

# The FundaMENTALS

A Youth Guide to Mental Health

**ADHD**



**Stand Together 2020**

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Dept. of Human Services



# Table of Contents



**Education..... 2**



**Mythbusters... 3**



**Stigma..... 4**



**Resources..... 5**

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Keep an eye out for new episodes of **Unless...** A Stand Together podcast where students discuss mental health conditions!

**Podcast Playlist on Youtube**

**Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**  
consistent difficulty sustaining attention;  
includes hyper-activity and impulsive behavior

## NEW PSYCHOLOGY TERM!

**ADHD Inattentive (formally known as ADD)**

### *What is ADHD?*

ADHD, or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, is “a disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development”, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Those with ADHD are often found fidgeting and can be inattentive to the task at hand.

### *What are symptoms of ADHD?*

Inattention and hyperactivity/impulsiveness are the main symptoms and signs of ADHD. It is typical to see both of these shown in younger children. According to NIMH, some symptoms under these two categories include, “problems sustaining attention in tasks or play, including conversations, lectures, or lengthy reading; easily distracted by unrelated thoughts or stimuli; running or dashing around or climbing in situations where it is inappropriate or, in teens and adults, often feel restless; being constantly in motion or ‘on the go,’ or acting as if ‘driven by a motor’”.

### *How is ADHD treated?*

ADHD is diagnosed by a trained professional, often a pediatrician or psychologist. As of now, there is no complete cure for ADHD, however there are multiple treatments to help ease symptoms. Medications, such as Ritalin and Adderall, are common, as well as different forms of therapy.





Here are the common myths and misconceptions of ADHD.

**Myth: ADHD isn't a real medical disorder.**

*Fact: ADHD has been recognized as a legitimate diagnosis by the National Institutes of Health and other major organizations. The American Psychiatric Society also recognizes it in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.*

**Myth: ADHD is a result of bad parenting.**

*Fact: Whenever a student/person that has ADHD blurts things out or gets out of their seat during class, it's not that they haven't been taught that these behaviors are wrong. It's because they cannot control their impulses which are rooted in brain chemistry, not discipline. Having overly strict parenting can actually worsen these symptoms.*

**Myth: Children who have special accommodations because of their ADHD are getting an unfair advantage.**

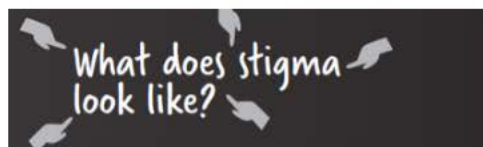
*Fact: The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that public schools address the special needs of all children with disabilities, including students with ADHD. These accommodations, such as extra time on tests, level the playing field so that students can learn just as successfully.*

**Myth: Children who take medication for their ADHD are more likely to abuse drugs when they become teenagers.**

*Fact: Medications used to treat ADHD have been proven safe and effective for 50 plus years. Although they don't cure ADHD they are highly effective at easing the symptoms. Having untreated ADHD will actually increase the risk that an individual will abuse drugs or alcohol.*

# Stigma

There are numerous misconceptions surrounding ADHD that lead to stigma. For example, ADHD is viewed simply as a personality trait and that people with ADHD are just lazy or don't try enough. In kids, people assume their behavior is a result of poor parenting rather than them having a mental health disorder. This often leads to parents not having their kids with ADHD get evaluated or treated because they think it's a reflection of their character. Adults with ADHD are often seen as drug-seeking individuals who seek a diagnosis in order to receive stimulants. Adults may not disclose their diagnosis due to fear of it affecting their jobs or pushing people away. In general, there is the idea that people with ADHD are taking and abusing dangerous medications, which isn't the case. People with ADHD can feel ashamed that they need medication. This is a result of the notion that ADHD can be overcome or controlled with willpower. This is similar to telling someone who is farsighted that they don't need glasses and should just try harder to see. In order to stop this stigma, you need to get educated, get involved in organizations, and speak up when you hear misinformed information. Also, make sure to provide support, hope, and encouragement (SHE) for those with ADHD.

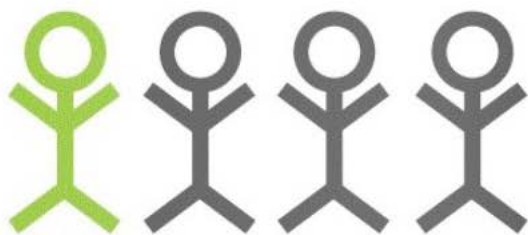


**S**TEREOTYPES  
**T**EASING  
**I**NAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE  
**I**GNORANCE  
**M**YTHS  
**A**TTITUDE



# Resources

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## American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Great website with links to articles, videos, books, and FAQs regarding ADHD.

## ADDitute

Online resource to sign up for different free newsletters about ADHD.

## How To ADHD

YouTube channel with hundreds of videos dedicated to ADHD.

## Children and Adults with Attention- Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Organization dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by ADHD with some chapters located in Pittsburgh.

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