

ADHD in Education

Information and supportive strategies

An overview

Everybody with ADHD has different strengths and difficulties which need to be considered on an individual basis. For many people with ADHD, minor adjustments in education can make a significant difference and enable them to fulfil their potential.

Strengths of ADHD within the education setting

- Spontaneity, flexibility and willingness to take risks
- Creative ideas – thinking ‘outside the box’
- Enthusiasm with relentless energy
- Ability to hyperfocus on topics with the potential for excellent results by way of concerted effort
- Motivated by short term deadlines – working in sprints rather than marathons
- Do well in fast paced environments due to high levels of stimulation

Legalities

All education providers have a legal responsibility to attempt to remove the barriers faced by students as a result of their disability. ADHD is included as a disability under the 2010 Equality Act and as such, reasonable adjustments should be implemented to support them to fulfil their expectations. The following strategies are just some examples of reasonable adjustments that are recommended. Most of these will cost little or nothing to implement. Visit gov.uk for further information about the Equality Act

Web www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Supportive strategies

Modifications to the studying environment

- Include visual prompts (e.g., wall charts for routines, timetables, checklists, post it notes)
- Use alarms and timers
- Reduce distractions by using headphones, noise-cancelling earphones or ear plugs. You may find that you work best with some level of background noise but this should not be overbearing. Non-lyrical (i.e., classical music / white noise) can be helpful
- Make use of an independent working space, either at home or in a library with fewer external distractions
- Work flexibly (e.g., at home, in the library, outdoors) for novelty and to maximise motivation
- Place a sign on your study door (e.g., ‘do not disturb’, ‘please come back later’)
- Consider front-row or aisle seating for classes to minimise distraction and allow for fidgeting / breaks if needed

- Make timetables to meet your needs and think about what time of day you are most productive (i.e., when symptoms are less disruptive or when medication [if prescribed] works best).

Modifications to communication about study time and assignments

Those supporting you with your studies (e.g., supervisors, personal tutors) should:

- Provide clear information about expected outcomes and time frame by which to complete tasks. It may be useful to provide instructions in writing and / or allow time to make notes
- Allow extra time to complete assignments if necessary
- Provide structure to tasks which may include breaking down a task into bitesize chunks with time targets for each small task
- Provide support with prioritising workload according to deadlines

Reasonable adjustments for exams

- Complete the exam in smaller room away from other students
- Make use of short movement breaks if permitted / necessary
- Use a computer. People with ADHD often struggle to organise their thoughts or write in an organised way, so typing may assist with this
- If permitted, make use of extra time. It may take longer than average for you to process verbal or written information, organise your thoughts, plan a response, and record them

Student learning support services

Consider a referral to student support or learning support services for specialist advice and educational help.

Self-compassion and understanding

Often the best way to help yourself is to develop an understanding of ADHD and the difficulties it might cause. Understanding your own barriers and how you best work is essential. Talking to your supervisor / mentor / tutor / student support service needs to be more than a one-off conversation. Try to build a relationship where you feel you can trust them, and you can both talk about any concerns. For example, you could arrange a monthly meeting to talk about how your ADHD is affecting you, and review any reasonable adjustments or strategies that have been implemented.

A few extra tips

- We encourage you to review this list and highlight which strategies may be helpful
- Try to identify a suitable person to help you and go through the list with them
- If you have been diagnosed / treated by our service, we can provide you with a reasonable adjustments letter for your educational provider which outlines the information contained in this leaflet

Please also see our information leaflets on '*strategies to support inattention*' and '*hyperactivity and impulsivity*' for additional ideas for your consideration.

Remember how well you are doing to have come this far. Be kind to yourself and reward yourself for your successes, no matter how small.

