



ADHD

Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity Disorder

- THE BASICS -



THE 'GOLDEN' GLOSSARY

What is ADHD?

A condition characterised by specific behavioural patterns. Individuals with ADHD often exhibit **persistent inattention** and/or **hyperactivity-impulsivity** that interferes with daily activities. What is often overlooked in defining ADHD is that it also involves a **developmental impairment of executive functions**, which are the self-management systems of the brain. ADHD can be categorised into three types.

Hyperactive (15%)

The least common type of ADHD; an individual is impulsive and hyperactive. But they don't have trouble paying attention.

Inattentive (20-30%)

An individual with this type is mostly inattentive and easily distracted.

Combined (50-75%)

The most common type of ADHD; an individual is impulsive and hyperactive. They *also* have trouble paying attention and are easily distracted.

DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosing ADHD in children requires **at least 6 symptoms of inattention or hyperactivity/impulsiveness**. For adults, diagnosis is trickier, typically requiring **5 or more symptoms**, and it's essential to confirm these symptoms have been **present since childhood**. Adult ADHD diagnoses in the UK became more **recognised in 2012**, increasing awareness and identification of the condition.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

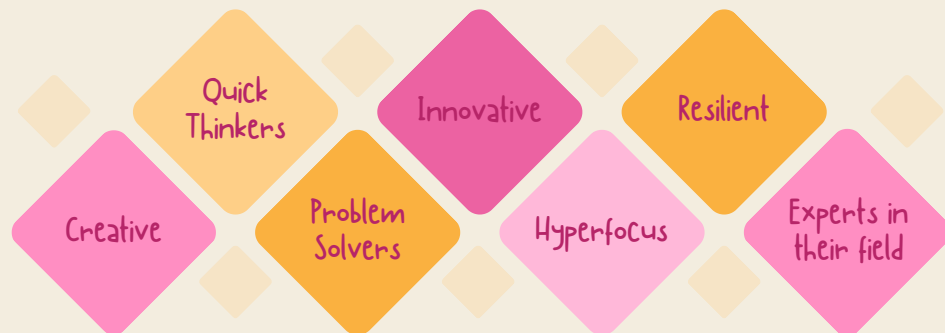
Executive functioning refers to the mental skills that help us **plan, organise, and manage tasks efficiently**, from analysing tasks and developing strategies to setting deadlines and adapting plans as needed. These skills develop in early childhood and continue maturing into our thirties. However, for individuals with ADHD, this **development is often delayed**, making it harder to manage time, stay organised, meet goals, and regulate emotions or impulses. As a result, ADHD individuals may need **support** with tasks that seem mundane to others.

I'm highly creative and can write entire screenplays, but I often struggle with everyday tasks like responding to emails or remembering meetings. I need reminders and systems to stay on top of these routine responsibilities.



STRENGTHS

While ADHD can present challenges, it also comes with unique **strengths**.



HYPERFOCUS

ADHD hyperfocus refers to a **state of intense concentration** where an individual can become **deeply absorbed in an activity that interests them**. They can spend hours on a task, often **losing track of time** and forgetting about other responsibilities.

Hyperfocus can lead to **high productivity** and **incredible innovation** and **creativity**, but sometimes an individual may require **external reminders** to **help balance focus** across various tasks.



SUPPORTING ADHD INDIVIDUALS

01. Listen and Learn

Take the time to understand each individual's unique needs, preferences, and experiences. Listen openly without making assumptions and educate yourself on neurodiversity to become a more supportive ally.

02. Support Executive Function

Understand an individual's challenges and offer tailored support for executive functions like task prioritisation, balancing focus, and providing reminders. Simple tools like planners or apps can help them stay organised and manage daily tasks effectively.

03. Harness Strengths

Understand an individual's strengths and create an environment that allows them to leverage these skills in both work and personal life. This support can help them thrive by aligning tasks with their natural talents, such as creativity or problem-solving, and providing flexibility to maximise their potential.

03. Advocate for Acceptance

Promote acceptance and understanding, not just awareness. Encourage others to see the strengths and perspectives neurodivergent individuals bring to the community, and work towards creating an inclusive, supportive culture.



LEARN MORE

To learn more about ADHD and neurodiversity, visit **Behind the Smiles** - a community built to educate, support, and empower, regardless of neurotype.

We provide **resources**, **share experiences**, and offer **guidance** to foster acceptance of all ways of thinking. By raising awareness and breaking down barriers, we create a **safe, non-judgmental space** for growth.

Behind the Smiles **empowers** individuals to build **confidence**, **embrace** their neurodivergent identities, and **connect** with a supportive, inclusive community.

Explore our content and join us in supporting all minds at **BehindTheSmiles.co.uk**.

