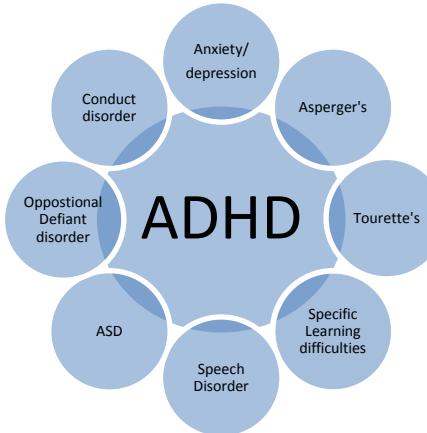


ADD/ADHD

All students who attend CoPASS have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and a Statement of Educational Need. Some of our students have an additional diagnosis of ADHD or ADD. We will describe how we define and meet the needs of students with a diagnosis of ADHD, always having to take into account their barrier to learning which is associated with their autism.

At least 50% of students with ADHD have other related areas of difficulty.

Co-existing conditions associated with ADHD



How we define ADHD/ADD

The terms ADD and ADHD are medical diagnoses and describe a syndrome of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, which may include extreme impulsiveness, inattentiveness and continuous motor activity. Adhd is one of the most common childhood disorders.

There are two sub groups of childhood ADD:

- ADHD – associated with impulsive, hyperactive
- ADD- without hyper-activity, inattentive-impulsive

It is now considered as a disorder of age-inappropriate behaviour with key characteristics of:

Inattention

Appearing not to listen when spoken to
Fails to finish tasks
Poor organisational skills
Avoids sustained effort
Easily distracted
Lose things, is forgetful

Hyperactivity

Fidgets
Cannot play/work quietly
Leaves seat in class
Runs/climbs excessively
Murmurs, talks because is unable to internalise speech
Always 'on the go'

Impulsivity

Talks excessively
Difficultly in turn taking
Blurts out answers
Intrudes on others
Can be physically and/or verbally aggressive
Interrupts others

Medication and ADHD

The prescription of medication to treat ADHD is controversial. The medication most commonly used is methylphenidate (Commercially available as Ritalin) and an alternative drug is dexamphetamine. For many students with ADHD, medication produces short term benefits. It calms and helps them become less aggressive and enables them to interact more effectively with others. As a school, we too, can have impact on a student with ADHD, as we have considerable opportunity to help them develop academically and socially in partnership with parents and carers. Many of the useful approach to support

students with ADHD will also enable the students with Autism spectrum disorder; however some approaches may need to be different.

Classroom support strategies we find useful

A positive learning attribute of students with ADHD is their active learning style. Kinaesthetic/ tactile learning tasks and role play make use of this strength, resulting in increased attention levels and reduced disruptive and impulsive behaviours.

Environment

- Encourage a quiet, calm environment and minimise unnecessary noise.
- Ensure the student's timetable or schedule is easily accessible to them
- Make organisational structures, rules and routines simple and easy to follow and recall
- Sit student away from external distractions (e.g. doors and windows)
- Sit the students where it is easy to monitor progress unobtrusively.
- Within the familiar routines, maximise variation to keep the student's interest.
- Manage group working situations; working in pairs maybe easier.

Teaching strategies

- Consistency of instructions, procedures and routines
- Teaching to the student's cognitive and personal strengths
- Create supported, structured opportunities to allow the student to be academically successful
- Provide frequent legitimate opportunities to leave their seat under staff direction
- Preview and review tasks together so they know what is expected of them and can be rewarded for completion
- Give concise and clear instructions e.g. 'Stop talking, and read page 3' rather than 'get on with your work'
- Ask the student to repeat the instruction to confirm what is expected of them
- Seek alternatives to writing as they may find it difficult due to poor organisational, sequencing and attention skills.
- Increase the likelihood of success by having smaller more achievable steps
- Use direct modelling and instruction to enable the student to understand key aspects
- Rehearse desired thinking routines with students
- Give frequent and prompt feedback and rewards
- Involve them in their own learning decisions e.g. their preferred style of access
- An errorless learning approach with tasks set up and verbally cued so that the student gives the correct response and prevents them committing an incorrect response to memory

Self-esteem and social skills

Students with ADHD can be highly disorganised, often being unaware of messy hair, clothing back to front etc. Messages from school may never reach home, tasks in school left uncompleted because they spend so much time thinking about the first part etc. all of these factors can affect their self-esteem as they achieve little.

The may benefit from:

- A key worker
- Direct teaching of social interaction and self-advocacy
- Strategies to manage organisational skills

- Praise for positive social achievement

Behaviour

- Reinforce positive behaviour rather than highlighting the negative
- Set clear behavioural expectations with the student and the family
- Working with families to share agreed approaches
- Manipulate circumstances so that the student can achieve
- Use an ignore/re-enactment of rules/ praise strategy in response to rule breaking behaviour
- When behaviour is disruptive, use consistent, clearly managed, short-term time out strategies.

Occupational Therapy

Often the students with ADHD can benefit from carrying heavy materials, wearing for weighted bags or belts and from having regular physical movement breaks to help regulate their hyperactivity. In CoPASS the use of such strategies would be overseen by the occupational therapist and part of the student's sensory diet.

Useful links

Brain Gym : www.braingym.org/about

ADD information and support Service: www.adiss.co.uk

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder : www.chadd.org

Hyperactivitive Children's Support Group: www.hacsh.org.uk