

# IDEAS FOR ACCOMMODATING INDIVIDUALS WITH ADD/ADHD IN POSTSECONDARY TRAINING AND COLLEGE

## Preface

### KEY TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE AN ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

*(taken from pp. 83-84, Diagnostic Criteria from DSM-IV, The American Psychiatric Association, 1994)*

#### **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder**

Either (1) or (2):

(1) at least six of the following symptoms of ***inattention*** during a period of at least 6 months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level:

- (a) often fails to give close attention to details
- (b) often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks
- (c) often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- (d) often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish tasks or duties
- (e) often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- (f) often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort
- (g) often loses things necessary for tasks or activities
- (h) is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli
- (i) is often forgetful in daily activities

(2) at least six of the following symptoms of ***hyperactivity- impulsivity*** during at least 6 months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with the developmental level:

- (a) often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
- (b) often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected
- (c) often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate
- (d) often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly
- (e) is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor"
- (f) often talks excessively often blurts out answers before questions have been completed
- (h) often has difficulty awaiting turns
- (i) often interrupts or intrudes on others

## **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (Not Otherwise Specified) -**

a category of disorders with prominent symptoms of inattention or hyperactivity-impulsivity that do not meet criteria for Attention- Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Though the above characteristics describe children, these characteristics can also follow that individual through adulthood. This might mean that the problems he/she had in grade school and high school ( restlessness, inability to concentrate, poor organization skills, projects being late, poor listening skills, etc.) might continue on through college and employment.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CLASSROOM**

#### **For lecture setting:**

- ▼ tape recorders or micro tape players
- ▼ note takers
- ▼ hard copies of notes provided by the instructor or other student
- ▼ lap top computer for note taking
- ▼ calculators (some have voice synthesizers)
- ▼ classroom without a lot of distractions (such as noise, decorations, interruptions, etc.)
- ▼ request that the directions be clear and concise (possibly in written form on the blackboard or on paper)
- ▼ a detailed syllabus to give ample time to complete reading and writing assignments

#### **For test-taking:**

- ▼ quiet environment
- ▼ extended time
- ▼ administer test on the computer
- ▼ use a tape recorder to record the answers
- ▼ oral examinations

▼ index cards, blank paper, and/or ruler (help keep place on line)

### **Organization Skills**

▼ break projects to weekly and then daily goals

▼ use daily checklist of what needs to be done that day (might help if you prepare it the night before)

▼ use alarm watch or timer as a reminder for meetings and classes

▼ electronic organizers or daily planners

▼ mini talking memo

▼ color coding for reading/scanning (highlighters and colored mylar templates)

▼ perform the task that is unpleasant first, and followed by the one that is liked or a reward

### **Concentration**

▼ use white noise machine or environmental soothers to cover noise

▼ study in an environment that doesn't have a lot of visual or auditory distractions

▼ use a watch alarm or timer set for 10 min intervals to be reminded to get back on task

▼ find outlets for restlessness such as exercise and/or sports

▼ when sitting in a cubicle area, try to sit away from other students or other distractions

▼ use a headset to listen to music without words- *if* music wouldn't be a distraction