

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Tips for Teens

Developed in collaboration with the mental health centers of NBHP and FBHP & the Client and Family Advisory Board

- 1. Participate in your treatment.** You are the expert about yourself. Be actively involved in setting your individual treatment goals and attending appointments. Practice the skills you learn in treatment. Since most teens still live with their parents or other adults, treatment often includes these adults. Let your therapist and/or prescriber know if you want some time to talk with them alone.
- 2. Ask questions.** Ask your therapist and/or prescriber to explain if they say things you don't understand, or if you have questions about ADHD and your treatment. Write down questions ahead of time and bring them to appointments.
- 3. Talk to your school counselors or teachers** about things that help you learn, such as where you sit in the classroom, extra time or help on assignments; or you can say things like "it's easier for me when there's not so much noise."
- 4. Pay attention to your feelings.** A lot of teens with ADHD have feelings that are hard to deal with, like feeling anxious about school or having low self-esteem. All teens struggle with peer pressure. This can be harder to resist when you feel anxious or don't feel good about yourself. Surround yourself with positive people. You can ask to talk confidentially with your therapist if you are worried about any of these things.
- 5. Get support from family, friends and peers.** You are not alone! There are teen support groups where you can talk with other teenagers about how they deal with ADHD. Ask for information about support groups in your community or online like Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD).
- 6. Care about yourself.** Get enough sleep, proper nutrition and regular physical activity these things can all help you control your energy and your ability to concentrate. Join an after-school activity; this is a great way to use your energy, feel good about yourself and make friends. Remember, alcohol and illegal drugs often complicate symptoms of ADHD and make life more difficult.
- 7. Take ADHD medications as prescribed.** Talk to your parents or prescriber if you have any questions about your medications or if you have uncomfortable side effects. Ask your parents or other close adult to help if you are having trouble remembering to take the medications.
- 8. Create a routine/structure for yourself.** Use your phone, planner, or calendar to stay on track with your goals, appointments, etc. Create lists for remembering daily tasks, and use other types of reminders to help you organize your day. There are a number of applications available for smart phones or computers to help manage symptoms of ADHD and get organized.
- 9. Learn about ADHD** and how people with ADHD learn to cope effectively with their symptoms. Ask for written materials, and read information on the Internet or from the library and see the resource list below.

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Resources for Clients and Families

American Academy of Pediatrics <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/adhd.cfm>

ADDitude: Living well with attention deficit <http://www.additudemag.com/>

National Institute of Mental Health (1-800-421-4211 or
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/complete-index.shtml>)

Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD) www.chadd.org

<https://www.achievementsolutions.net/achievementsolutions/en//Home.do>

Quinn, P., Stern, J. & Russell, N. (1998). *The 'Putting on the Brakes' Activity Book for Young People with ADHD*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.