



6 Common Questions about ADHD

As an ADHD Life Coach and Consultant, I often find myself in conversations with friends and acquaintances about the topic of ADHD. Following, are a few examples of questions and statements that usually commence the discussion, along with some answers that I share IF the person is interested in engaging further:

What really is ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD is the medical term used to describe someone who presents inattentive and/or hyperactive (with the mind or body) behaviors that present extreme challenges in two or more areas of his/her life and that have been present for longer than six months. Someone with ADHD has a lack of specific neurotransmitters to the frontal lobe, causing executive function challenges, such as: difficulties with organization and planning, time awareness and management, emotional self-regulation, and motivation. ADHD is usually genetic; however, in some situations, it can be caused by trauma to the brain.

My child was diagnosed with ADD, not with the "H".

ADHD is the correct term used regardless of whether there is a hyperactive component or not. There are numerous facets to the diagnosis of ADHD, always involving some form of self-regulation difficulty. Nonetheless, the medical term Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) is diagnosed as: Predominantly Inattentive Presentation, Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive Presentation, or Combined Presentation.

Doesn't everyone have some form of ADHD?

No. Though anyone can be distracted, restless or forgetful at times, for individuals with ADHD, this is ongoing and persistent and significantly interferes with two or more areas of their lives (social, academic, personal and professional) for a period of six months or longer. At times in their lives, it can be debilitating and have many other implications.

I don't think my child needs to know the label. He'll/She'll just use it as an excuse.

Self-awareness is key regardless of the age of the person with an ADHD diagnosis. Diagnoses are not given so people can have *labels*; rather, they can be helpful explanations for understanding why certain things happen the way they do and how to develop ways to be productive and successful. By identifying and defining specific behaviors, such as impulsive, emotional, or unmotivated and knowing the extremes that



can come with an ADHD diagnosis, a person (child or adult) can understand that there is an explanation to what is going on and strategies that can help.

How come I was fine growing up, did great in school, and was very organized? Now, I can't seem to manage my house, my kids, work, etc.?

As a child, systems are put in place that can be easier for some to follow, even those with ADHD. Since ADHD is neurodevelopmental, it has always been a part of you; however, circumstances have not caused debilitating responses until now. Many factors can cause, as Laurie Dupar, my mentor and teacher describes, [The Tipping Point](#), which is a time in your life when old systems and strategies you've used become unreliable. Often times, adults are diagnosed and have an "aha" moment, when they realize that it did take them longer to do projects or assignments, or it was harder to stay focused when they were in college; yet, they were able to manage. Now, with added stimuli and responsibilities, they need guidance to help them cope.

Why does my child's/spouse's (person with ADHD diagnosis) emotion never match the situation?

ADHD emotionality is often not a facet of ADHD that is understood initially because it is not (yet) a part of what classifies the diagnosis. However, individuals with ADHD feel emotions so deeply, whether positive or negative, that it can be overwhelming for the individual and their loved ones. Due to difficulties controlling impulsivity, these individuals act on their emotions without processing the appropriateness of the reaction. It's important that a parent or family member waits until the emotions are not high to discuss possible alternative reactions to specific situations.

