

BEHAVIORAL PRESENTATIONS OF ADHD IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Lindsay Smart, PhD
Shelley Alonso-Marsden, MA
Child/Adolescent Telehealth
April 9, 2015

WHAT DO YOU THINK WHEN YOU THINK “ADHD”?

HYPERACTIVE KID IN KID'S CHOIR

ADHD SUBTYPES

HYPERACTIVE-IMPULSIVE SUBTYPE

- Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in chair.
- Has difficulty remaining seated.
- Runs about or climbs excessively in children; extreme restlessness in adults.
- Difficulty engaging in activities quietly.
- Acts as if driven by a motor; adults will often feel inside like they were driven by a motor.
- Talks excessively.
- Blurts out answers before questions have been completed.
- Difficulty waiting or taking turns.
- Interrupts or intrudes upon others.

INATTENTIVE SUBTYPE

- Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes.
- Has difficulty sustaining attention.
- Does not appear to listen.
- Struggles to follow through on instructions.
- Has difficulty with organization.
- Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring a lot of thinking.
- Loses things.
- Is easily distracted.
- Is forgetful in daily activities.

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes.

Example:

- “Chris” – 12-year-old male therapy client

- Referred to therapy for failing grades in 6th grade due to missing assignments and frequent errors in completed work.

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Has difficulty sustaining attention

Example:

- “Lisa” – 7-year-old female brought in for testing by her mother
- During testing session, Lisa asks for frequent breaks during subtests. She asks to play a board game but loses interest quickly and asks to play another before the first is complete.

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Not seeming to listen when spoken to

Example:

- “Maria” – 9-year-old female therapy client
- Ongoing family conflict related to child seemingly ignoring her parents when they are talking to her.

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Struggles to follow through on instructions.

Example:

- “Jose” – 6-year-old male testing case
 - Normal IQ. Difficulty completing age-appropriate multistep instructions (e.g., getting ready in the morning)

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Has difficulty with organization.

Example:

- “Scott” – 13-year-old male therapy client
- Referred to therapy for failing grades in 6th grade due to missing assignments and frequent errors in completed work.

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring a lot of thinking.

Example:

- “Steven” – 14-year-old male therapy client
- Moved to online school following bullying in middle school. Difficulty completing school tasks due to spending hours daily on video games and internet videos.

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Loses things.

Example:

- “Emily” – 9-year-old female therapy client
- Frequent family conflict due to child frequently misplacing both small (gloves, hat) and expensive (iPod) items at school.

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

- Is easily
distracted.

Example:

- “Rachel” – 10-year-old female therapy patient with primary anxiety
 - Has difficulty maintaining course of therapeutic conversation. Frequently changes topic back to her interests (My Little Pony)

HOW TO SPOT INATTENTION IN KIDS

Is forgetful in daily activities.

Example:

- “Peter” – 21-year-old male testing client
- Referred for testing after failing first semester of college. Peter reports that he was unable to remember assignments, class schedule, and social engagements.

ADHD IN GIRLS

WHY MANY GIRLS WITH ADHD ARE LEFT UNTREATED

<http://www.nbcnews.com/watch/nightly-news/why-many-girls-with-adhd-are-left-untreated-371523139576>

ADHD IN GIRLS

Boys are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD as girls (CDC, 2015) Girls more likely to exhibit inattentive subtype (Hinshaw, 2002)

Population-based studies indicate similar levels of ADHD between boys and girls (Froehlich et al., 2007)

Girls are more likely to internalize difficulties, labeling themselves “stupid” and show more depression and suicidal thoughts by adolescence (Gershon, 2002)

Girls with hyperactive-impulsive subtype more likely to attempt suicide (Hinshaw et al., 2012)

AGE AND ADHD

ADHD IN ADOLESCENCE

Hyperactivity declines in adolescence (Ingram, Hechtman, & Morgenstern, 1995)

Expectations for academic independence increase over the course of school

- Children with ADHD may have more academic difficulty as they enter middle and high school (Brown, 2000)

Impulsive risky behavior (CHADD, 2008):

- Driving
- Alcohol and drug use
- Lying
- Stealing
- Unprotected sex

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING DEFICITS

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING DEFICITS IN ADHD

Across studies, children with ADHD display significant Executive Functioning deficits (Willcutt et al., 2005)

Basics of Executive Function:

- Working memory
 - Ability to retain and manipulate distinct pieces of information over short periods of time.
- Mental flexibility
 - Ability to sustain or shift attention in response to different demands or to apply different rules in different settings.
- Inhibitory control/Self-control
 - Ability to set priorities and resist impulsive actions or responses.

INBRIEF: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION: SKILLS FOR LIFE AND LEARNING

SOCIAL DEFICITS

SOCIAL DEFICITS IN ADHD

Kids with ADHD are more likely to:

- Have difficulty reading social cues; for example, they may interrupt or have trouble taking turns.
- Have problems learning social skills, such as conversation skills and problem-solving.
- Have trouble controlling their behavior and emotions. Other children may find their hyperactive or impulsive behavior irritating.
- Be very physical or aggressive.
- React angrily or inappropriately when they are upset.
- Have trouble cooperating with friends.