

Attention-Deficit Disorder and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are diagnoses applied to children and adults who consistently display certain characteristic behaviours over a period of time. The most common features include distractibility, impulsivity and, in the case of ADHD, hyperactivity.

Contrary to some beliefs, poor parenting does not cause ADD/ADHD. Instead, ADD/ADHD are most likely caused by biological factors that influence neurotransmitter activity in certain parts of the brain. There is a great deal of evidence that ADD/ADHD runs in families, which suggests strong genetic factors at work. Other important factors may include environment (exposure to certain toxins), birth experience (low birth weight, lack of oxygen) and nutrition (especially food allergies and vitamin deficiencies).

Signs & Symptoms

Individuals experiencing ADD/ADHD may exhibit some or all of the following symptoms. To meet the diagnostic criteria, these behaviours must be excessive, long-term and pervasive. They must also appear before 7 years of age and continue for at least 6 months, and must create a handicap in at least two areas of a person's life, such as school, home, work or social settings.

- Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes

Is easily distracted when playing or performing tasks

- Does not appear to listen when spoken to
- Does not follow through on instructions
- Has difficulty organizing and completing tasks
- Consistently loses things
- Feels restless, often squirming or fidgeting with hands or feet
- Runs or climbs excessively
- Talks excessively, often blurting out answers before hearing the whole question
- Has difficulty waiting for a turn

Therapeutic Approach

In addition to conventional measures - which may include medication therapy, counseling and behavior modification - modalities such as CranioSacral Therapy can play an important role in a comprehensive therapeutic approach.

CranioSacral Therapy is particularly helpful in reducing membrane tension inside the skull. By freeing the central nervous system to function more normally, CranioSacral Therapy has helped many children decrease or eliminate the need for medication.

Dr. John E. Ul, developer of CranioSacral Therapy, has been studying its effects on children with learning disabilities, including ADD/ADHD, since he was at Michigan State University in the 1970s.

Since then, CranioSacral Therapy has been used by many healthcare practitioners with great success. They often report an increase in self-esteem and greater ability to exercise self-control.