

UNDERSTANDING ADHD

A simple, practical guide from ADHD Zone

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition. It can affect attention, activity levels, impulse control, organisation and everyday functioning. People experience ADHD differently — there is no single 'ADHD way'.



What can ADHD look like?

A

Attention

Being easily distracted, losing track of what you were doing, forgetting things, or finding it hard to finish tasks.

H

Activity & restlessness

Feeling physically or mentally restless, needing movement, or finding it difficult to stay still or switch off.

I

Impulsivity

Speaking or acting quickly, interrupting, making rapid decisions, or finding waiting particularly difficult.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

ADHD can also make everyday 'behind-the-scenes' tasks harder — such as planning, starting, prioritising, switching between tasks, estimating time and remembering what you intended to do.

CAPACITY MATTERS

Having the **ability** to do something does not always mean having the **capacity** to do it right now. Energy, sleep, stress, sensory load, environment and the number of demands already being managed can all affect what feels possible.

ADHD Zone idea: instead of asking only "Can you do it?", it can help to ask "What capacity do you have for it today?"

ADHD IS NOT ONLY DIFFICULTIES

People with ADHD may also bring creativity, curiosity, enthusiasm, problem-solving, energy, humour, spontaneity or the ability to become deeply absorbed in things that capture their interest. These are possibilities, not requirements — ADHD looks different from person to person.

There is no need to fit a stereotype to be ADHD.

What can make life easier?

Externalise memory

Use reminders, lists, calendars, visual prompts and things you can see.

Make tasks smaller

Break a big task into the next tiny step — starting is often the hardest part.

Reduce friction

Put useful things where they are easy to find and remove unnecessary steps.

Use clear communication

Written instructions, one thing at a time and clear expectations can help.

Protect capacity

Build in pauses, quiet time, recovery and realistic limits — not just more pressure.

Ask for adjustments

At work or study, reasonable adjustments may help you access what you are capable of.

UNDERSTANDING BEFORE JUDGING

ADHD is not simply a matter of trying harder. Someone may understand what needs to be done and genuinely want to do it, while still struggling to start, organise, regulate attention or manage the demands involved. Support is often about making the task and environment work better — not blaming the person.

Want to explore ADHD further? If difficulties are affecting everyday life, speak with your GP or an appropriately qualified ADHD service about assessment and support. A diagnosis is based on a full specialist assessment — this guide is educational information, not a diagnostic test.