

ADD and ADHD Descriptions

| ADD without Hyperactivity | | ADD with Hyperactivity |
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| Cause: | The cause seems to reside primarily in the parietal lobe of the brain. The frontal lobe processes are intact. | The size and structure of many brain areas differs; especially, a lack of activity in the frontal area. This is linked to a deficiency of the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine which are involved with arousal and alertness. Low serotonin is linked to impulsivity and problematic behavior. |
| Main Indicators: | Fear; anxiety; low brain energy leading to a capacity problem; slow cognitive thinking; daydreaming; avoidance and procrastination; mental confusion; poor memory retrieval. But the frontal processes are intact so these people rely on logic. | Problems with attention, impulsivity and hyperactivity |
| Impulsiveness: | Rarely impulsive but can appear so when frustrated. | Self-regulation is weak because the control mechanisms of the frontal lobe are not functioning well, e.g. self talk is not used; they are unaware of the consequences to their actions, fast cognitive speed contributes to impulsiveness. |
| Distractibility: | <p>This is the primary problem. They cannot sustain attention and concentration because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) low energy which causes loss of focus and follow through b) environmental factors c) their own <u>racing</u> or <u>wandering</u> thoughts | Cannot maintain focus so have poor sustained effort; <u>race</u> from task to task; are easily bored; forget and lose things because they missed information due to being distracted; need external motivation |

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| Hyperactivity/ Restlessness: | Due to <u>anxiety</u> , not the ADHD motor issue. These people are driven and cannot relax. Daring activities are rare; activities are not for excitement but for relief from constant, wandering, racing thought patterns and anxiety | Due to motor activity, not anxiety. These people crave excitement and stimulation. |
| Social Problems | Shy; withdrawn, immature; often seen and not heard; information processing difficulties lead to not knowing how to talk, dress, act, etc.; conversation is difficult because of slow thinking or missed information; they can manipulate because of fear of others' anger or guilt about asking directly; interrupt because their wandering thoughts will cause them to forget what they want to say. May appear to not be listening but this is really due to the person's information processing deficit. | Egocentric; do not connect with others because they don't care; are rejected socially because of inappropriate behavior; are intolerant and can become abusive; cannot negotiate so manipulate others; interrupt because of impulsivity and lack of control; do not listen because of attention difficulties and lack of concern for others. |
| Communication: | When not talking excessively because of anxiety, these people say little but think a lot; therefore they do not display their thoughts or feelings. They are afraid to express anger or arouse it in others. | Meaningful relationships. However, personal relationships may be difficult and uncertain. Because of egocentricity, poor focus, distractibility, intolerance, etc. |
| Time Sense: | Time is poorly planned; being late is common but can be improved with teaching and practice | Time is poorly planned (miscalculation of time needed to complete a task); being late is common but can be improved with teaching and practice |
| Impatience: | Do not need instant gratification. These people become impatient only after trying unsuccessfully for a long time at which point they are tired, disheartened and upset. | Constantly frustrated and crave instant gratification |
| Sensitivity: | Shy and fearful of others' displeasure | Vulnerable to criticism to which they react, sometimes angrily. |
| Frustration Tolerance: | Desperate to succeed so will keep trying too long resulting in them being overwhelmed and despairing. This tendency may show as anger. | Frustration tolerance is low, leading to irritability, anger and aggression |
| Rigidity of thinking: | Tend to be concrete thinkers. May lead to rigid thinking patterns. | Black and white thinkers due to the frontal processes not functioning properly. They are rigid in relationships and are NOT team players. |

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| Planning and Organization: | May appear to have difficulty planning but these difficulties are really the result of distractibility, confusion and slow thinking processes | There may be sequencing problems due to poor frontal lobe functioning |
| Perseveration: | A big problem. These people will keep trying too long, burn out, and quit | Not a problem for this population. |
| Learning Difficulties: | Information processing is poor because information is missed. Difficulties in slow cognition are common but once they understand the material they can use it. Reading and spelling be difficult because of weak phonemic skills. Mental arithmetic can and geometry can also present problems | May have learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia) because of differences in brain functionality. Learning difficulties caused by the ADHD include missing information, and failing to learn from ones mistakes. They can often comprehend information but cannot make use of it. |
| Lying: | Aim to please. If they do lie it is usually only to avoid others anger or disapproval. | May lie for no valid reason. Lying is impulsive and fear is not involved. |
| Criminal Activity: | Are not as at risk for criminal behavior as people with ADHD because they have a better understanding of the consequences to their action. Stealing is usually only committed to cover up something. People with ADD make poor criminals because they have slow cognitive speed and do not tend to get away in time. | A lack of internal rules to govern behavior may lead to criminal activity. Maintaining a job may be a significant difficulty leading to low income and crime. People with ADHD are highly represented in the prison system. |
| Excessive Behavior: | Excessive or inappropriate talking, sex, spending, gambling, anger, movement, eating, codependency, alcohol/drug abuse especially cocaine Caused by no internal "stop" sign, no guilt, and no anxiety | Excessive or inappropriate talking due to anxiety, not hyperactivity, alcohol/ drugs to self-medicate for anxiety (marijuana popular as it gives a sense of relaxation), movement due to anxiety, not hyperactivity |
| Positive Attributes: | Movers and shakers, exciting, energetic, aggressive (all assets in pursuits others are afraid to try). Can do well if self-employed | Positive Attributes: These people do really well with what they know they can do |