



INCLUSIVE 4-H: ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

WHAT IS ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common disorders among children. Individuals with ADHD have difficulty with staying focused, paying attention, controlling one's behavior, and hyperactivity. ADHD is typically diagnosed during childhood and persists into adulthood. However, some of the characteristics of ADHD may change over time and with treatment. While medication and therapy can help relieve some characteristic behaviors associated with the disorder, there is no cure.

Some of the characteristics of ADHD in children include:

INATTENTIVE

- Easily distracted
- Tunes out of lessons
- Daydreams
- Difficulty staying in seat

DISORGANIZED

- Forgets to take things home
- Forgets instructions
- Messy workplace
- Frequently misplaces items

RESTLESS

- Fidgets
- Fiddles with nearby objects
- Difficulty waiting
- Difficulty taking turns

IMPULSIVE

- Talks excessively, burts out/interrupts
- May disrupt lessons
- Difficulty following rules
- Makes errors due to rushing

ADHD is not always considered a disability, but it can have lifelong effects. Adjusting education for people with ADHD can be beneficial for their learning. ADHD also frequently occurs in conjunction with other disabilities.

ADHD can affect school, work, and relationships for children and adults. It is important to keep in mind that people with ADHD enjoy fulfilling and successful lives.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Have contact information for parents or guardians and the member's doctor in accessible places. An example of this would be behind the child's nametag and in the medical forms box which should be stored in the main office at 4-H events. This form should include information such as what kinds of medications the child is taking, allergies, if any adaptive devices are used, and other health conditions.
- Understand that some people may not feel comfortable talking about certain aspects of their condition or disability. Do not force someone to answer questions that make them uncomfortable. Remind them that any information they share is voluntary, confidential, and not required.
- ADHD is a very common disorder and meeting with the child and his or her parent(s) about the disorder may not be necessary unless you have concerns about the child's behaviors during 4-H events.
- Having a clear schedule of events can help individuals with ADHD remember what they need to do next and keep them on track. Post the schedule of events in areas of the room where they are easy to see and/or provide schedules to each 4-H member. Provide advance notice of schedule changes.
- Keep activities short and/or interactive. Individuals with ADHD have a hard time sitting in one place for long periods of time. They also have a hard time staying focused for long periods of time, especially if they are not using their hands.
- Give instructions one at a time, repeat instructions, and/or post instructions in the front of the room. Individuals with ADHD have a hard time remembering multiple steps at a time. It may also be useful to demonstrate or have photos to accompany the steps of a task. Many people with ADHD are visual learners.
- Allow children to have fidget devices. Individuals with ADHD can usually focus better if their hands are active.
- Break large projects into smaller parts and allow extra time to complete tasks.
- Help individuals set short-term and long-term goals for project completion. Help them create a checklist of things that need to get done by a certain date/time.
- Understand that the individual's forgetfulness, carelessness and restlessness is something he or she has a hard time controlling and all you can do is be patient with him or her.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How does your ADHD impact you?
- What can we do to provide you with an accessible 4-H learning environment?
- Would it be helpful to have a written set of instructions, as well as hear them verbally?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.chadd.org
<https://add.org/adhd-facts/>
www.cdc.gov

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