

Strategies for Teaching and Learning

Pupil profiling - Understand your pupils. Meet with parents and the child, and talk about successes and difficulties. Helping the child to understand that they have been heard and what will be in place for them will help to alleviate anxiety and foster self belief. Create a pupil passport so evidence of this discussion can be seen

Environment - Visual aids to support the routine and organisational skills. Considered seating in a least distracting part of the classroom, near supportive peers who are not likely to distract but encourage attention. Small group work in a quiet area. Provide activity breaks and a change for movement, DO NOT take away break times as a punishment.

Work - Chunk assignments into achievable tasks, use visual aids such as task management boards to support this or whole class approach have small steps highlighted to the whole class. Reward achievements immediately and frequently to keep engagement levels up. Check they have understood verbal instructions. Use technology to record work. Remind children to visualize when trying to remember. Value their unique skills and verbalise them to raise self esteem. 'you are amazing at starting project you can be our leader'. Provide positive feedback on 1:1 settings. Agree a signal where children can request support.

Sensory Regulation/Thinking Tools - Availability of sensory regulation tools during lessons to aid attention and concentration—Incorporate rules for appropriate use.

Sensory Circuits - Include sensory circuits into the school timetable at the start of the day and after lunch to support pupils readiness for learning. Caution: complete sensory observation has taken place beforehand to ensure the right activities are chosen for the required stimulation.

Friendships - Support positive relationships and social skills.

Some children with ADHD will be supported with medication . This can take a while to get the right type and dosage.* It normally only supports in one area of deficit so other types of support need to be considered to compliment the medication.

This requires careful medical support and monitoring. Schools can support by observing changes in presentation when medication is used and dosages altered.

The Whole School:

- ◆ A culture of celebrating differences
- ◆ Listening to the voices of children and their parents in order to plan in a meaningful way
- ◆ Clear concise communication
- ◆ Commitment from all on how to minimize and manage presenting behaviours (even if undiagnosed)
- ◆ Understanding and empathic culture
- ◆ Flexibility to teach in an innovative style, and identify personalised strategies for pupils
- ◆ Adults to understand that behaviour is communication and that ADHD is a medical debilitating condition .

Children with ADHD symptoms are blessed with a number of skills, but struggle to show these in our society. They need support in understanding their brilliance and how best to use these benefits appropriately. Without the guidance and teaching schools are able to provide, they are vulnerable to mis-use and making the wrong decisions in order to satisfy their craving for excitement.

'Among the members of the tribes of Northern Canada' these adaptive characteristics - constantly scanning the environment, quick decisions making (impulsiveness), and a willingness to take risks- contribute every year to the tribes survival. These same behaviours, however, often make it difficult for tribal children to succeed in Western schools when we try and impose out Western curriculum on them' Will Krynen M.D. (1985) cited in A Hunter in a Farmer's World

References

Hartman. T (2019), *ADHD A Hunter in a Farmer's World*. Vermont USA: Healing Arts Press.

Bignall. S. (2018), *Autism, Asperger's & ADHD: What You Need to Know. A Guide for Parents, Students and other Professionals*. Nottingham: MyChild Services Publishing.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-adhd/>



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ADHD



'I am not inattentive...you are just boring!'

(ADHD adult, cited in A Hunter in a Farmer's World)

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ADHD? What is it?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

A Neurological disorder presenting as persistent difficulties in more than one setting; consequently affecting the wider implications for accessing education and society.

The 3 Presentations of ADHD

ADHD mainly Inattention Difficulties:

- Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes
- Has difficulty sustaining attention
- Does not appear to listen
- Struggles to follow through with instructions
- Has difficulty with organization
- Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring sustained mental effort
- Loses things
- Is easily distracted
- Is forgetful in daily activities

ADHD mainly Hyperactivity /Impulsive Difficulties:

- Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in chair
- Has difficulty remaining seated
- Runs about or climbs excessively in children; extreme restlessness in adults
- Difficulty engaging in activities quietly
- Acts as if driven by a motor;
- Talks excessively
- Blurts out answers before questions have been completed
- Difficulty waiting or taking turns
- Interrupts or intrudes upon others

ADHD combined presentation:

Meets both Inattentive and Hyperactive/Impulsive criteria

The hunters in our society: Constantly scanning the horizon, looking for danger, or the next chance to get sensory stimulation from an exciting activities. The world around these pupils is not stimulating enough for them.

Presentation of ADHD

Some areas to look out for:

- Immature behaviors in comparison to age expected behaviors (delayed maturation between 2-5 years).
- Impulsivity - calls out, can't wait, over talks their peers
- Highly emotional: Unable to regulate and will go from 0-100 in seconds.
- Easily distracted: constantly monitoring the environment around them, (can be over sensitive to stimuli) or distraction is internalised appearing as day-dreamers.
- Short but concentrated attention span: unless the task is of interest to them then they enter a high arousal state).
- Disorganised: will need constant reminders of routines, often their immediate environment is messy.
- Makes snap decisions: no ability to think things through.
- Procrastination—too many choices, cant decide.
- Poor sense of time: Inability to estimate how long something will take will over/under estimate.
- Difficulty following instructions can struggle to attend fully, often only hearing part or mis-interpreting instructions (slow processing and focus)
- Great sense of independence: Like to think and work things out for themselves. (Not liking supervision)
- Hyper sensitive, low tolerance to mistakes and perceives criticism where there is none.
- Executive function impaired in one or more areas in particular the working memory (linked to attention mechanisms and resource allocation)
- Poor visualising skills: Difficulty using visual memory to aid the processing of verbal information.
- Risk taking behaviours: Appearing to have a low safety sense making split second decisions.
- Can co occur with other neurodevelopment disorders language difficulties, delayed motor control, Dyslexia,
- Poor sleep hygiene. Unable to switch off.

Pupils with ADHD are often highly intelligent, creative, and highly skilled. They use their intuitions to get jobs done and will lead, tasks effectively. These skills are not easily transferred into the current educational environment, where the focus is generally more on sitting and listening. The ADHD mind that is constantly on the look out is not getting the sensory input it requires will result in impulsive behaviours to satisfy these cravings.

Main Areas of Concern

Hidden and unrecognised areas of difficulty can lead to a lifetime of isolation, both physically and emotionally.

Anxiety and Mental Health - A sense of underachievement, a feeling of always getting it wrong despite trying their hardest to achieve. Worrying about what its coming, the next task. Feeling insecure but desiring to risk take in order to meet needs for stimulation.

Males more likely to develop tendencies towards addictive behaviours, females more likely to experience mental health issues like eating disorders, depression and anxiety.

Peer Interaction - Poor self esteem around peers. Can say things as they come to mind which can lead to social isolation. Appears to lead peers into high risk situations in search for highly stimulating activities. Often gravitates to peers with similar high risk taking behaviours

Social Vulnerabilities - Children can have difficulties in making and maintaining friendships. They have a tendency to over talk, say without thinking perhaps sharing personal information and causing offence, difficulty in paying attention, thus missing social cues.

Home Life - Children with ADHD can monopolise attention away from siblings. Their frustration might be exhibited by inappropriate behaviours. They are demanding in the home, with difficulties settling to a task, and requiring adult support with organisational skills. They are often told off and chastised leading to further feelings of low self-worth.

Inappropriate approaches to authority - impulsive and risk taking behaviours along with a strong sense of independence lead to direct conflict with authority when demands are non-negotiable .

Growing up and Puberty - Increased mood swings, compared to peers, often feeling highly restless seeking high thrill activities to ensure that they feel involved and attentive. High risk of engaging in inappropriate activities.

Getting Organised & Started: This is a major problem for adults and children with ADHD. 'They put it off and off, which of course only add to the anxiety around the task' .

Thom Hartman (ADHD- a Hunter in a Farmer's World)