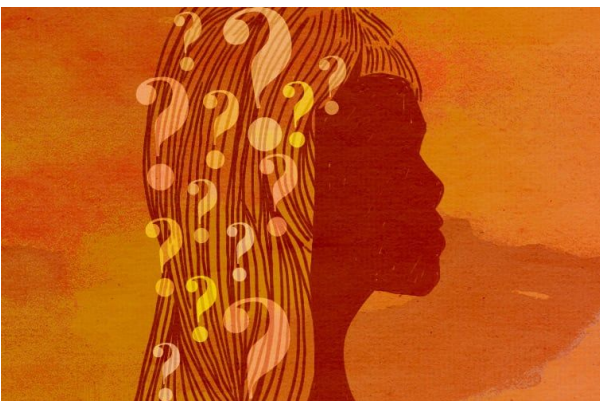


35 Things People With ADHD Want Everyone Else To Know



Quick note: [ADD/ADHD](#) is a neurological disorder characterized by difficulty sustaining attention, by lack of self-control, and by impaired working memory. It's now more often classified in medical literature as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), but lots of people (including some doctors) still refer to it as ADD. For the purpose of clarity and conciseness, we will refer to the disorder as ADHD for the remainder of this article.

1. ADHD isn't an inability to concentrate — it's an inability to *control* what we concentrate on.

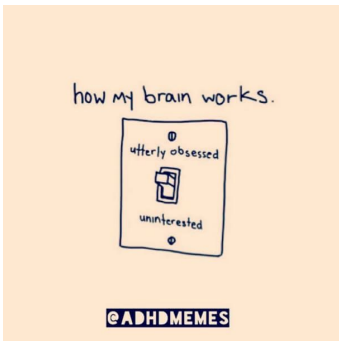


2. Sometimes we focus on literally everything at once.

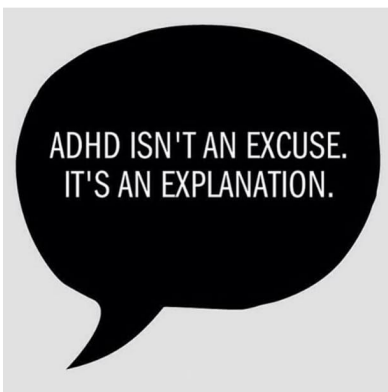


"People seem to think that ADHD means that I'm always too easily distracted. In actuality, I am focused on far too many things at any given moment and move from thought to thought very quickly."

3. ...Or we focus *too* much on one thing, which we call "hyperfocus".



4. ADHD impacts every part of life — not just school.



5. And both children and adults can have the disorder.

"I wish people understood that ADHD affects adults too, and it's not just something you grow out of when you're done with school. Kids that had trouble remembering their homework become adults who have trouble with adult tasks like remembering appointments and paying bills on time."

6. ADHD impairs the brain's [prefrontal cortex](#) — which deals with focusing, decision-making, and managing tasks.

"It's more than just the inability to focus on a lecture."

7. But there are *a lot* of other symptoms, so ADHD can present differently in different people.

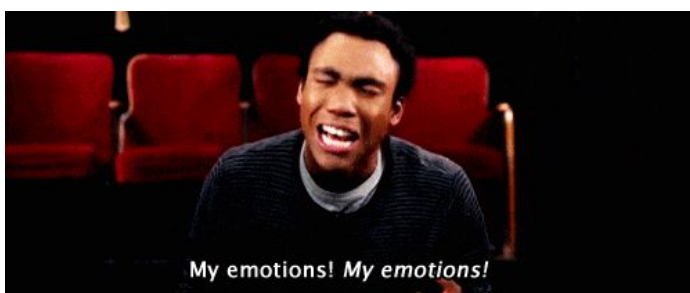
"ADHD looks very different in everyone. It's important to know how your symptoms present themselves and educate yourself about coping strategies accordingly. Individualized help makes a world of difference."

8. Sometimes ADHD makes it difficult to filter our thoughts, so we end up blurting things out.



"A lot of the time I really don't have the ability to filter my thoughts before they come out of my mouth. I've hurt the feelings of a lot of people I love because of my inability to control the impulse to speak. I hate it."

9. It can also make emotions way more intense and hard to control.



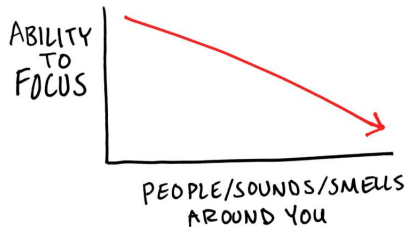
"I wish people understood the emotional aspects of ADHD. It's like having a permanently short fuse and it's so hard to rein in negative emotions once you start having them. Our struggles with emotional control can cause people without ADHD to get so frustrated trying to understand us."

10. We genuinely have a very difficult time estimating how long it takes to do things.



"I'm really bad at knowing how long something is going to take me. I can't account for how my attention is going to hold up or how many times I'll check to make sure that I didn't miss or forget anything. It may just look like poor time management, but I really have no clue how to estimate time or give timelines."

11. Sometimes we can't handle lot of stimuli at once — like sounds, noises, smells, textures, etc.



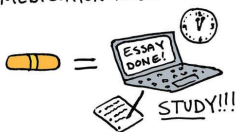
"People should know that ADHD also affects how you handle certain stimuli. Many people with ADHD can't process multiple sounds at once, or multiple people and things touching them."

12. We often have to stick to one task at a time or else we get too overwhelmed.

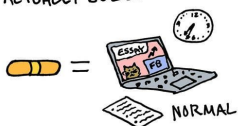
"I wish people understood that when I have a lot of things on my plate, I feel like I can't do anything because I don't know where to start. I get overstimulated and can't focus on anything."

13. Medication doesn't give us an advantage — it just levels the playing field.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK
MEDICATION DOES:



WHAT MEDICATION
ACTUALLY DOES:



"Taking my meds isn't giving me 'extra' focus. It helps me get closer to the level of focus people without ADHD have."

14. ...which is why we hate when others ask for it like it's a recreational drug.

"Asking if you can have some of my pills as a boost just before exam is an insult to me and all the others who actually need the medication to function how you do without it."

15. And even with medication, we still have to work really hard to focus and stay on track.



"Even though I'm on ADHD medication, it can still be very hard for me to focus on the right things. For example, if I'm taking a test and someone is chewing gum loudly — that's all I can think about. Or if I'm copying notes and a bunch of people are talking, I'll concentrate on their voices instead of my notes."

16. We can't change the fact that we think and learn differently.

"It's just a different wiring of the brain. It's just who we are."

17. It can make romantic relationships even more complicated than they already are.

THINGS PEOPLE WITH ADHD
WISH THEIR PARTNERS KNEW:



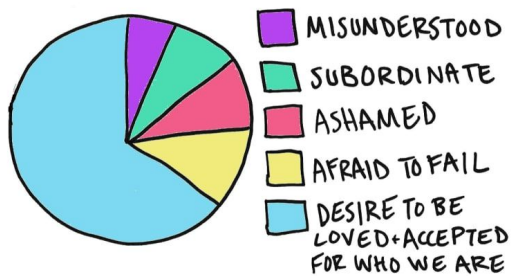
"ADHD really messes with my ability to maintain an interest in relationships. I constantly feel restless when in a committed relationship. After a month or two, I'll get bored of them. It takes an enormous effort to try and combat those feelings, knowing it's my ADHD and not *me*."

18. People with ADHD often experience self-esteem issues.

"Sometimes when I see my friends complete things so easily and succeed with small tasks so effortlessly, it makes me feel like I'm bad at life."

19. And sometimes we feel like we're being a burden to others.

HOW WE OFTEN FEEL
AS THE "ADHD ONE"



"It's stressful always worrying if you're bothering your friends with your disorder, so we could all use a little reassurance that you're okay with us."

20. But it's just as frustrating for us to deal with as it is for our family, friends, partners, and teachers.

"I wish people understood that it's also frustrating for me to not be able to pay attention or to be paying attention to the wrong thing. I don't like being like this either but I can't change it."

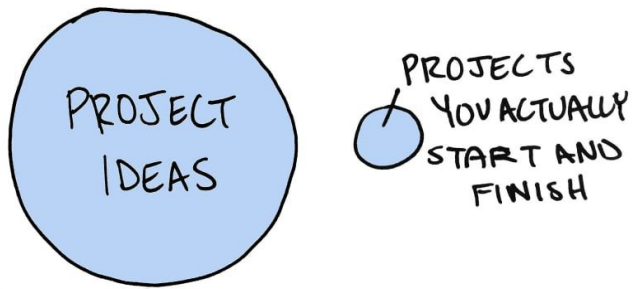
21. It's common for people with ADHD to also suffer from depression and/or anxiety.

"I'm so inside my head all the time that I overanalyze everything! I often feel stupid or like I'm simply not able to do things without help. This has led to lots of anxiety and some depression."

22. We often pour ourselves into our work because it's a way to release the constant stream of thoughts.

"We put our heart and soul into our work because — while we thoroughly enjoy every minute of it — our work is an avenue for us to release and escape all our thoughts and feelings."

23. But while we're great at starting things, we often have trouble finishing them.



"I cannot tell you how many times I have started a task and not finished it because I am so easily distracted. I have about seven or eight books that I haven't read the ending of because I couldn't focus anymore. I've also started tons of craft projects and hobbies, but I just can't find anything that sticks."

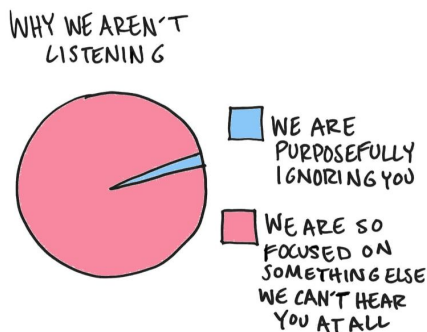
24. It takes us longer to complete tasks because we have trouble plotting out the steps.

"It might take us a little longer to complete things or get organized because we have to work twice as hard to get even the simplest tasks done. For me, sending an email often feels like having to write a 20 page essay!"

25. Having ADHD can make it really difficult to engage in a simple conversation.

"When I'm having a conversation with someone and I change subjects too fast, stare into space, or get completely distracted — I really don't mean to. I wish people were more understanding about the social complications."

26. But even if it's hard for us to listen, it doesn't mean we don't care about what you're saying.

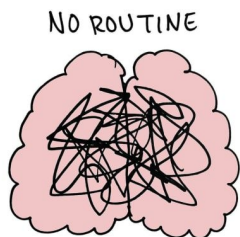
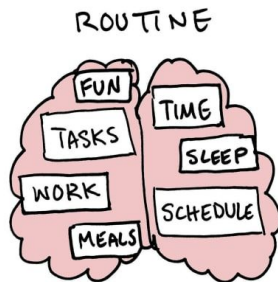


"I often have to ask for clarification on things to make sure that I heard it correctly and remember. It doesn't mean I actively wasn't listening or I don't care about what you're saying."

27. Living with ADHD every single day can be exhausting.

"People with ADHD may seem full of endless energy, but we are also really tired. Our bodies and mind run at warp speed. Many people don't know that ADHD can cause excessive tiredness due to the increased functioning of the body and mind."

28. Sometimes we can only function with structure and routines.



"I wish people knew that if I don't have my structure and my schedule, I feel lost. I won't do anything I need to do."

29. Having ADHD does not make you any less intelligent.

"Just because I have ADHD doesn't mean I'm unintelligent. In general people with ADHD are really intelligent. We just have trouble focusing."

30. And it definitely doesn't make you lazy — if anything, it makes you work even harder.

"Even though I have ADHD and school doesn't come easily to me, I work extremely hard and I'm not any less capable of success."

31. Our ADHD doesn't stop when it's time to sleep — it actually kicks into overdrive.

"I wish people knew that ADHD doesn't turn off when you get in bed to go to sleep. Your mind is still running and taking in all the details."

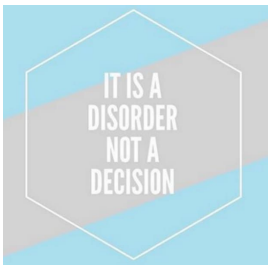
32. When we apologize for our impulsive behavior, we mean it — even if it's for the hundredth time.

"I wish people knew that when I say I'm sorry for my impulsive actions, I really am sorry. There really isn't anything else I can do to stop my impulsive behavior that I haven't already tried or am currently doing."

33. You can't tell if someone is struggling with ADHD just by looking at them.

"I wish people knew that just because I 'appear to have it together' doesn't mean that I don't still struggle."

34. ADHD is not a choice.



"I wish people understood that I don't have a choice in how my brain works."

35. Finally, it means the world when people are patient and supportive.

"The best thing you can be for someone with ADHD is patient. Patience is absolutely key to dealing with and accepting this disorder."