Home for Good | Safe Families

ADHD TRAINING

Handbook

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been developed from the ADHD Awareness Training programme and is designed as a post-training reference guide. It provides practical information for volunteers, family support workers and professionals supporting children, young people and adults with ADHD. This has been developed from our practical experience of supporting families with ADHD through our professional and personal lives.

What is ADHD?

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental difference affecting attention regulation, impulse control and activity levels. ADHD is lifelong, frequently runs in families and presents differently in every individual. Some people are predominantly inattentive, some predominantly hyperactive/ impulsive and others demonstrate a combined presentation.

The STAR model

Throughout this handbook we use the STAR approach.
This is a support theory that can help when working with people with ADHD.



STOP – notice what is happening.
THINK – consider what ADHD-related factors may be contributing.
ACT – identify supportive strategies.
REVIEW – reflect on effectiveness and next steps.



STOP: RECOGNISING SIGNS

When behaviour becomes challenging it is important to pause before making assumptions. Consider whether difficulties may be linked to attention regulation, executive functioning, sensory processing, emotional regulation or overwhelm. Avoid viewing behaviour as laziness, poor motivation or bad parenting.

If you can take a short pause in your day now to reflect on your own experience of ADHD, whether it's supporting someone in your family, a friend, professional experience or maybe this is something you identify with. Give yourself time to think through what you already know, what has been positive or negative about this? If you are a person of faith you might consider praying about this topic before you start.



THINK: CONSIDER WHAT FACTORS ARE CONTRIBUTING

To be able to do the 'think' part of the support strategy we need some knowledge of what ADHD is and isn't.

Do you remember the myths?

Myth: ADHD doesn't exist

There are over 100,000 scientific journals that provide research and insight into the disorder and it is widely accepted that ADHD meets the defined explicit criteria for judging mental disorders.

Myth: People with ADHD can't concentrate

People with ADHD are able to concentrate when they are interested by what they are doing.

Myth: ADHD is just an excuse for laziness

Neural messages in the brain of someone with ADHD are often inefficiently transmitted. If messages are not sufficient enough to activate a person, it is likely to make them seem unmotivated or lazy.

Myth: ADHD is the result of bad parenting

There is no evidence that parenting plays a significant part in the inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity that defines ADHD.

Myth: Only boys have ADHD

Around 4.2% of girls have received a diagnosis of ADHD at some point in their life. Girls and women are less likely to present with hyperactive behaviours compared to boys and so inattentive behaviours can often be overlooked.

Watch video- What is ADHD?

UNDERSTANDING PRESENTATION

Hyperactivity, Inattention, Impulsivity

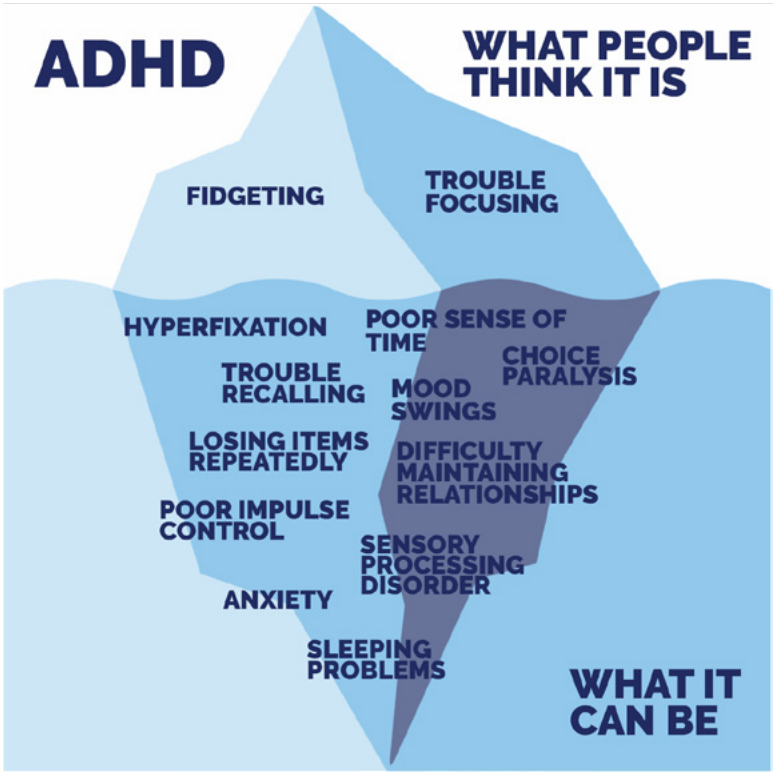
These are the 3 broad categories of ADHD traits.

Hyperactivity may include fidgeting, restlessness, excessive talking and difficulty waiting.

Impulsivity may include interrupting, difficulty waiting and risk taking.

Inattention may include forgetfulness, disorganisation, lateness and difficulty following lengthy instructions. Adults often describe racing thoughts and feeling constantly on the go.

More indepth video about neuroscience if you would like more detail on this



Don't forget the hidden challenges we looked at in the iceberg.

Which of these do you find most surprising?

Many difficulties are hidden. Executive functioning challenges can make starting tasks, planning, prioritising and organising difficult.

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria may result in intense reactions to criticism or perceived rejection.

Sensory sensitivities and emotional regulation challenges can also impact daily life.

ADHD STRENGTHS ICEBERG



However, there are many strengths hidden as well, ADHD is associated with creativity, innovation, humour, persistence, curiosity, problem solving and energy.

Many individuals develop exceptional expertise in areas of interest through hyperfocus.

A strengths-based approach helps individuals build confidence and resilience.



ACT: PRACTICAL SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- Create clear routines and structure.
- Use visual timetables, planners and reminders.
- Break tasks into smaller steps.
- Reduce distractions where possible.
- Use timers and deadlines.
- Consider body doubling.
- Provide movement opportunities.
- Give clear and concise instructions.

Movement

- Movement can improve concentration and regulation.
- Encourage exercise, dance, walking and bilateral activities.
- Promote good sleep, nutrition and emotional wellbeing.
- Use PACE: Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy.

Wellbeing supports

- Emotional support is key, ensure to create an emotionally safe relationship.
- Being aware of your emotions
- Getting good sleep
- Exercising well
- Eating healthy foods
- PACE – Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy

Do remember that having ADHD can cause a great deal of distress, and mean that access to some aspects of life can be challenging.



REVIEW: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

What have I learned? Which strategies fit the families I support? What barriers might I unintentionally create? How can I use more strengths-based language when discussing ADHD? When supporting someone with ADHD, take time either with them or alone to review and reflect on how support is going?

KEY RESOURCES

- **ADHD UK:** adhduk.co.uk
- **ADDISS:** addiss.co.uk
- **Scottish ADHD Coalition:** scottishadhdcoalition.org
- **NHS ADHD in adults information:** nhs.uk/conditions/adhd-adults
- **NHS ADHD in children and young people information:** nhs.uk/conditions/adhd-children-teenagers

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