Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Description

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequently displayed and more severe than is typically observed in individuals at comparable level of development. ADHD is characterized by a pattern of behavior that can result in performance issues in social, educational, or work settings. Symptoms include behaviors such as failure to pay close attention to details, difficulty organizing tasks and activities, excessive talking, fidgeting, or an inability to remain seated in appropriate situations (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-V, 2013).

Individuals do not outgrow ADHD, but ADHD may manifest differently in the adult, who often learns to compensate, or to manage the symptoms of ADHD with medication.

Possible Characteristics

- Inability to maintain focus on tasks over a long period of time
- Tendency to get bored, particularly during lectures
- Difficulty with change
- Variability in performance
- Impulsivity in action and words
- Social problems
- Fidgetiness, squirming in seat
- Problems with time management and organization

Guidelines

Structure: Provide a syllabus with clearly delineated expectations and due dates. Study guides, review sheets, and frequent opportunities for feedback are helpful in providing structure and organization.

Multi-modality Instruction: Provide handouts, visual aids, and hands on activities in class. Allow time for clarifications of directions and essential information, and consider allowing students to use more than one way to demonstrate or explain information.

Classroom Focus: Consider posting class notes or an outline of key concepts online before class. If a student appears extremely distracted, it may be appropriate to encourage the student to sit near the front of the class, away from doors, air conditioning units, windows, or any other possible sources of distraction. Keep instructions as brief, and break long tasks into shorter ones when possible.

Testing accommodations: Students with ADHD often have a need for a reduced distraction testing environment, and experience great difficulty taking tests in the classroom. Distractions that seem small to others (such as students shuffling papers or getting up to turn in a test) can make it
impossible for some individuals with ADHD to complete an exam. SDS testing rooms are often the least distracting testing alternative for students with ADHD.