

ADD/ADHD Characteristics Checklist

The symptoms and behaviours exhibited by individuals with an Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Executive Functioning Disorder (EFD) are normal human behaviours. Anyone can experience and/or exhibit similar behaviours from time to time. For someone with ADD/ADHD or EFD however, they are usually “the rule, rather than the exception.”

The following list includes behaviours, feelings and attitudes that are commonly experienced by individuals with ADD/ADHD/EFD. Keep in mind however, that not every individual with ADD/ADHD/EFD will experience all of these characteristics. Also, consider whether these characteristics are present across multiple situations- at home, at school/work, at play, in social situations. Keep this in mind when reflecting on the presence and severity of your symptom on this list. (One does not need to have an official diagnosis to reap the benefit of our programs.)

If you find that you exhibit 15 or more of these symptoms and they are affecting your life in multiple areas, it is time to take a closer look. Please call and we can help you find solutions that capitalize on your strengths.

Thought Process

- Intelligent, curious and/or intuitive
- Thinks “outside of the box”
- Strong in some form of creativity (art, music, invention, designing, building, mechanics, etc.)
- A tendency to think in pictures
- Strong imagination
- Enthusiastic (dives into things they enjoy wholeheartedly)
- Often multitasks or has more than one thing on the go at a time

Short Attention Span/Distractibility

- Short attention span, unless very interested in something (e.g. computer games)
- Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in school/work
- Easily distracted, tendency to drift away (although at times can be hyper focused)
- Lacks attention to detail, due to distractibility
- Trouble listening carefully to directions
- Frequently misplaces things
- Skips around while reading, or goes to the end first, trouble staying on track
- Difficulty learning new games, because it is hard to stay on track during instructions
- Poor listening skills
- Tendency to be easily bored (tunes out)

Restlessness

- Restlessness, constant motion, legs moving, fidgetiness
- Has to be moving in order to think

- Excessive talking
- Trouble sitting still, such as trouble sitting in one place for too long, staying in desk at school, sitting at a desk job for long periods, sitting through a movie
- An internal sense of anxiety or nervousness
- Often on the go, as if “driven by a motor”
- Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in activities that require sustained mental effort (school work, homework, financial books)

Impulsivity

- Impulsive, in words and/or actions (spending money)
- Difficulty taking turns in conversation
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others (butts into conversations or games)
- Difficulty awaiting turn
- Say just what comes to mind without considering its impact (tactless)
- Trouble going through established channels, trouble following proper procedure, an attitude of “read the directions when all else fails”
- Impatient, low frustration tolerance
- Stuck in the moment
- Frequent traffic violations
- Frequent, impulsive job changes
- Tendency to embarrass others
- Lying or stealing on impulse
- Does not take ownership of mistakes

Poor Organization

- Poor organization and planning, trouble maintaining an organized work/living area
- Chronically late, chronically in a hurry (or always needing to be much too early because they aren’t sure how much time they may need.)
- Loses track of time, a poor sense of internal time (little or no sense of what 20 minutes feels like without a watch)
- Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (assignments, pencils, books, keys, tools)
- Often have piles of stuff
- Easily overwhelmed by tasks of daily living
- Struggles with tracking scheduling (homework due dates, doctors’ appointments, meetings)
- Struggles with establishing and following a routine or is excessively stringent/unbending in routines
- Poor financial management (late bills, check book a mess, spending unnecessary money on late fees)
- Some adults with ADD are very successful, but often only if they are surrounded by people who organize them.

Problems Getting Started and Following Through

- Chronic procrastination or trouble getting started
- Starting projects but not finishing them, poor follow through

- Enthusiastic beginnings but poor endings
- Spends excessive time at work because of inefficiencies
- Inconsistent work performance

Negative Internal Feelings

- Chronic sense of underachievement, feeling you should be much further along in your life than you are
- Chronic problems with self-esteem
- Sense of impending doom
- Mood swings
- Negativity
- Frequent feeling of demoralization or that things won't work out for you

Relational Difficulties

- Trouble sustaining friendships or intimate relationships, promiscuity
- Tendency to be immature
- Confused about others reactions and/or struggles to read nonverbal cues (facial expressions, knowing when someone is bored with a conversation)
- Unawareness of own non-verbal communication (voice volume, talking speed, eye contact, body language and/or facial gestures)
- Failure to see oneself as a contributor to a problem (always someone or something else's fault)
- Self-centered; immature interests
- Failure to see others' needs or activities as important
- Lack of talking in a relationship
- Verbally abusive to others
- Proneness to hysterical outburst
- Avoids group activities
- Trouble with authority

Short Fuse

- Quick responses to slights that are real or imagined
- Rage outbursts, short fuse

Frequent Search for High Stimulation

- Frequent search for high stimulation (bungee jumping, gambling, race track, high stress jobs, ER doctors, doing many things at once, etc.)
- Tendency to seek conflict, be argumentative or to start disagreements for the fun of it

Tendency to Get Stuck (thoughts or behaviors)

- Tendency to worry needlessly and endlessly
- Tendency toward addictions (food, shopping, alcohol, drugs, work)

Switches Things Around

- Switches around numbers, letters or words
- Turn words around in conversations
- Switches around syllables of words when speaking
- Struggles telling a story in sequence so it makes sense to others or goes off on tangents
- Inaccurate self-observation. A poor observer of others and yourself. Not accurately gauging the impact you have on other people and probably seeing yourself as less effective or more powerful than other people do.

Writing/Fine Motor Coordination Difficulties

- Poor or inconsistent writing skills (hard to get information from brain to pen)
- Poor handwriting, often prints
- Coordination difficulties

The Harder I Try the Worse It Gets

- Performance becomes worse under pressure.
- Test anxiety, or during tests your mind tends to go blank
- The harder you try, the worse it gets
- Work or schoolwork deteriorates under pressure
- Tendency to turn off or become stuck when asked questions in social situations
- Falls asleep or becomes tired while reading

Sleep/Wake Difficulties

- Difficulties falling asleep, may be due to too many thoughts at night
- Difficulty coming awake (may need coffee or other stimulant or activity before feeling fully awake)

Low Energy

- Periods of low energy, especially early in the morning and in the afternoon
- Frequently feeling tired

Sensitive to Noise or Touch

- Startles easily
- Sensitive to touch, clothes, noise and light