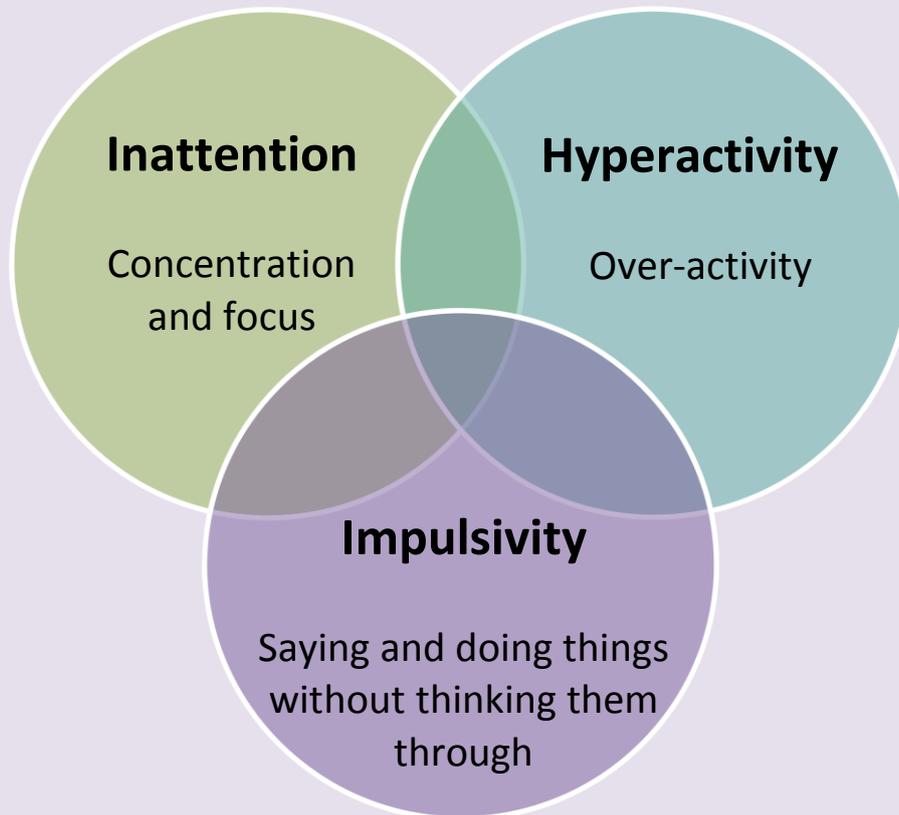
[www.psychology-services.uk.com](http://www.psychology-services.uk.com)

Impairments?

## WHAT IS ADHD?

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition which changes the way that a child thinks and behaves. It can affect their learning, behaviour and relationships with others.

Young people with ADHD often have difficulties in 3 main areas:



## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ADHD?

Young people with ADHD are often forgetful and disorganised, they struggle with waiting, they daydream, and they start things but do not finish them. They are often very active and find it difficult to play or work quietly or remain seated. They act without thinking and they don't think through the consequences of their behaviour. They can be reckless as they don't see danger.

These problems are more marked compared with their peers and have been present since they were young children in junior school. They occur across a variety of settings, at home, in school and in the community.

## WHAT CAUSES ADHD?

We don't know yet exactly what causes ADHD but it's understood to be a genetic condition, meaning that it often runs in families.

There appears to be reduced amounts of a chemical neurotransmitter called *dopamine* in the brains of people with ADHD. Dopamine is responsible for attention, learning, responding to rewards and motor control.

Not everyone with a genetic predisposition will actually develop ADHD. This is because the environment also influences how a child develops. It is recognised that some *risk factors* make ADHD more likely to occur in children with a genetic vulnerability. These risk factors include things that happened in pregnancy and during birth.

The important thing to know is that ADHD seems to be caused by both genetic and environmental factors.  
No one is to blame.

## FOR HOW LONG WILL THE CHILD HAVE ADHD?

For many young people symptoms of ADHD will improve as they get older. Some young people will have symptoms that persist into adulthood. Some may continue to be inattentive but become less hyperactive and impulsive

## WHAT OTHER PROBLEMS MIGHT THEY HAVE?

Often there are other conditions that occur alongside ADHD. These include oppositional defiance disorder, conduct disorder, mood and anxiety disorders, autism spectrum disorder, and tics disorder.

Young people with ADHD may also develop low self-esteem. If this affects their behaviour in any way (e.g. by avoiding or withdrawing from activities they usually enjoy or by expressing negative thoughts and feelings) you should consult your doctor.

You might notice the child struggles to keep up in school. This is because they have poor concentration and listening skills, difficulty remaining seated, difficulty with waiting, and poor impulse control. These behaviours sometimes lead them to get into trouble at school. They are forgetful and disorganised because of their symptoms. They are not necessarily being lazy or oppositional.

Some young people with ADHD have sleep problems due to their hyperactivity and inability to 'switch off'. Strategies for improving sleep hygiene are provided at [www.psychology-services.uk.com/resources](http://www.psychology-services.uk.com/resources).

They have difficulty managing their emotions and their behaviour. They may have a low tolerance for frustration and seem excessively emotional (up and down) or reactive. This may lead them to get into trouble at school or in the community

Sometimes young people with ADHD find it more difficult to get along with people. They may find it easy to make friends, but find it difficult to keep friends.

Young people with ADHD also have positive qualities. They can be creative and funny. They often have unique and innovative ideas. They may be good at sports. They may be adventurous and eager to try out novel activities and gain new experiences.

## HOW DOES ADHD GET BETTER?

There is no cure for ADHD or any known way of preventing it. However, there are a number of recommended strategies that support young people with ADHD.

**Parenting and behaviour management** - Parents/carers can learn methods to help shape and manage the child's behaviour, such as using rewards and routines.

**Behaviour management and classroom interventions in school** - Teachers can put additional supports in school to help manage behaviour and enhance learning skills.

**Adaptations to the environment** – You can change things around the child to optimise successful skills acquisition and coping behaviours.

**Diet** - There is some evidence that diet and supplements help ADHD, specifically the use of omega supplements.

**Cognitive behaviour therapy** - This helps the child to alter the ways they think and behave through the acquisition of adaptive coping strategies.

**Medication** – For severe symptoms, young people may be prescribed medication to help them to focus better and improve self-control. This works by changing the chemicals in the brain to help them to think more clearly and feel calmer.

**Education** – It helps for the child to know the facts about ADHD and learn how they can help themselves. An information sheet for children can be found at: [www.psychology-services.uk.com/resources](http://www.psychology-services.uk.com/resources).

## WHO CAN I TALK TO ABOUT IT?

Suggested points of contact include:

- General Practitioner (GP)
- A specialist in ADHD such as a Clinical Psychologist or Psychiatrist
- Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) at school

It is important that parents/carers and teachers have a good line of communication in order to maximise support for the child. Lots of parents/carers and teachers find that using a 'Home School Diary' is an efficient way to share information between them.

It can be hard looking after a child with ADHD and it is not uncommon for parents/carers and teachers to feel overwhelmed. It is important to take care of yourself, gain support from friends, family and colleagues, and ensure you schedule 'me time' into your day.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

To learn about specific strategies that can be implemented by parents/carers and teachers, go to 'Helping Children with ADHD: A CBT Guide for Practitioners, Parents, Carers and Teachers' by Susan Young and Jade Smith (2016; Chichester, John Wiley & Sons).

The current national guidance for ADHD can be found by searching for ADHD on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence website ([www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)).

### Useful Websites:

[www.psychology-services.uk.com](http://www.psychology-services.uk.com) – Information, resources, training and events

[www.ukadhd.com](http://www.ukadhd.com) – Information, resources, local support and events.

[www.livingwithADHD.co.uk](http://www.livingwithADHD.co.uk) – Information, apps and videos.

[www.ADHDtogether.com](http://www.ADHDtogether.com) – Information, advice and resources.

Dr Jade Smith  
&  
Professor Susan Young



[www.psychology-services.uk.com](http://www.psychology-services.uk.com)