NP HOME
Assess, LLC

# Understanding ADHD
# Patient Education Handout

Michelle Holder, PMHNP-BC, APN-BC
Phone: 855-921-0500
www.nphomeassess.com

*You deserve to be heard, believed and supported*

## WHAT IS ADHD, REALLY ?

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a brain-based condition that affects attention, impulse control and executive functioning. It is not caused by laziness, lack of intelligence, or poor motivation.

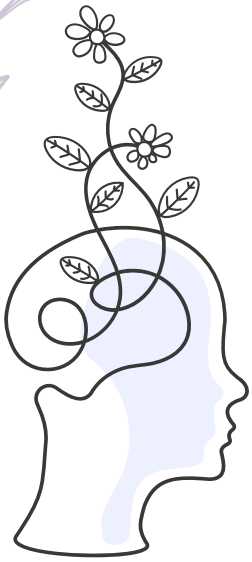
## ADHD TYPES

ADHD exists on a spectrum and presents in three subtypes – and especially for women, it looks nothing like these stereotypes.

*Inattentive type*: Difficulty focusing, organizing and follow through. Often mistaken for anxiety or "spacing out". The most common presentation for women.

*Hyperactive-Impulsive type*: Restlessness, talking excessively, acting without thinking, difficulty waiting. Often more visible, but less common in women.

*Combined*: Features both subtypes present together. The most commonly diagnosed presentation



NP HOME
Assess, LLC

## ADHD AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE

Your clinician isn't just looking at today but also should be tracing patterns across your lifetime to understand how ADHD has shaped your experience.

Here's what your clinical history should include:

***Early Patterns***

Academic struggles, behavioral patterns, report card comments, social difficulties, or early signs of inattention.

***Genetic History***

ADHD, learning differences, anxiety, mood disorders, or substance use in close relatives

***Life Functioning***

Patterns of underachievement, job changes, missed deadlines, difficulty in structured environments

***Co-occurring Conditions***

Prior diagnoses of anxiety, depression, PTSD, eating disorders, or substance use – these commonly overlap with ADHD.

***Body-Based Overlap***

Sleep disorders, thyroid conditions, chronic pain, hypermobility (HEDS/HDS), POTS, MCAS, Histamine Intolerance, PMDD – conditions that can co-occur or mimic ADHD.

***Hormonal Patterns***

Whether symptoms worsen with your menstrual cycle, postpartum period, or perimenopause. Hormones are a critical and often missed piece.

NP HOME
Assess, LLC

## HOW YOU LIVE MATTERS TO YOUR DIAGNOSIS

The details of your daily life tell a story. Your clinician will explore these areas to build a full, honest picture of how ADHD may be showing up in your life, such as:

***Sleep***

Racing thoughts at night, trouble with waking up in the middle of the night, non-restorative sleep or delayed sleep phase

***Eating***

Forgetting to eat, impulsive or emotional eating, caffeine dependency, or hyperfocus on certain food

***Exercise***

Reliance on movement to focus, difficulty with consistency, or high intensity activity as self-regulation.

***Substances***

Use of caffeine, nicotine, alcohol or cannabis to manage focus, calm racing thoughts or aid sleep.

***Phone & Screens***

Excessive scrolling, difficulty putting down devices, or doom scrolling as avoidance.

***Relationships***

Difficulty with conflict, people pleasing, overcommitting or withdrawing, sensitivity to criticism, social anxiety.

***Work & Home Life***

Unfinished projects, chronic lateness, difficulty keeping routines, cluttered environments, any feedback received from friends, colleagues or managers.

***Coping Strategies***

Lists, alarms, body-doubling, working late – adaptive strategies that can mask ADHD while exhausting you.

NP HOME
Assess, LLC

## PREPARING FOR ADHD EVALUATION

The more information you bring to your appointment, the richer the picture your clinician can build.

Here's what helps:

***Bring prior medical records***

Previous psychiatric or psychological evaluations, IEP/504 plans from school or any prior ADHD testing

***Note your patterns***

Think back to childhood – ask a parent/guardian or sibling if possible.
What did your report cards say?
Did you struggle to finish homework?

***List all medications***

Include over the counter supplements, vitamins, herbal remedies and all prescription medications.

***Track a Typical Week***

Before your appointment, briefly note 3-5 specific situations where attention or executive function was hard for you.

***Be Honest***

There are no right or wrong answers. The more openly you share your experiences, the more accurate your evaluation will be.