

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Managing ADHD in Adulthood

ADHD is commonly defined as a childhood-onset neurodevelopmental condition characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. It often carries on into adulthood. Among diagnosed children, 65 percent continue to have ADHD as adults. For adults who think they may be affected by ADHD, there are symptoms to look for, and ways to help manage the condition.

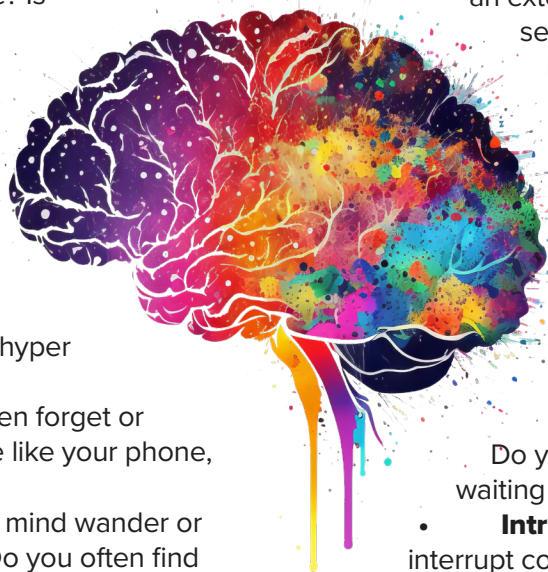
Symptoms of Inattention

- **Careless mistakes:** Do you have difficulty with detail, overlooking or missing mistakes at work? Or do you often get lost in the details?
- **Lack of focus:** Do you find it hard to focus during work, in conversations, or while reading something lengthy?
- **Poor listener:** Are you often perceived as someone who doesn't pay attention in conversations, even without any obvious distractions?
- **Following direction:** Do you find that you fail to complete tasks at work or at home? Or do you tend to start a task and become easily side-tracked?
- **Staying organized:** Do you struggle to stay organized at work or at home? Is time management or missing deadlines an issue for you?
- **Sustained interest:** Do you struggle with tasks that require continued mental effort like completing forms or reviewing lengthy documents? Do you sometimes avoid those tasks? Or find yourself hyper focused on the wrong tasks?
- **Misplaced items:** Do you often forget or misplace items of importance like your phone, wallet or keys?
- **Easily distracted:** Does your mind wander or drift to unrelated thoughts? Do you often find you have multiple thoughts at once or jump from thought to thought spontaneously?

- **Forgetfulness:** Do you often forget to get back to people, or miss a bill or appointment?

Symptoms of Hyperactivity/Impulsivity

- **Fidgety:** Are you often tapping your hands or feet or find yourself unable to sit still?
- **Inability to stay seated:** Do you often find yourself wandering around when you should be at your desk, in a meeting, or seated at a social event?
- **Restlessness:** Are excessive movement or feelings of restlessness an issue in your day to day? Is it hard to relax? Do you struggle to sleep?
- **Inability to be quiet:** Is it hard for you to quietly engage in leisure activities?
- **Inability to stay still:** Are you often impulsively “on the go,” finding it uncomfortable to be still for an extended period at work or in a social setting like a movie? Have you ever been described as hard to keep up with?
 - **Talkative:** Do you find yourself talking excessively or too loudly at times?
 - **Interrupting:** Do you sometimes blurt out an answer before a question is even completed, or find yourself finishing people's sentences?
 - **Inability to wait your turn:** Do you struggle with waiting in line or waiting for your turn at something?
 - **Intruding on others:** Do you ever interrupt conversations or find yourself taking over what others are doing without asking? Do you do these things impulsively?



HELPFUL TIPS TO MANAGE ADHD IN ADULTHOOD

AT HOME

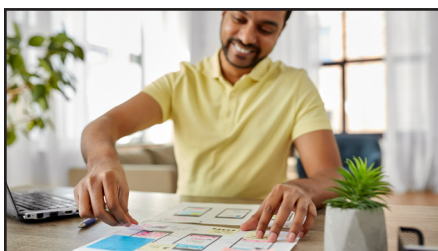
- » **Set reminders and stick to them:** Be it on your phone, on a hanging calendar, or even post-it notes around the house, set reminders for everything and cross tasks off the list as you complete them.
- » **Everything in its place:** Find a place for important items like your keys, gym bag, wallet or computer bag and always return them after use so you don't lose anything.



- » **Work to throw things out:** Clutter can increase ADHD stresses. Clean out your bags, throw away stacks of unused items like magazines or old mail. Book time in your schedule and do a little every day so it doesn't become overwhelming.

AT WORK

- » **Ask questions:** Take note of your deadlines and make sure you understand directions, even if it means asking twice.

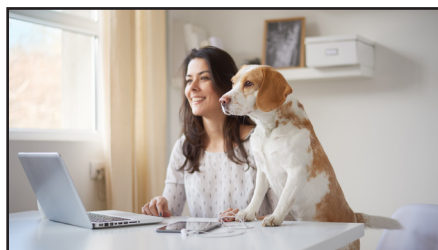


- » **Make things simpler for yourself:** Arrange tasks into bulleted lists with clear directions for each step.

- » **Put a time limit on conversations:** It's easy to get lost on a call so for conversations that are meant to be quick, keep it short and simple.
- » **Know your schedule:** Check your agenda several times a day so you don't forget a meeting or task.
- » **Ask for feedback:** It's OK to ask your supervisor or coworker how you're performing so you know what to focus on.

WORKING FROM HOME OR REMOTE SCHOOLING

- » **Rethink your schedule:** Breaks and meals are just as important to your workday structure as your meetings and tasks.
- » **Prioritize your tasks:** Check in with your team or boss, make a list of what is due when, and stick to it.



- » **Create a home office:** Carve out space just for work to help stay on task and to shut off when the workday is over.
- » **Do not disturb:** Ensure everyone with you knows when you're working so they aren't tempted to distract you.

IN RELATIONSHIPS

- » **Schedule time for your relationship:** Book time with your partner, maybe a date or a movie so they stay a priority.

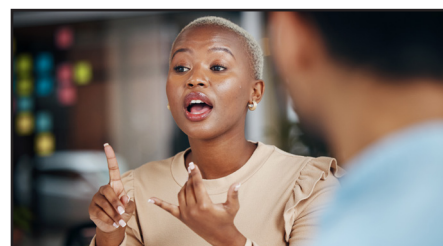
- » **Look for better ways to communicate:** Remember you're on the same team. Work with your partner to find a way of communicating that works for both of you.



- » **Be compassionate:** ADHD takes up a lot of mental and emotional space — pause and reset if you feel frustrated to avoid conflict.

IN SOCIAL SETTINGS

- » **Schedule social time into your life:** Make plans and enter them into your calendar so you don't miss out.
- » **Find a support group:** Making friends as an adult can be hard — maybe even harder with ADHD — but finding people to talk to can help.
- » **Check in with yourself:** Impulsivity and emotional regulation are common traits for those with ADHD so stop and take a breath.



- » **Ask for feedback:** Similar to requesting feedback at work, asking friends and family how you're coping with symptoms can help you find areas of improvement.