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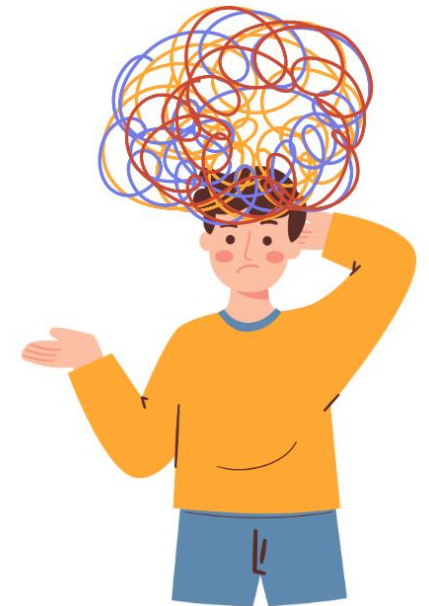


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Course Materials

# Attention disorders

What to do if you can't  
concentrate





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## How to recognize attention disorders





Children and adolescents with attention disorders have problems controlling their concentration or their actions.

The medical name for this is very long and is called "attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder" and is usually abbreviated to "ADD" or "ADHD" or "AD(H)D".





People with AD(H)D usually have problems in one or all of these areas:

- ☞ Attention
- ☞ Hyperactivity
- ☞ Impulse control

On the next pages we explain these terms.



## Attention

If you have AD(H)D, you can't concentrate on one thing for long. You get distracted easily, even when you try to pay attention.

Some people with AD(H)D often daydream, forget the time and don't notice what's going on around them. For others, their thoughts jump around so wildly that they can't collect their thoughts.





## Hyperactivity

People who are hyperactive have a lot of energy and find it difficult to sit quietly. It is as if their body wants to be constantly moving, even when they are supposed to remain still. For example, they tap their feet, fidget around and feel restless, even though they want to sit still.

Hyperactive children are often loud and wild. This can lead to them overlooking dangers and hurting themselves or others.





## Hyperactivity

Some hyperactive children are also intrusive, meaning they don't notice well how physically close it is appropriate to be to another person. It's as if these children don't sense that sometimes it's important to keep their distance or respect certain boundaries and private spaces.

Intrusiveness can seem rude or inconsiderate, even if the person doesn't mean any harm.





## Impulse control

People with AD(H)D often act thoughtlessly. They may say something before they think about it or do something without considering the consequences.



It's as if their brain skips the "stop" button sometimes.



## Impulse control

People who have problems with impulse control tend to act quickly based on spontaneous feelings.

For example, freaking out when you're angry or screaming and jumping around when you're excited - even when it's not appropriate at the time.





## Causes of attention disorders





## Genetic factors:

"Genetic" means that one can inherit the tendency to AD(H)D from one's ancestors.

Often several people in the same family have such a tendency.



Studies have shown that certain genetic variations may be associated with an increased risk of AD(H)D. Family members of people with AD(H)D are therefore at higher risk of also being affected by this disorder.



## Environmental factors:

Stress and environmental exposure to the mother during pregnancy can increase the risk of AD(H)D in her child.

An unhealthy environment for pregnant women or certain behaviors during pregnancy can affect the development of their baby's brain. This can cause the child to have problems later in life at school and in everyday life, for example with concentration.





## Neurobiological causes:

"Neurobiological" refers to the function and structure of the brain.

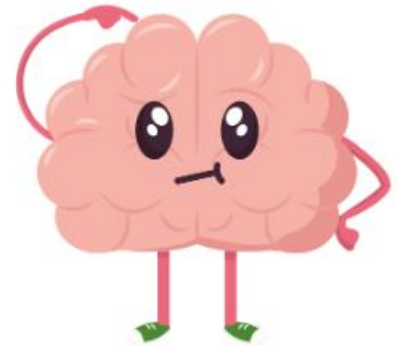


Studies show differences in brain activity and brain structure in people with AD(H)D, particularly in the areas of impulse control.



Certain regions of the brain are responsible for controlling attention and movement. It is believed that AD(H)D is related to impaired development of these regions of the brain.

In some people, the structure of the brain is slightly altered, meaning it is slightly misshapen. This may contribute to the difficulties observed in people with AD(H)D.





## How to deal with attention disorders







AD(H)D can be detected early by having children take special tests, talk to experts and be observed.

It is very important to recognize AD(H)D quickly so that children can get the right help.





By knowing early that a child has AD(H)D, teachers, parents and professionals can do just the right thing to help the child improve and get help.

This will allow the child to reach their full potential and overcome problems in this area before they become worse and make school or life unnecessarily difficult.



## Treatment options

If a child has AD(H)D, you want to help them improve their concentration and self-control. There are several ways to do this.





## Behavioral therapy

Here, children with AD(H)D can learn how to concentrate better and how to better deal with feelings such as anger or sadness.



A behavioral therapist shows children tricks and strategies for completing tasks without distraction and how to interact better with other people.



## Occupational therapy

In occupational therapy, you write or paint, build something or play movement games.

A child with AD(H)D can learn how to concentrate better, how to use their hands and fingers skillfully, and how to complete tasks alone.





## Neurofeedback

Neurofeedback is a special type of brain training that can help you concentrate better and become calmer.



First, they put small sensors on your head that measure the activity in your brain. It doesn't hurt at all, it's a bit like putting on headphones. And don't worry - no one can read your thoughts!



## Neurofeedback

Then you play a game or watch a film on the screen. But here's the exciting part: you control the game or film with your brain! If you concentrate well or stay calm, the game works better or the movie goes well.

Over time, the brain learns how to concentrate better and stay calmer because it realizes that being calm and concentrated makes the games and films work.





## Medicines

When you have AD(H)D, certain substances in your brain don't work together as well as they should. Medication can help.

Imagine that the brain is like traffic on many roads. Sometimes the cars are mixed up and there are traffic jams. Medicines are like traffic cops who regulate the traffic on the highway of the brain so that everything flows better.







## Medicines

These medicines help the brain to concentrate better, be calmer, and accomplish tasks more easily. It's a bit like wearing glasses to see better. Medicines help the brain to think more clearly and function better.



You get the right medication from a doctor who knows exactly what helps and how much you need.



## Tips for people with AD(H)D

### Find groups and friends:

Talking to other people who have similar problems can help. In groups or with friends, you can feel less alone and learn how others deal with their difficulties. This can give you new ideas and support.





## Tips for people with AD(H)D

### Build self-confidence:

It is important that you are proud of yourself and accept yourself, even if you find it difficult to concentrate and control yourself.



Think about the things you are good at and encourage yourself. Therapists can help you get rid of negative thoughts and build strong self-esteem.



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