

Adult Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) is an increasingly common issue facing college students today. National statistics state that 2-4% of adults have AD/HD, with men more likely to have the disorder than women at a ratio of 2:1.

The hallmark symptoms of AD/HD include:

- Difficulty focusing attention
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsivity

AD/HD symptoms show up in various situations, such as in the college classroom, work settings, and may create difficulties getting work done. Symptoms may also affect relationships with friends and family. While AD/HD symptoms must be present prior to 7 years of age for diagnosis, AD/HD often goes undiagnosed until adulthood. This can have a negative affect on an individual's sense of self-worth. For example, those with misunderstood AD/HD symptoms may have taken in negative perceptions of themselves, such as "lazy", "dumb", or "slow". To complicate matters further, men may be overdiagnosed and woman may be underdiagnosed.

It is not unusual for university students to experience some symptoms of AD/HD at some time in their college careers. For instance, at some point in their schooling, university students may find that they have difficulty focusing on schoolwork or make impulsive, poorly thought-out decision; these characteristics alone are not reflective of AD/HD.

Rather symptoms must be present in **two or more settings**, including school, home, and work and **interfere significantly with daily functioning**. AD/HD is complex and a difficult disorder to diagnose, and should only be diagnosed by an experienced and qualified professional such as a psychologist or a psychiatrist.

Signs of AD/HD include:

- Difficulty sustaining attention in tasks
- Being easily distracted or forgetful in daily activities
- Making careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities
- Lack of follow-through in completing homework, chores, or responsibilities at work
- Losing things necessary for tasks or activities
- Fidgety or difficulty remaining still
- Talking excessively or not seeming to listen when spoken to
- Interrupting others or blurting out answers before questions have been completed