

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

This factsheet has been developed in consultation with key national agencies with experience and knowledge in the specific areas. The information is provided for **guidance** only, allowing you to be more informed in your approach to being a more **inclusive** coach. No two people are the same, as such, please ensure your first step is to speak directly to the person – understand their **abilities** and goals and never assume.



What is ADHD?

ADHD is a highly genetic, brain-based syndrome that has to do with the regulation of a particular set of brain functions and related behaviours.

These brain operations are collectively referred to as “executive functioning skills” and include important functions such as attention, concentration, memory, motivation and effort, learning from mistakes, impulsivity, hyperactivity, organisation, and social skills. There are various contributing factors that play a role in these challenges including chemical and structural differences in the brain as well as genetics.

People with ADHD are likely to be creative, flexible thinkers with a lot of energy and spontaneity.

It is important to remember that ADHD exists on a spectrum of severity (mild/moderate/severe). This means that ADHD symptoms (i.e., hyperactivity, impulsivity, and/or inattention) are not exactly the same in every person. So, one person might be very active, talk a lot and interrupt and intrude on other people; another person could daydream and be quiet and withdrawn; another person could be both: all of them could still have ADHD.

As with anything else, no two people with ADHD are exactly the same and everyone experiences ADHD in their own way.

What we may see when coaching with people who have ADHD

Inattention - easily distracted, difficulty following through on instructions (e.g. loses focus, side-tracked), does not seem to listen when spoken to directly, has trouble holding attention on tasks or play activities, fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes with activities

Impulsivity - difficulty awaiting turns, interrupting conversations or instructions, blurting out answers to questions before they are completed and intruding in others games

Hyperactivity - difficulty remaining seated, fidgeting with hands and feet, shifting from one uncompleted task to another and difficulty playing quietly

Other Frequent Features - difficulty coping with peers, engaging in dangerous activities without thinking about the consequences, high pain threshold, can be immature/clumsy



How to include people with ADHD in your coaching sessions

- Provide structure with rules and regulations, remain calm and always have a positive approach
- Adapt your coaching style to meet the learning style of your participant; ask the participant/parent/carer how they learn best prior to the coaching session
- Be mindful of heightened levels of frustration or anxiety and know when to step back
- Look directly at the participant when communicating
- Ensure your coaching environment is organised and predictable
- Always praise positive behaviour
- Try to develop a private signal system with the participant to notify them when they are off task or acting inappropriately
- When coaching a group and giving instructions, use the person's first name to attract their attention. (When asking the whole group to 'come over here', some people may need you to tell them specifically by name that you mean them too.)

For further information and support, please visit www.hadd.ie or contact info@hadd.ie

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