

Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (AD(H)D)

AD(H)D is an attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity. Global characteristics of ADHD are: hyperactivity and impulsiveness and/or problems with attention. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is a sub-type of the better known disorder ADHD. Officially, it is called attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, predominantly inattentive type. In ADD, the attention deficit is in the foreground (Brain Foundation Netherlands).

Characteristics

ADD and ADHD are disabilities that may cause obstacles when it comes to studying. Every student, including those with AD(H)D, is different. Preferences in learning style, intelligence, age, character, etc. influence whether the characteristics below are expressed or not.

Positive characteristics

- Creativity
- Persistence
- Hyperfocus (over-concentration)
- Optimism and spontaneity
- Quick thinking
- Social involvement
- Versatile
- Visually oriented
- Sensitive
- Intuitive
- Able to make keen analysis
- Eye for detail
- Broad interest

Impairing characteristics

Attention Deficit

- Easily distracted
- Forgets things, loses things, doesn't finish things
- Difficulty with information processing, planning and organising
- Difficulty with details and routine work

Hyperactivity (not ADD)

- Constantly busy
- Agile, difficulty sitting still
- Rushing through activities
- Restless, impatient

Impulsivity

- Doing/saying things without thinking about it
- not taking others into account (overwhelming)
- Overwhelmed by possibilities and impulses and therefore inhibited (ADD)

Tips

It is not so much about the characteristics, but about the extent to which the student experiences obstacles during the study. Below are a few tips per educational activity that can help students with AD(H)D. Students with other disabilities or support needs may experience similar barriers and also benefit from the tips. Talk to the student to find out what helps or works best.

Contact hours

(lectures, working groups, etc.)

- Be guiding and directive in the provision of teaching material, assignments or instructions.
- Ensure the layout of the teaching material is orderly, with a clear structure, clear language, consistent instructions and a concrete step-by-step plan.
- Provide written instructions including the steps to be taken.
- Provide information in different ways (e.g. verbally, video, text).
- Use various working methods (e.g. listening, question block, individual, discussion).
- Provide teaching materials (such as presentations) in advance.
- Offer the possibility of audio recording and/or put your lecture online.

Assessing and examining

- Provide in time written information about the test (form, content, assessment, which teacher, which room).
- Vary the types of tests (e.g. written, verbal, portfolio).
- Vary the kind of questions (multiple choice or open questions).
- Spread the times of assessments and the deadlines.
- Provide a quiet environment with minimal stimuli.
- Offer the possibility to take the exam in an alternative way.
- give extra time to process the information properly.
- Give students the opportunity to have a moment of rest.

Independent study tasks

- Provide information by e-mail or use a digital learning environment.
- Offer help with planning.
- Provide help in developing good study methods.
- Provide written instructions including the steps to be taken.
- Give clear information on different information channels to be used.
- Split tasks.
- Work in pairs or with a study buddy.
- Monitor the progress.

Internship and graduation projects/theses

- Announce an internship in time.
- Provide information on how to find an internship placement.
- If necessary, inform the workplace in advance.
- If necessary, provide an alternative placement.
- Provide a fixed point of contact.
- Formulate assignments clearly and simply.
- Split tasks and assignments.
- Offer help with prioritising and planning.
- Offer extra feedback moments.
- Set partial products with deadlines.
- Make the assessment criteria known in advance.
- Monitor the progress.

Note: this overview is not complete.

More information

- **ECIO, expert centre on inclusive education**
- **Hogeronderwijstoegankelijk.nl/en**
- **Brain & Spine Foundation (UK)**
- **Hersenstichting (Dutch)**
- **Innovatiewerkplaats Begeleid leren (Dutch)**
- **Oudervereniging Balans (Dutch)**