



## Attention Differences (or 'ADD' / 'ADHD')

*Attention Differences or Disorders is the term used to refer to Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). They lead to difficulties in maintaining attention and often impulsive behaviour. Around four percent of children have this diagnosis and this falls to around one percent in adults.*

Attention Disorders present differently, so it is important not to assume someone with the condition is affected with all the potential difficulties below. The individual is the expert in their condition, so they should be your number one source of information about how it affects them.

### Concentration & Focus

- Struggles to stay focussed and can get easily distracted
- Poor listening skills/zones out
- Flits from one activity to another overlooking details
- Hyperfocus: becomes over absorbed in interesting tasks
- Poorly organised
- Finds it hard to start and finish tasks

### Hyperactivity/Impulsivity

- Perpetually 'on the go' and highly energetic
- Difficulty sitting still and easily bored. Excessive talker.
- Impatient and can sometimes interrupt others.
- May appear rude and/or insensitive
- Prone to risk taking and reckless behaviour

### Emotional Difficulties

- Difficulty managing emotions, especially anger and frustration
- Low self-esteem and often insecure and negative
- Prone to mood swings and feelings of inadequacy
- Difficulty staying motivated
- Difficulty maintaining professional relationships
- Easily stressed out

**Whether you have a friend, colleague, student or employee with an Attention Disorder, there are some simple things you can suggest to make their life easier:**

#### - **WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

Where possible, avoid open plan offices. Provide access to quiet spaces with minimal distractions. Introduce a 'Do Not Disturb' sign for tasks when absolute focus is required. Help with setting up an organised workspace with necessary resources to help (desk tidy, in/out trays, day planner etc)

#### - **PHYSICAL MOVEMENT**

Encourage standing up and moving around to break up time consuming or monotonous tasks. Suggest a physical activity during meetings (e.g. notetaking, doodling or stress ball). Offer the opportunity to go outside at break times as fresh air and movement can be beneficial.

#### - **EMOTIONAL HELP**

Set small, achievable goals to build confidence and celebrate success. Create opportunities for positive feedback and encourage open and honest two – way discussion at regular intervals.