

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

PART 1

'It's like there is three, of me, all wanting to do different things at the same time.'

Adam. Age 10.

What it is

ADHD is a lifelong condition characterised by inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsivity. People with ADHD tend to find it difficult to maintain focus and are hyperactive (always on the go). They may exhibit unwanted or inappropriate behaviour, seem inattentive, and act on impulse. In order to be identified as ADHD, the behaviours should be present in at least two environments (e.g., home and school) and should have been present before the age of 12 years.



ADHD can exist in isolation but is commonly seen co-occurring with one or more SpLD.

There are three presentations of ADHD:

- inattentive presentation (sometimes referred to as ADD);
- hyperactive-impulsive presentation;
- combined presentation, which is the most severe.

In terms of gender and ADHD, most research is consistent that there are more boys than girls with ADHD Hyperactive-Impulsive presentation but there are more girls than boys with ADHD Inattentive presentation.

This is an important issue as it is easier to spot hyperactive and impulsive symptoms and there is a lot of evidence to support that girls with ADHD Inattentive type are missed, especially during the primary school years. This can have serious long-term consequences in terms of their learning, behaviour and self-esteem later in life.

This is one of the major reasons why the age on onset was raised from 7 to 12 in the recent DSM-V in terms of identification of symptoms.

