

ADHD in Adults

www.hadd.ie

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Myths and Realities of Adult ADHD



Myth One

- ADHD is a lack of willpower. People with ADHD focus on what they want. They don't apply themselves.

Myth Two

- Everyone has the symptoms of ADHD. If you are smart enough you can overcome them.

Myth Three

- ❑ You can't have ADHD and have another condition. It's one or the other.

Myth Four

- ❑ You have to be diagnosed with ADHD as a child in order to really have it as an adult.

The Truth

□ ADHD is:

- Neurobiological
- 5% of population
- Life-long
- Chronic impairment
 - Occupational
 - Relationships
 - Family
 - Community

Adult ADHD symptoms

1. Extreme concentration difficulty (A)
2. Extreme organisational skills difficulty (B)
 - A. *“zoning out” of conversations, finishing tasks, several tasks going at once but unfinished, forgetful, distracted*
 - B. *Keeping home chores organised, work duties uncompleted, procrastination, difficulty estimating time needed for tasks, losing things*

ADHD Symptoms (cont.)

- Hyperactivity-differs from childhood condition
- Different in adults:
 - Restless
 - Fidgety
 - Easily bored
 - Irritated
 - Mood swings
 - Can't sit and relax, nervous energy

ADHD Symptoms (cont.)

□ Impulsivity:

Difficulty controlling impulses

- Making sudden decisions on a whim
- Impulse buying/shopping
- Trouble listening to others

Difficulty relating to others

following conversations

interrupting

saying things you regret later

responding to questions before they are fully asked

Effects of Adult ADHD

□ *If left untreated:*

□ **Health:**

□ binge eating, compulsive eating, cycle of drug/alcohol abuse, forgetting medications, keeping medical appointments

Effects of Adult ADHD

□ **Work and Finances**

- Concentrating, completing tasks, listening, relating to others, managing finances, struggling to pay bills, losing important paperwork, missing deadlines, indebtedness due to impulsive spending

Effects of Adult ADHD

□ Relationships

- Wondering why others are “nagging” you to tidy up, get things done, or “take care of business”, hurt loved ones by being short-tempered, cross, irritable, blurting out hurtful things, impatience with the children, quick to flare up, not getting along with supervisors at work, quitting jobs impulsively

Effects of Adult ADHD

Education, Learning and Training

- Underachievement
- Low exam results
- Gap in knowledge
- Academic failure
- Early school leaving
- Embarrassment
- Bullying

Effects of Adult ADHD

☐ **Misc. Effects**

- ☐ Increased road traffic citations/accidents in adolescents
- ☐ Increased road traffic citations/accidents in adults
 - Teens 4x more likely to have an accident
- ☐ Increased incidence of industrial accidents

Psychological Effects

- Low self-esteem
- Low self-confidence
- Diminished sense of self-efficacy
- Sense of shame and guilt
- Task avoidance
- Social withdrawal

Co-Morbidity in Adult ADHD

- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Underemployment
- Anxiety disorders
- Bi-polar disorder
- Specific learning disabilities (dyslexia)
- Epilepsy

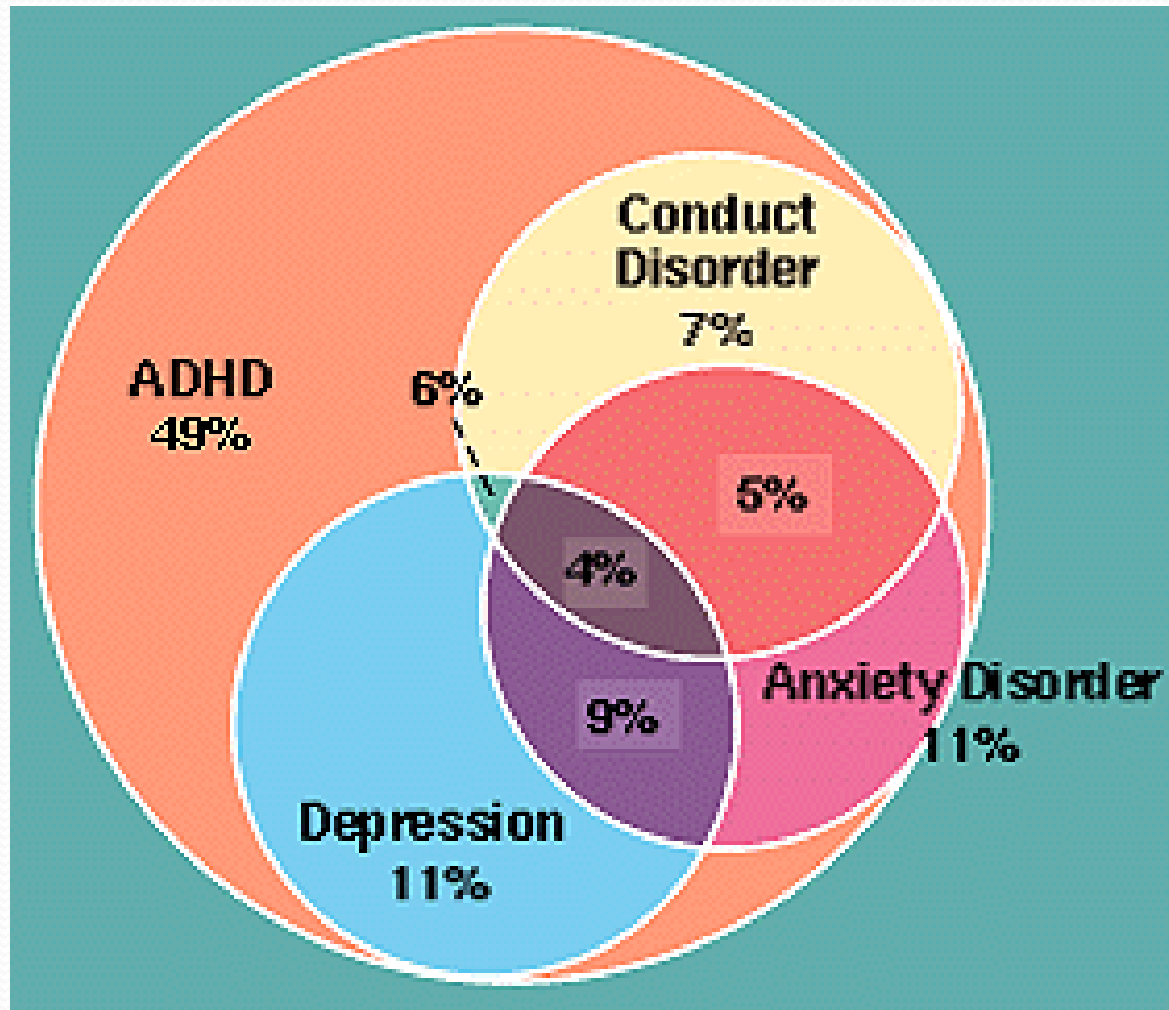


Illustration from Joseph Biederman and Stephen Faraone, Harvard Mahoney Neuroscience Institute Letter, Winter 1996 Volume 5 Number 1



ADHD in adults is not a benign condition

- It can ruin relationships
- It can devastate educational attainment
- It can destroy job opportunities
- It can lead to serious mental health problems
- It can lead to a life of chronic strife and unhappiness

The Good News

- As you will see, there is a positive side to adult ADHD
- It is a highly treatable and manageable condition
- Help is readily available in Ireland
private vs. public
- www.hadd.ie
- www.davidjcarey.com
- www.counsellor.ie