

10 Problems That Could Mean Adult ADHD

A lot of the time it's not hard to spot ADHD in kids. But adults can have more subtle symptoms. This means many adults struggle with ADHD and may not know they have it. They may not realize that many of the problems they face, including staying organized or being on time, relate back to ADHD.

Here are 10 potential warning signs of adult ADHD:

Top 10 Signs

No. 1: Trouble Getting Organized

For people with ADHD, the responsibilities of adulthood -- bills, jobs, and children, to name a few -- can make problems with organization more obvious and more problematic than in childhood.

No. 2: Reckless Driving and Traffic Accidents

ADHD makes it hard to keep your attention on a task, so spending time behind the wheel of a car can be hard. ADHD symptoms can make some people more likely to speed, have traffic accidents, and lose their driver's licenses.

No. 3: Marital Trouble

Many people without ADHD have marital problems, so a troubled marriage shouldn't necessarily be seen as a red flag for adult ADHD. But there are some marriage problems that are likely to affect the relationships of those with ADHD. Often, the partners of people with undiagnosed ADHD take poor listening skills and an inability to honor commitments as a sign that their partner doesn't care. If you're the person with ADHD, you may not understand why your partner is upset, and you may feel you're being nagged or blamed for something that's not your fault.

No. 4: Extremely Distractible

ADHD is a problem with attention, so adult ADHD can make it hard to succeed in today's fast-paced, hustle-bustle world. Many people find that distractibility can lead to a history of career under-performance, especially in noisy or busy offices. If you have adult ADHD, you might find that phone calls or email derail your attention, making it hard for you to finish tasks.

No. 5: Poor Listening Skills

Do you zone out during long business meetings? Did your husband forget to pick up your child at baseball practice, even though you called to remind him on his way home? Problems with attention result in poor listening skills in many adults with ADHD, leading to a lot of missed appointments and misunderstandings.

No. 6: Restlessness, Trouble Relaxing

While many children with ADHD are “hyperactive,” this ADHD symptom often appears differently in adults. Rather than bouncing off the walls, adults with ADHD are more likely to be restless or find they can’t relax. If you have adult ADHD, others might describe you as edgy or tense.

No. 7: Trouble Starting a Task

Just as children with ADHD often put off doing homework, adults with ADHD often drag their feet when starting tasks that require a lot of attention. This procrastination often adds to existing problems, including marital disagreements, workplace issues, and problems with friends.

No. 8: Lateness

There are many reasons for this. First, adults with ADHD are often distracted on the way to an event, maybe realizing the car needs to be washed and then noticing they’re low on gas, and before they know it an hour has gone by. People with adult ADHD also tend to underestimate how much time it takes to finish a task, whether it’s a major assignment at work or a simple home repair.

No. 9: Angry Outbursts

ADHD often leads to problems with controlling emotions. Many people with adult ADHD are quick to explode over minor problems. Often, they feel as if they have no control over their emotions. Many times, their anger fades as quickly as it flared, long before the people who dealt with the outburst have gotten over the incident.

No. 10: Prioritizing Issues

Often, people with adult ADHD mis-prioritize, failing to meet big obligations, like a deadline at work, while spending countless hours on something insignificant.

Getting a Diagnosis

If you think you have adult ADHD, get examined by a trained and experienced mental health professional. It can be hard to diagnose because some possible symptoms -- like poor concentration or motivation, or relationship problems -- can also be signs of other conditions. Depression or substance abuse can have similar symptoms. Once you get checked out, you can get the best help for you and start feeling better.

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