

Teaching Students With Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)

Definition

According to the DSM-IV (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition), the essential feature of ADHD is a persistent pattern of symptoms occurring for at least 6 months of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that has a higher frequency and severity than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development. Medical research considers this disorder neurobiological in origin, characterized by abnormalities of neurotransmitters in the brain, as well as a tendency to be transmitted genetically. ADHD is broken down into three different subtypes: 1) *Predominantly Inattentive Type*; 2) *Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Type*; and 3) *Combined Type*.

Characteristics and Educational Implications

1) Predominantly Inattentive Type:

- Easily distracted from a task, lesson or conversation by extraneous stimuli
- Difficulty, avoidance and/or dislike of tasks that require sustained mental effort or attention on any one thing
- Difficulty listening when spoken to directly
- Difficulty following instructions or finishing tasks
- Skipping over details
- Making careless mistakes
- Problems organizing tasks and activities
- Distraction or forgetfulness in daily activities

2) Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Type:

- Difficulty remaining seated, often fidget or squirm
- Constantly in motion
- Always seeming to be "on the go"

- Excessive talking
- Blurting out answers before questions are completed
- Difficulty waiting for turn
- Problems with interrupting or intruding on others

3) Combined Type, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:

Students with the combined type of ADHD have symptoms of both types described above. They struggle with paying attention, hyperactivity, and controlling their impulses. Positive traits associated with people who have ADHD:

- Creative and imaginative
- Flexible and open
- Enthusiastic, spontaneous and lively
- Energetic, driven and tenacious

Suggestions and Instructional Strategies for Faculty

- Provide clear guidelines and expectations about the course, including time-lines.
- Post rules, schedules and assignments.
- Provide reminders and call attention to any changes in the schedule.
- Make sure directions are given step by step. Give directions both verbally and in writing.
- Combine lectures with classroom demonstration, visuals and videos.
- Work together with the student and the Disability Resource Center to ensure a successful learning experience for the student.

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**Disability
Resource
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Possible Academic Accommodations

- Reduced course load
- Extended exam time
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Access to class notes/note taker
- Use of tape recorder for lectures
- Distraction reduced test space

This document is a compilation of resources from the DSM-IV, ADDA, CCDI, UCI and Helpguide.org.