



## Introduction

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is commonly diagnosed in children and adults, but it often co-exists with other psychological conditions. Below is a table that outlines some common DSM-5 conditions that co-exist with ADHD, explaining how their symptoms overlap or mimic ADHD.

**Table: Common DSM-5 Conditions that Co-Exist with ADHD (Listed by Prevalence)**

Condition	Symptoms that Overlap with ADHD	Prevalence Among Individuals with ADHD (%)	How It Mimics ADHD	Key Differences
<b>Anxiety Disorders</b>	Restlessness, trouble concentrating, difficulty staying still, irritability	~25-40%	Anxiety can lead to distractibility, restlessness, and fidgeting	Anxiety is related to fear or worry, while ADHD involves attentional and hyperactivity issues.
<b>Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)</b>	Irritability, impulsivity, difficulty following rules, defiance, mood swings	~35-50%	Difficulty with authority, temper tantrums, disobedience	ODD focuses more on defiance and oppositional behaviours, while ADHD includes broader attention and hyperactivity issues.
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>	Difficulty focusing, problems with reading, writing, and math	~20-30%	Academic struggles, slow work pace, distractibility	Learning disabilities are specific to certain academic skills, while ADHD affects broader cognitive processes.
<b>Substance Use Disorders</b>	Impulsivity, risk-taking behavior, inability to stay focused	~15-30% (in adolescents and adults)	Substance abuse can lead to problems with concentration and impulsivity	Substance use disorders are linked to addiction, while ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder.
<b>Depressive Disorders (e.g., Major)</b>	Low energy, difficulty concentrating,	~20-30%	Lack of motivation and low concentration	Depression includes pervasive sadness and hopelessness, which is not characteristic of ADHD.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Symptoms that Overlap with ADHD</b>	<b>Prevalence Among Individuals with ADHD (%)</b>	<b>How It Mimics ADHD</b>	<b>Key Differences</b>
<b>Depressive Disorder)</b>	irritability, sleep disturbances		can resemble ADHD symptoms	
<b>Bipolar Disorder</b>	Impulsivity, irritability, distractibility, mood swings	~5-10%	Mood swings and impulsive behavior overlap with ADHD symptoms	Bipolar disorder includes distinct mood episodes (mania or depression) that are not present in ADHD.
<b>Sleep Disorders (e.g., Insomnia, Sleep Apnea)</b>	Daytime sleepiness, irritability, trouble concentrating	~20-40%	Sleep deprivation can cause cognitive impairment similar to ADHD symptoms	Sleep disorders cause symptoms due to lack of rest, whereas ADHD symptoms are due to neurodevelopmental factors.
<b>Conduct Disorder</b>	Impulsivity, hyperactivity, aggression, disregard for others' rights	~5-10%	Disruptive behavior, rule-breaking, lack of empathy	Conduct disorder involves more severe antisocial behavior, while ADHD lacks the overt disregard for others' rights.

## **Conclusion**

The conditions most commonly observed alongside ADHD are anxiety disorders, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), and learning disabilities, with anxiety disorders having the highest co-occurrence. Understanding the relative prevalence of these conditions helps clinicians to be more mindful when diagnosing ADHD and co-existing disorders. Proper differentiation between ADHD and these co-occurring conditions is essential for effective treatment planning, ensuring that individuals receive the most appropriate care to address all aspects of their symptoms.

