ADHD: GP information sheet

ADHD can shape how a person manages attention, energy, organisation and time. It can be part of life for children, teenagers and adults, and every person's experience is a little different. Alongside the hard parts, people with ADHD bring their own strengths, interests and ways of seeing the world.

About this sheet. We have written this sheet as psychologists, in the hope that GPs may find some of it useful. It offers general information only and is not a clinical tool.

How it may show up in everyday life

Some people, or the people close to them, may notice things like these. They can look quite different from one person to the next.

At work or study

- Starting tasks might feel hard, even ones that matter
- Deadlines may creep up quickly
- Some days might feel much harder than others

Time and organisation

- Time may seem to slip away
- Keys, phones or plans might go missing
- Routines could be hard to keep going

Energy and focus

- Some people may feel restless, inside or out
- Focus might drift on some tasks
- Yet attention can be deep on things that interest them

In relationships

- Partners or family might feel the strain of missed plans
- Friendships could feel harder to keep up
- People may worry about letting others down

For children

- Sitting still in class may be tricky
- Families might notice big feelings around homework
- Teachers may share similar observations

For adults

- Some adults may only start to wonder about ADHD later in life
- Many may have found their own ways to cope
- Those ways might feel tiring over time

What the person might be bringing

By the time someone mentions attention or organisation, they may have been carrying it for a long while. They might feel frustrated, tired, or a little embarrassed. Some people may carry a sense of shame, or worry that they are simply not trying hard enough.

A warm, curious conversation may help it feel safer to talk. Feeling heard can be a meaningful first step.

What GPs already do well

Opening gently

GPs are often the first person someone feels able to talk to. A gentle opening can help people share things they may not have said out loud before.

Listening to the story

GPs often know the person, and sometimes their family, over many years. That wider view of someone's life can be very valuable.

A steady point of contact

As people explore their options, the GP can remain a familiar, steady presence, working alongside other professionals.

Seeing the whole person

GPs often hold the bigger picture of someone's health and wellbeing, which can help people feel understood.

What psychology may offer

Understanding

- Time to make sense of experiences
- A thorough assessment, where the person would like one
- Recognising strengths as well as challenges
- Space to talk about stress or worry

Practical and family support

- Ideas for planning, time and organisation
- Support with study or work routines
- Support for parents, carers and families
- Working with schools, where the family wishes

Everyday things some people find helpful

These are simply possibilities. What helps one person may not suit another.

- Simple, predictable routines
- Regular sleep and wind down time
- Breaking bigger tasks into small steps
- Visual reminders, lists or phone alarms
- Movement and time outdoors
- Being kind to themselves on harder days

Trusted Australian resources

ADHD Australia adhdaustralia.org.au

Raising Children Network raisingchildren.net.au

Medicare Mental Health medicarementalhealth.gov.au

Referring to Strategic Psychology

Our psychologists work with children, adolescents and adults. If a client would like to see one of our team, they can call us on 02 6262 6157 or visit strategicpsychology.com.au. Medicare rebates may be available with a GP referral.

This sheet offers general information for GPs to consider. It does not replace clinical judgement.