ADHD

Awareness Month

ADHD awareness month allows us an opportunity to consider what we know about ADHD, as well as the opportunity to learn a little more, so that we can be confident in offering support where needed.

> 'Being diagnosed with ADHD has helped me understand more about myself'
> *Billy (aged 9)*
>
> 'ADHD is just a part of me, its who I am. It everyone else that has a problem with it!'
> *Clara (aged 17)*
>
> 'Now my son has been diagnosed with ADHD his life has been turned around, he is now able to recognise and understand certain characteristics he has without being told he is just naughty.'
> *Mother of Thomas (aged 19)*

So, what is ADHD?

ADHD is an acronym that most people are familiar with, but they often don't know what it stands for or what it means.

So, let us start with the basics; **ADHD** stands for **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**.

Some might say this is a new phenomenon, but you'll be surprised to know that way back in 1899, the philosopher William James detailed in his book, 'Talks to Teachers', how some individuals are naturally "scatter-brained", and others are able to control their thoughts in a constructive way without the "temptation to swerve aside to other subjects". William James noted these ways of thinking as 'field of consciousness.'

What are the symptoms of ADHD?

ADHD is a group of behavioural symptoms relating to a neurodevelopmental condition which may develop before birth or during early childhood. In the UK, ADHD may also be referred to as Hyperkinetic disorder. As ADHD falls under the umbrella of other neurodiverse conditions such as Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and others, it can often be challenging to recognise in the early years.

- ➢ **Hyperactivity** = fidgety, problems sleeping.
- ➢ **Inattention** = disorganised, struggle to focus on tasks, forgetfulness.
- ➢ **Impulsivity** = interrupting others, not understanding cues for conversation, speaking, or acting out without thinking.

In the early years, children may also develop sensory integration challenges within the environment, which may lead to dysregulation. Unfortunately, this can often lead to misdiagnoses of other behavioural issues – therefore, early intervention is required to support the child on the learning journey.

Looking at the statistics relating to ADHD's intersection with other difficulties or conditions may also help us to further build our awareness:

- 1/2 with ADHD also have dyslexia
- 1/2 with ADHD also have dyspraxia
- 9/10 with Tourette's have ADHD
- 2/3 with ADHD display autistic spectrum traits.

Common myths and providing support

There are many common myths surround ADHD, some of which you may have previously heard of. Let's clarify the facts from the fiction:

- Myth: Only boys have ADHD.
  - Fact: Although more boys have been diagnosed, 4.2% of girls have also been diagnosed.
- Myth: ADHD is due to poor parenting.
  - Fact: ADHD develops from a range of environmental factors as well as genetic factors.
- Myth: ADHD is an excuse for laziness.
  - Fact: No – ADHD is an issue with a chemical imbalance and is not under a voluntary control.

Take a moment and consider………

- What must life be like for a child with ADHD.
- How would you support a child, young person, or adult with ADHD?
- What professional support may they and their families need?

Good Practice

When providing support for individuals with ADHD, it's important that you remember to:

- Be warm and understanding, responsive and flexible to the needs of those with ADHD
- Consider that ADHD makes them who they are, having the knowledge and understanding around their needs creates a positive vibe
- Work in partnership with others, especially with parents and carers
- And finally, one of the most crucial factors is **relationships.** Strategies are useful, but **positive relationships** are always going to be more important.

Useful List for further reading

https://www.adhdawarenessmonth.org/myths-and-facts-about-adhd/

https://www.adhdawarenessmonth.org/category/q-a/

https://adhdaware.org.uk/what-is-adhd/neurodiversity-and-other-conditions/