



**SAINT SOPHIE'S**

PSYCHIATRIC CENTER



**SAINT SOPHIE'S**  
PSYCHIATRIC CENTER

# ADHD Across the Lifespan

PRESENTING TO

Presented by:  
Lindsey Hiatt, PA-C and Danielle Swanson, PA-C, FAIHM  
October 2, 2024



# ADHD Signs & Symptoms

## -Children Ages 6-12-



# DSM-V Criteria

- Fails to give close attention to details, following instructions, or finishing tasks
- Difficulty sustaining attention in tasks/activities
- Does not seem to listen when spoken to
- Does not follow through on tasks/assignments
- Difficulty organizing tasks/activities
- Avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to do or start tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Losing things needed for daily activities
- Easily distracted by external stimuli
- Forgetful in daily activities
- Often fidgets or squirms in seat
- Leaves seat in situations where remaining seated is expected
- Runs about or climbs in inappropriate settings
- Unable to engage in leisure activities quietly
- Often “on the go” or acting as if “driven by a motor”
- Excessive talking
- Difficulty awaiting turn
- Interrupts or intrudes on others



# Children Ages 6-12

- Often fidgets and taps hands/feet or squirms in seat  
Carpet time is very difficult for a child with ADHD! Hard time sitting still, they are close to other students for added distractions, able to “poke” at their neighbors for dopamine boost.
- Constant movement from AM to PM  
“Tiring them out” doesn’t work the same as with a child without ADHD.
- Some children are not disruptive at school but then bouncing off the walls at home  
School might not have concerns but now this is impacting their home life and relationships with siblings/parents/care givers.
- Impulsivity and acting without thinking  
This strongly impacts school and home/social settings, extremely difficult for them to control.



# Children Ages 6-12

- Little or no sense of danger  
These children are at a much higher risk of injury ex: dental trauma, burns, fractures, and traffic injuries.
- Explosive and emotional outbursts  
This can be very disruptive in school and at home/social settings. This impacts relationships with friends and family. Often the outbursts are followed with remorse and shame.
- Fussy eating and sensory issues  
Children with ADHD can be picky eaters. They have their “safe foods” that change over time. Sensory issues can be very disruptive to the child and family members/care givers. Sensory issues not only involve food but also clothing.
- Sensitive to rejection or criticism  
Children with ADHD have a harder time with criticism as they feel this more deeply than a child without ADHD. They can be extremely hard on themselves when they are criticized and often it can result in negative self-talk and perfectionism.



# Children Ages 6-12

- Burst of energy in the evening/at bedtime  
Children with ADHD often get "the zoomies" before bed, likely related to a compromised internal circadian rhythm often seen in children with ADHD.
- Sleep problems  
"They've never been a good sleeper", I hear this all the time! Children can struggle with falling asleep, staying asleep, or both. If a child's brain is sleeping all day, why would it need to sleep at night!
- Enuresis (bed wetting)  
Very common in children with ADHD and can improve/resolve with ADHD management.

## EARLY INTERVENTION!:

Studies of children with ADHD show that ADHD symptoms persist from childhood to adolescence in 50-80% of cases, and into adulthood in 35%-65% of cases (Owens et al. 2015)



# Early Intervention: Why?

ORF Oral Reading Fluency and RC Reading Compr	
Fall Goal	Winter Goal
ORF 46-96 wpm RC 127-164	ORF 61-114 wpm RC 136-171
ORF <u>36</u> w.p.m. RC <u>142</u>	ORF <u>77</u> w.p.m. RC <u>153</u>

**Fall results:** no medication

-Stimulant started following Fall conferences-

**Winter results:** long-acting stimulant daily in AM





# Early Intervention: Why?

## Unit 1: Addition & Subtraction Patterns

Does my child know their basic facts about addition /subtraction to 20?

— 29/50

## Unit 2: Place Value and Measurement

Does my child know the place value for digits of hundreds/tens/ones?

— 9/23

## Unit 3: Two digit Addition & Subtraction within One Hundred

Can my child add/subtract 2 digit numbers?

— 6/13

Do they use a non count by ones strategy to get the answer?

— —

### Unit 1-3 results:

no medication

## Unit 4: Measurement

Does my child know the tools of measurement?

— 21/25

Can my child tell time to the minute?

— —

Does my child understand how to measure to the inch, foot and yard?

— —

## Unit 5: Place Value to One Thousand

Can my child count by 10s and 100s to 1000?

— 48/57

Can my child add and subtract money and solve money problems?

— —

Does my child have strategies for addition and subtraction?

— —

### Unit 4-5 results:

long-acting stimulant

daily in AM



# ADHD Signs & Symptoms

## -Adolescents Ages 13-18-



# Adolescents Ages 13-18

- Daydreaming/zoning out  
These students often go undetected as they aren't disruptive to the classroom but instead quiet and inattentive.
- Falling asleep in class  
ADHD results in part of the brain being "sleepy", that coupled with poor sleep often result in these students falling asleep easily in class.
- Losing things/needing to borrow things at school  
Adolescents with ADHD are often losing things needed to complete tasks, for example, their calculator for a math test. They will often scramble to find a friend who they can borrow from.
- Not doing homework/forgetting homework/forgetting test days  
Adolescents with ADHD can come off as "lazy" or as if they don't care.

32.2% of students with combined type ADHD drop out of high school, compared to 15% of teens with no psychiatric disorder (Breslau et al. 2011).



# Adolescents Ages 13-18

- Misbehaving in select classes (non-preferred classes)  
This is something to watch for! Often adolescents with ADHD will do fantastic in their preferred classes and very poorly in their non-preferred classes.
- Overstimulated after school and hiding in room for hours or sleeping after school  
Often seen in adolescent students (in children it is more emotional dysregulation), can present as depression so important to ask detailed questions regarding this behavior.
- Fingernail biting/twirling hair  
More often seen in girls, this is a way to keep the brain stimulated and “awake”.
- Lack of boundaries with others and missing social cues  
This greatly impacts relationships/friendships in this age group and can lead to other conditions like anxiety and depression. Examples: oversharing, invading personal space, interrupting, etc.

Adults with a history of childhood ADHD are more than twice as likely as controls to have considered or attempted suicide by the age of 21 years (Agosti 2011).



# Adolescents Ages 13-18

- Time Blindness: inability to sense how much time has passed and inability to estimate the time needed to get something done  
This can lead to adolescents being late for school/class, missing/being late for appointments, and breaking curfew.
- Angry outbursts/Easily frustrated  
Often a result of overstimulation, hyperfocus, or simply emotional dysregulation due to ADHD. This impacts relationships/friendships/family and usually results in negative self-talk and remorse/shame.
- Risky/impulsive behavior  
Dopamine seeking behaviors are extremely dangerous in adolescents with ADHD as this age they have access to more dangerous means of accidental harm ex: vehicles, ATV's, water sports vehicles, etc.

Teens and young adult drivers with ADHD have 2-8 times more collisions, citations, and suspended licenses than teens and young adults without ADHD (Barkley, 2007).



# Genetics/Hereditiy

- If a parent has ADHD, the child has up to a 57% chance of also having ADHD (Barkley, 2015).
- If a sibling has ADHD, the child has about a 32% chance of having ADHD (Barkley, 2015).
- If a twin has ADHD, the other twin has about a 70%–80% chance of having ADHD (Barkley, 2015).



# Impact on Friendships

“Friends forgive you of your distractibility, your forgetfulness, your working memory problems and even your restlessness. They will not forgive your anger, your hostility, the quickness with which you emote to other people, because it is offensive, it is socially costly.” –Dr. Barkley



# ADHD in Adults

“ADHD doesn’t always look like a kid who can’t stay still and is bouncing out of their seat. Sometimes it means feeling completely overwhelmed with the world around you and all the things you are supposed to accomplish within it, and feeling like a failure because everyone seems to be able to do things you can’t.”

[ADDitudemag.com](http://ADDitudemag.com)





# Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale

- How often do you have trouble wrapping up the final details of a project, once the hard parts have been done?
- How often do you have difficulty getting things in order when you have a task that requires organization?
- How often do you have problems remembering appointments or obligations?
- When you have a task that requires a lot of thought, how often do you delay or avoid getting started?
- How often do you fidget or squirm your hands or feet when you have to sit down for a long time?
- How often do you feel overly active or compelled to do things, like you were driven by a motor?
- How often do you make careless mistakes when working on a boring or difficult project?
- How often do you have difficulty keeping your attention when you are doing boring or repetitive work?
- How often do you have difficulty concentrating on what people say to you, even when they are speaking to you directly?



# Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (Continued)

- How often do you misplace or have difficulty finding things at home or work?
- How often are you distracted by noise or activity around you?
- How often do you leave your seat in meetings or situations where you are expected to remain seated?
- How often do you feel restless or fidgety?
- How often do you have difficulty unwinding or relaxing when you have time to yourself?
- How often do you find yourself talking to much in social situations?
- When you're in a conversation, how often do you find yourself finishing the sentences of people you're talking to, before they finish them themselves?
- How often do you have difficulty waiting your turn in situations when turn taking is required?
- How often do you interrupt people when they're busy?



# Common ADHD Difficulties

- Difficulty with motivation- interest based nervous system
- Emotional hyperarousal- internal hyperactivity, mood fluctuations
- Rejection sensitivity
- Difficulties with sleep
- Struggles with eating- missing meals or binge eating



# ADHD in Young Adults

- Many young adults whose symptoms were manageable or unnoticed in elementary and/or high school may struggle more once in college for several reasons:
- Increased academic demand
- Decreased physical activity
- Dietary and sleep changes
- Lack of imposed structure



# ADHD in Women

- Women are more likely to have a delayed diagnosis or to be misdiagnosed.
- Women with ADHD are more likely to experience comorbid mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, migraines, and eating disorders
- Approximately 2/3 of women with ADHD also experience clinically significant PMS or PMDD
- Women with ADHD are more likely to experience post-partum depression and symptoms may persist longer than in women without ADHD
- Over 75% of mothers who work outside of the home are working full time in addition to home and parenting responsibilities
- Societal and cultural expectations placed on women and mothers may result in increased impairment and anxiety in women with ADHD. Struggling with these demands may result in perceived failure, guilt, and feelings of inadequacy.



# ADHD and Hormones

- The frontal lobe of the brain is responsible for executive function
- Dopamine needs estrogen for transport to the frontal lobe
- Decreases in estrogen, whether during the menstrual cycle or during perimenopause/menopause, can cause increased severity of symptoms
- Increases in testosterone during puberty are associated with increased academic difficulty, anger/hostility, and risk-taking behaviors in males.
- Decrease in testosterone in later life can lead to more prominent symptoms in males



## Why Treat Adult ADHD?

- Trouble maintaining living environment
- Difficulty maintaining employment
- Increased risk for legal difficulties
- Increased risk for substance abuse
- Increased risk for divorce/relationship problems
- Financial difficulties- “ADHD tax”
- Increased risk for other mental health symptoms (depression, anxiety, self-esteem issues)



GI

People with ADHD often  
have a special feel for life,  
a way of seeing right into  
the heart of matters, while  
others have to reason their  
way methodically.

- Edward M. Hallowell

[GreetingIdeas.com](http://GreetingIdeas.com)





# References

- <https://www.additudemag.com/hormonal-changes-adhd-puberty-postpartum-menopause-andropause/>
- <https://psychology-tools.com/test/adult-adhd-self-report-scale>
- <https://www.additudemag.com/the-adhd-exercise-solution/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/adhd/diagnosis/index.html>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0018506X23001642>
- <https://www.additudemag.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/3-Defining-Features-of-ADHD-That-Everyone-Overlooks-2.pdf>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10173330/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2794242/>
- <https://chadd.org/about-adhd/adhd-data-and-statistics/>
- [https://www.uptodate.com/contents/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-in-children-and-adolescents-overview-of-treatment-and-prognosis?search=adhd%20children%20&source=search\\_result&selectedTitle=1%7E150&usage\\_type=default&display\\_rank=1#H16](https://www.uptodate.com/contents/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-in-children-and-adolescents-overview-of-treatment-and-prognosis?search=adhd%20children%20&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1%7E150&usage_type=default&display_rank=1#H16)
- [https://www.uptodate.com/contents/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-in-children-and-adolescents-epidemiology-and-pathogenesis?search=adhd%20genetics&sectionRank=1&usage\\_type=default&anchor=H7&source=machineLearning&selectedTitle=1%7E150&display\\_rank=1#H21](https://www.uptodate.com/contents/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-in-children-and-adolescents-epidemiology-and-pathogenesis?search=adhd%20genetics&sectionRank=1&usage_type=default&anchor=H7&source=machineLearning&selectedTitle=1%7E150&display_rank=1#H21)