ADHD

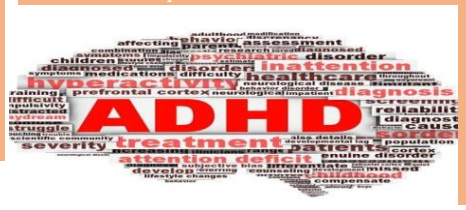
Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

WHAT IS ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a neurobehavioral disorder affecting a person's behaviour, creating great difficulty to function in every day environments. Currently it is unknown what causes ADHD however it is recognised as a disorder which is accompanied by several symptoms. Any adult or child can be affected by ADHD and it is a disorder affecting people globally. ADHD can occur at any time in a person's life. Over time ADHD has become a known disorder and is becoming better understood by professionals (Hammerness, 2009). Children with ADHD can sometimes have other disorders such as anxiety, depression or other learning difficulties (Welsh Assembly Government). ADHD is a disorder which is often ignored by people and not believed to be a 'true' disorder. Over the last few years professionals are acknowledging the struggles for learners with ADHD and are slowly altering perceptions (Kakourus, E and Maniadki, K., 2017).

SYMPTOMS, DIAGNOSIS, CHALLENGES

Parents and Practitioners can often identify children with additional learning needs, ADHD being one of them. Children with ADHD often have noticeable tells of the disorder before the age of 6. According to NHS.uk (2021) there is a set of strict criteria when diagnosing children with ADHD. Children must have 6 or more symptoms of inattentiveness or hyperactivity. If a child has 6 or more of the symptoms for longer than a 6-month period, they will be referred to a specialist for formal assessments. To be diagnosed children will be observed, assessed and evaluated (Chandler, 2010). Children who have ADHD often underachieve in education. This will often lead to emotional and behavioural distress which can affect their interpersonal skills, preventing them from forming a true bond with loved ones, peers and teachers International Journal of Developmental and Educational Psychology (2020). Like many additional learning needs, ADHD comes with many challenges inside and outside of school. Often children with the diagnosis are labelled as 'aggressive' or 'annoying' by their peers. Children often face larger amounts of social rejection compared to other children with additional learning needs when applying for jobs, meeting new people or in the classroom (Hamilton, A. and Metzger, L., 2021). Teachers will often label children with ADHD as troublesome, violent or lazy. Often, parents will not allow their children to be friends with another child who has been diagnosed with ADHD due to these stigmas. The main symptoms of ADHD often lead to children underachieving in education due to stigmatisation and environments not being adapted to meeting the child's needs (D.A. Moore et al, 2017). Children with ADHD also find focusing in lessons and keeping their attention for long periods of time a challenge which in result may display problemed behaviours or poor academic performance. Another challenge for children with ADHD is that there is not many teachers with the appropriate strategies to assist learners with the disorder, leading to education being more stressful for children which loses their focus even quicker.



SUPPORTING FAMILES AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH ADHD IN EDUCATION

Supporting Families-A diagnosis of an additional learning need can affect a child's family just as much as it affects the child. While children with ADHD are stigmatised, often the parents are too. Raising a child with additional learning needs such as ADHD can be isolating and confusing while they try to support their child to the best of their ability. Most of the time when parents advocate for their child and their needs in education, they are labelled as 'being difficult'. Often, parents have had to battle with many different methods of soothing their child once they are triggered and advocating to the education professionals will help a child to feel at ease in these environments. Ignoring these demands can be detrimental to a child's progression (Parenta, 2022).

Supporting children- A person has an additional learning need or ALN if there is a learning difficulty or disability of medical conditions or otherwise (Welsh Government, 2021). ADHD today is recognised in schools as a disorder The education systems today play a very important role for children with ADHD. The Uk National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) clinical practice encourages teachers who have received training about ADHD should be providing behavioural interventions to help young children with ADHD (DuPaul, G and Stoner, G., 2014). The Equality Act 2010 states that schools must make reasonable adjustments so all children can access facilities and services. The Act also applies to independent schools, maintained and non-maintained settings. It is crucial to remember that the needs of the child are paramount when planning interventions for children with additional learning needs such as ADHD (DuPaul, G and Stoner, G., 2014). A child with an ADHD diagnosis will have a treatment plan discussed with parents, doctors and most of the time the school or nursery too. Behavioural classroom management strengthens positive behaviours and organisational training can help children with their time management and planning. Allowing children to use things such as fidget devices allows children to move without disrupting those around them. Langberg et al (2011) found that using things called 'movement breaks' and 'little things to get the children up' helped to focus children with ADHD in lessons. This agrees with the idea that movement is a great way to manage the children who are hyperactive. While children with ADHD are often labelled and stigmatised it can also be a positive label as teachers can recognise that the child is not being difficult, and a different approach is needed to grasp their focus and attention allowing them to engage in lessons, not hindering their learning experience (D.A. Moore et al, 2017).

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