

ADHD 101: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WEBINAR OVERVIEW & RESOURCES

Here are key insights from the webinar by Dr. Ryan Lloyd and Dr. Anca Balasu, on ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder).

What ADHD is

It's easy to misunderstand this condition. Here are some facts:

- ADHD is a neurocognitive (brain-based) disorder that can affect an individual's ability to focus.
- The three types include:
 - ADHD-hyperactive
 - ADHD/ADD-inattentive
 - ADHD-combination
- There are no known causes or prevention measures. And it can't be outgrown, but it can be managed.
- The disorder is recognized under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act so schools and workplaces need to make reasonable accommodations to support individuals with the diagnosis.

What to know before making an ADHD appointment

There are several reasons a child might show signs or behaviors that might look like ADHD. It's important to take the following steps to make sure you're heading down the right path for the best solution:

- Talk with your family physician
- Consult your child's teacher
- Document symptoms & behaviors (including when, how long, where, etc.)
- Consider other causes & conditions (see list below)

Testing for ADHD or other diagnoses

Comprehensive evaluation of ADHD may include interviews with the child, parents, teachers and other caregivers:

- Interview will include a thorough history of the individual's core symptoms
- Parent(s) and child will be asked to complete ADHD behavior and self-report rating scale
- Teachers, day care providers, baby-sitters may be asked to complete relevant rating scales
- Observe child (patient) in school and other natural environments
- Review relevant school and medical records
- Complete a bio-psycho-social assessment

Your medical provider and assessing psychologist may assess for other co-occurring disorders such as:

- Anxiety disorders
- Other neurodevelopmental disorders
- Learning disorders or intellectual disability
- Post-traumatic event symptoms/disorders
- Depressive disorders
- Autism

Treatment for ADHD

If left untreated, ADHD and other co-existing disorders can cause suffering in individuals with ADHD and their families. Comprehensive treatment may require more than one intervention based on the unique needs of the child. A combination of therapy, medication and education support approaches provide best results for improving quality of life:

- **Therapy (psychosocial and other)**
 - Mental health counseling for your child, you or the family to address relationship, self-esteem, discipline and parenting concerns, among others
 - Behavior therapy/behavior modification
 - Social skills interventions
- **Medication management**
 - Medication can help manage symptoms in conjunction with other therapies.
 - Psychostimulants – helps manage motor effects (e.g., fidgeting), cognitive effects (e.g., distractibility) and social effects (e.g., reduce aggression).
 - Nonstimulant medications – considered if psychostimulants are ineffective
 - Possible side effects vary, but two common ones are reduced appetite and mildly elevated blood pressure.
 - Starting medication/continued monitoring – use may be adjusted by season or activity level, as appropriate.
- **Academic support**
 - School interventions
 - Parent & child education about ADHD diagnosis and course of treatment
 - Parent training classes or programs to address your child's behavior
 - Educational program modifications & supports, including 504 Plans, tutoring and special education programs

Advocating for someone with ADHD

People can have mistaken ideas about ADHD. As you learn more about this condition, share what you know with others so they too can use effective means of helping those with ADHD. You can be an advocate by sharing information and asking for support from:

- Family, friends, neighbors
- Your child's teacher, doctor, coach or other adult interactions
- Government officials or others who can change laws or unfair policies



Additional Resources:

- ADDitude:
<https://www.additudemag.com/>
- PeaceHealth Healthy You blog post:
<https://www.peacehealth.org/healthy-you/tips-for-parents-of-children-with-adhd>
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry and American Psychiatric Association:
 - Overview for parents:
<https://chadd.org/for-parents/overview/>
 - Medication guide:
<http://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/Psychiatrists/Practice/Professional-Topics/Child-Adolescent-Psychiatry/adhd-parents-medication-guide.pdf>
 - Facts for families:
https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-Who-Cant-Pay-Attention-Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity-Disorder-006.aspx
 - Advocacy guide:
<https://chadd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CHADD-Advocacy-Manual-2019-FINAL.pdf>
- National Institute of Mental Health:
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd>
- CDC:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/index.html>
- Child Mind Institute:
<https://childmind.org/guide/what-parents-should-know-about-adhd/>
- WA state special education:
https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/guidance-families-special-education-washington-state/how-special-education-works?_sm_au_=iVVtkF5qPN6MsFHPtHqkkKtVQ2M4p
- FACT Oregon:
<https://www.factoregon.org/home>

