



National Alliance on Mental Illness
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Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

What is ADHD?

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. The most commonly diagnosed behavior disorder in young people, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that ADHD affects an estimated 9 percent of children aged 3-17 and 2-4 percent of adults.

Although ADHD has its onset and is usually diagnosed in childhood, it is not a disorder limited to children—ADHD often persists into adolescence and adulthood and is frequently not diagnosed until later years.

Symptoms, Causes and Diagnosis?

There are actually thought to be three different types of ADHD, each with different symptoms: predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive/impulsive and combined. Diagnosing ADHD requires a comprehensive evaluation and cannot be done with one single test.

Treatment, Services and Support

A key aspect of treating ADHD is taking a “multimodal” approach. This means utilizing multiple methods for treatment including medical, educational, behavioral and psychological.

Living With ADHD

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. The most commonly diagnosed behavior disorder in young people, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that ADHD affects an estimated 2-4 percent of adults. ADHD has a strong genetic component and runs in families; therefore, it is not uncommon for a parent of a child with ADHD to begin to recognize their own symptoms as they engage in supporting their child’s treatment process.

Many of the strategies that help youth with ADHD, including structure, organizational tips and coaching as well as medication interventions, are helpful for adults living with ADHD. Developing an individualized approach to your treatment, one that focuses on your strengths and circumstances, is just as critical for you as an adult as it is for children.