

# A Practical Guide to Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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# Objectives

1

Discuss features of ADHD, including the diagnostic criteria.

2

List conditions that may present with symptoms of ADHD and co-exist with ADHD.

3

Explore approaches to ADHD.

4

Identify potential effects side effects of ADHD therapies.

5

Understand Executive Functioning



# Who defines Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?



APA

American Psychiatric  
Association



DSM V

Diagnostic and Statistical  
Manual of Mental Disorders

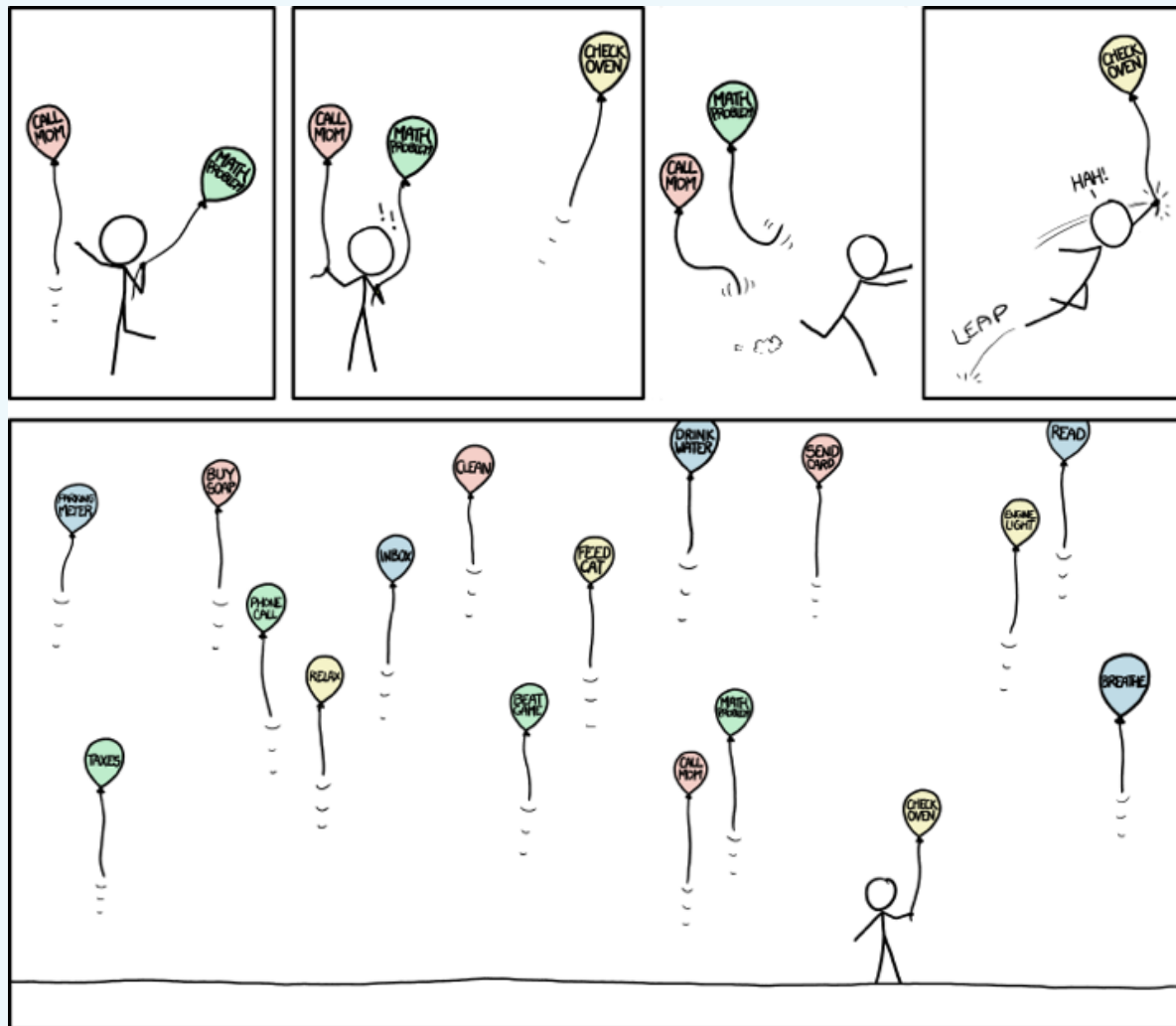
- Rules of diagnosing and treating mental health disorders



# What is ADHD?

- Pattern of behavior of inattention and impulsivity
- Beyond age norms
- More than one setting
- 6 months or more
- Performance difficulties
  - educational
  - social
  - work

# ADHD



6 for 6  
months



Persistent



Pervasive



Impairing

## Inattention

Fails to attend to details or makes careless mistakes

Difficulty sustaining attention

Does not seem to be listening

Not follow through

Difficulty organizing tasks

Avoids task requiring sustained mental effort

Loses things

Easily distracted

Forgetful

Sometimes attentive to the wrong thing or too many things

Can be very absorbed in activities of interest-ex video games



## Judging Disabilities by Eric Perlin

How can you say you have clinical depression?  
I've seen you smiling and even laughing on several occasions!



How can you say you have Attention Deficit Disorder?  
I've seen you surf the Internet for hours at a time!



How can you say you have asthma?  
You're breathing just fine right now!



How can you say you have paraplegia? I can see that you have two legs just like everyone else! You could walk if you really wanted to!



www.funnytimes.com





## Hyperactivity Impulsivity

Fidgets often

Leaves seat

Runs or climbs

Unable to play quietly

“On the go”

Talks excessively

Blurts answers

Difficulty waiting

Interrupts



## Associated Symptoms



Low tolerance for frustration



Sleep problems



Risk taking



Difficulty delaying gratification



Over-reactive emotional responses



Hasty, careless style



# How many kids have it?

An estimated 7 million (11.4%) U.S. children aged 3-17 years have ever been diagnosed with ADHD, according to a national survey of parents using data from 2022.

Danielson ML, Claussen AH, Bitsko RH, et al. (2024)

In 2022, an additional 1 million U.S. children aged 3-17 years had ever received an ADHD diagnosis compared to 2016.

Danielson ML, Claussen AH, Bitsko RH, et al. (2024);  
Bitsko RH, Claussen AH, Lichstein J, et al. (2022)

According to a national 2022 parent survey, nearly 78% of children with ADHD had at least one other co-occurring condition.

Almost half of the children with ADHD had a behavior or conduct problem.

About 4 in 10 of the children with ADHD had anxiety.

Other conditions affecting children with ADHD include depression, autism and Tourette syndrome.

Danielson ML, Claussen AH, Bitsko RH, et al. (2024)

## DSM V Criteria

Symptoms before  
age 12

2 or more settings

6 months or longer

Affects functioning

Rule out  
schizophrenia,  
psychotic disorder,  
anxiety or  
personality disorder

# ADHD Diagnosis

- History
- Differentials to consider
- DSM criteria
- Testing, no single test
  - Stroop test, quotient
- Observations
- Standardized questionnaires, >1 setting
- School Evaluation
- Medical Evaluation



# Standard Questionnaires

**Connors**

**Vanderbilt**

# ADHD: Executive Function



It's like driving in the rain with bad windshield wipers. Everything is smudged and blurred and you're speeding along, and it's really frustrating not being able to see very well.



It's like listening to a radio station with a lot of static and you have to strain to hear what's going on.



It's like trying to build a house of cards in a dust storm. You have to build a structure to protect yourself from the wind before you can even start on the cards.



# Engine





# Brakes



## Perspectives on ADHD



Attention Deficit  
Hyperactivity Disorder



Executive Functioning  
Disorder

# Executive Function Disorder

Executive function is what the CEO of a company must do -- analyze, organize, decide, and execute.

Turning intentions into actions.



# Executive Function



1. Analyze a task



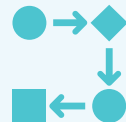
2. Plan how to address the task



3. Organize the steps needed to carry out the task



4. Develop timelines for completing the task



5. Adjust or shift the steps, if needed, to complete the task



6. Complete the task in a timely way

# Academic Supports

504 plan

IEP

General  
supports

Medical  
Assistance



# Medication

## Stimulants

- Methylphenidate
- Amphetamine Salts

## Atomoxetine

## Alpha Agonists

- Clonidine
- Guanfacine

## Polypharmacy

## Medication



Important to monitor effects and side effects



Provide support as well as medication



Trial and Error



Adherence to medication

# Success in Therapy



Is more complicated than we thought



Understanding and addressing co-morbidities



Frequently involves ruling out other conditions



Taking a medical approach and going beyond to collaboration in care to improve functioning.







# Thank you!



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