

# ADHD

## ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

### What is ADHD?

ADHD is a neurological condition (that is, related to the the way your brain works). It causes difficulty with attention, hyperactivity or acting impulsively. Every person will have a different mix of strengths and difficulties. You may experience difficulties either with focus and concentration, or with hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour, or both types of behaviour.

### Inattention

Some of the difficulties you may have with attention include:

- not paying close attention to details or making careless mistakes
- finding it hard to focus and concentrate, easily distracted not sustaining attention even with tasks you enjoy
- being reluctant to engage in work requiring sustained mental effort
- finding it hard to read and write
- finding it hard to listen even when someone is speaking to you directly
- not following through on instructions and failing to finish work
- having difficulty in organising tasks and activities; being forgetful with regular duties
- losing materials you need for tasks and activities

### Hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour

Some of the difficulties you may have with being impulsive or having a high level of activity include:

- fidgeting, doodling, feeling of restlessness, difficult to stay seated when this is expected
- having difficulty quietly engaging in activities
- feeling 'on the go', driven, over-excited
- talking excessively, blurting out the answers
- feeling impatient, having difficulty waiting your turn, interrupting, intruding on others
- having trouble following expected procedures
- being impulsive, not thinking of consequences
- feeling easily bored, craving stimulation
- setting unrealistic goals, inappropriately multi-tasking, so tasks are not achieved

These challenges can lead you to feel that you may not be doing what you feel you are capable of doing. Sometimes this sense of underachievement is more about the expectations people have about themselves rather than a reflection of their actual performance

## Suggestions for successful learning and study

### Reading

- Find out from your tutor what is the most important article, chapter or book in your required course reading and read that first.
- Make an appointment with Learning Services to learn about effective reading strategies such as highlighting, skimming and scanning so you can make the best use of your reading time.
- Some students find it easier to concentrate when they listen to texts being read aloud. Use Read and Write Gold software (on Ara computers) to read your online documents aloud to you. Ask Disability Services for more information.
- Record key information from your reading using your preferred method: highlighting, written or typed notes, mind maps or other visual diagrams, or recording yourself speaking.
- Pace your reading to assist you in maintaining attention. Ask Learning Services staff about active reading strategies to help you keep focused.

### Writing

- Set yourself specific goals in writing your assignments. Learning Services can assist you with organisational strategies. Typing enables you to make changes to your text as you go.
- Make an appointment at Learning Services to get help with skills such as essay and report writing and notetaking skills.
- If it is hard to get started writing an assignment, use a strategy to start your thoughts flowing:
  - put all your first thoughts on the page by writing or typing: edit it later
  - draw a mind map or diagram to plan your response, or use mind mapping software
  - record what you want to say first, then use that audio to guide your writing
- Ask a friend, or use the read-aloud function on Read and Write Gold, to read your draft assignment back to you. This will help you identify errors that your mind skips over when you read silently.
- When powerpoint hand-outs are available on Moodle, print these out before class: read through them before you go to class and use them to help you take effective notes in class.
- Talk to Disability Services about options and strategies if you find it difficult to focus and take notes in your classes or to focus on reading and writing tasks for tests and exams.

### Organisation and memory

- Find out what works for you, for instance, a study planner poster or the organiser on your phone, and use this to keep track of your assessment dates and study process. Disability Services may be able to assist you with this.
- Learning Services can help you develop planning and study strategies. Learning Services can also assist you with developing effective learning and memory techniques.

**Phone: 940 8089**

**Email: [disability@ara.ac.nz](mailto:disability@ara.ac.nz)**

### ***For more information:***

ADHD Association: <http://www.adhd.org.nz/adults/>

Study Strategies: [http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/resources\\_success/learning\\_disabilities](http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/resources_success/learning_disabilities)

Information about ADHD: <http://brainhe.com/students/types/ADHDstaff.html>