

SECONDARY SCHOOL STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

1. Behaviour problems in the classroom

- Develop clear, concise rules and consequences. Impose consequences quickly and in a non-confrontational, matter of fact manner.
- Separate the compulsive talker from his or her mates. Seating at the front of the classroom is generally best.
- Acknowledge low self-esteem and feelings of resentment by finding ways to relate in a positive manner.
- Bring parents and counsellors in early. Don't wait for a problem to become chronic. Don't wait for your relationship to become one of mutual animosity.
- Identify provocative situations in advance, if possible. ADHD students are more likely to impulsively misbehave if left unsupervised.

2. How to cope with hyperactivity

- Provide the student with opportunities for movement (passing out or collecting paper) if possible.
- Consider allowing shortened assignments if the student seems to comprehend the material but is too restless to complete the entire assignment.
- Allow the student some movement (within boundaries as agreed by private understanding). Often this movement will allow the student to listen more attentively.

3. Promoting more efficient learning

- Material presented in a multisensory manner will be more likely to register with the student and has a better chance of being remembered. Diagrams, charts, outlines, graphs, pie charts, maps, etc will all enhance memory. Even lecture material can be better organised by the student if he has a basic written outline around which to organise the material.
- The student should be encouraged to bring a laptop or notebook computer to class both for note taking and test taking purposes. A student who is highly skilled at keyboarding will be able to take notes more effectively and present his own ideas and thoughts more effectively if he is not hindered by the process of handwriting.
- Provide the student with work samples which exemplify and delineate the criteria which the teacher expects the student to achieve. Students with ADHD are often concrete in their thinking and such stated criteria, along with examples, can be very helpful.
- When possible, provide opportunity to review the student's work with him after school, so there is a continuous flow of information and feedback between the student and the teacher.
- When possible, provide a first review of the student's work with him after school, so there is a continuous flow of information and feedback between the student and the teacher.
- Offer a variety of styles and formats for presenting work to students such as lecture, demonstrations, seminar, drills, manipulatives, and simulations.
- Try to discriminate between knowledge of content areas and mechanics of written language (spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, grammar) in grading papers.
- Giving the student a choice of assignments at times, so that the student can select a task which most closely fits his own learning style and skills.
- Be sure that there is enough structured opportunity for the student to ask questions, clarify assignments and so on.

4. Testing accommodations

- Tests are often taken more successfully in a quiet, non-distracting environment, outside of the regular classroom.
- Due to the slow processing speed, poor handwriting and poor organisational skills, a computer should be made available for essay exams or in class writing assignments.
- Allow extended times on tests and examinations. This will serve the dual purpose of reducing anxiety, as well as actually provide more time to organise thinking and to put thoughts on paper.
- If feasible to do so, allow the student to demonstrate his knowledge of classroom material through means other than regular tests. This might include an oral examination in private with the teacher, a special report or project, or simply the opportunity to take a test in a different format from the usual essay format.

5. Reducing distractibility

- Notices and assignments on the chalk board should be printed neatly and clearly, blocked off from the remainder of the board in a box. This will reduce difficulties with visual distractibility and visual confusion.
- Erase the chalkboard frequently and completely so that remnants of previous presentations are not left to visually distract and confuse the student as you begin your current explanation.
- Try to keep classroom noise at a minimum. Conversation with other students makes concentration for the ADHD student nearly impossible.
- Allow the student to take his work to a quiet place outside of the classroom, such as the library or a study carrel, if he can demonstrate that he is going to use that opportunity responsibly.
- Seat the student away from peers or activities which may serve as auditory or visual distracters.

6. Enhancing organisation

- Announce all tests, special projects, reading assignments, etc at the beginning of each marking period. Hand out assignment sheets with the necessary information for each of these projects.
- The student with ADHD will be helped if he is made accountable for various parts of long term assignments, rather than simply being expected to hand in a project at the end of the marking period.
- Give notice of transition within the class, such as a ten minute notice that test time is about to be over, followed by a five minutes notice. Similar notices for the class being over, for seat work time about to end, etc will all help the student with ADHD to organise his work and himself.
- Written contracts can be helpful, in which the teacher specifies the dates and amount of work which is expected to be presented on specific projects. The specific rewards to the student for correct performance is also specified.
- Develop and display monthly calendars to keep track of important events, such as test dates, project due dates, assignments and so on.
- Keep an “In Basket” conveniently placed and colourfully identified for students to use to hand in assignments. Forgetting to hand in assignments is a chronic problem for ADHD students.