



# HUMANIZING NEURODIVERSITY: A DEEPER LOOK AT ASD, ADHD, & MORE

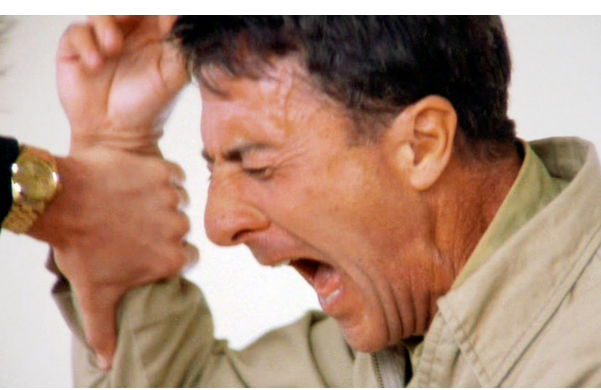
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# WHAT'S YOUR IMAGE OF AUTISM???





# WHAT AUTISM LOOKS LIKE TO ME.



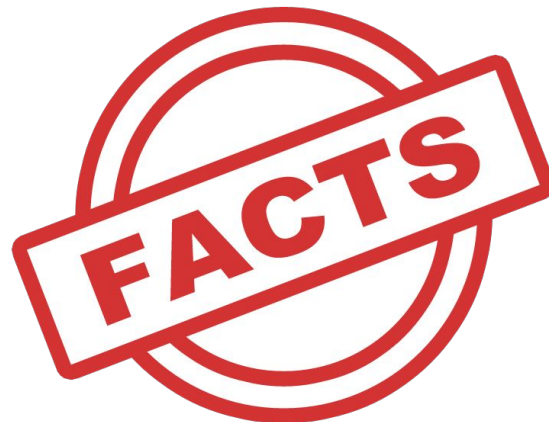
IF YOU'VE MET  
ONE PERSON WITH  
AUTISM, YOU'VE  
MET ONE PERSON  
WITH AUTISM.  
DR. STEPHEN SHORE



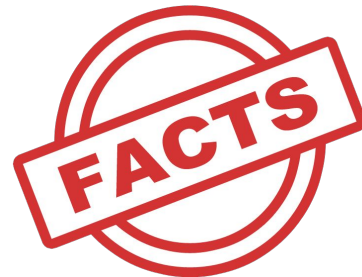
# FACTS ABOUT ASD

## Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – Key Statistics (U.S.)

- **Prevalence in Adults:**  
Approximately **5.4 million U.S. adults (2.21%)** are estimated to have ASD (based on 2017 data).
- **Prevalence in Children:**  
In 2025, the CDC reported that **1 in 31 children** (aged 8) were diagnosed with ASD, based on 2022 data.
  - **Boys:** 1 in 20 (approx. 4.9%)
  - **Girls:** 1 in 71 (approx. 1.4%)
  - **Boys are ~3.4× more likely** to be diagnosed than girls.
- **Intellectual Functioning:**  
Among children with ASD:
  - **37.9%** have an intellectual disability (IQ < 70)
  - **23.5%** are in the borderline range (IQ 71–85)
  - **38.6%** have average to above-average intelligence (IQ > 85)



# FACTS ABOUT ASD



- **LGBTQIA+ Identity:**  
Estimates suggest **42–69% of individuals with ASD** identify as LGBTQIA+ (based on smaller studies; data varies).
- **Diagnosis Age:**  
Most children are diagnosed **after age 4**, though **reliable diagnosis is possible as early as age 2**.
- **Savant Syndrome:**  
Occurs in **<1% of individuals** with ASD (rare and not exclusive to ASD).
- **Equity & Access:**  
ASD affects all **ethnic and socioeconomic groups**, but **minority populations are often diagnosed later and less frequently**.
- **Early Intervention:**  
Early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly better outcomes across the lifespan.
- **Emerging Research:**  
No medical test currently exists for autism, but **AI-based tools (e.g., eye-tracking)** are being studied as potential diagnostic aids.



SOCIAL INTERACTION DIFFERENCES  
COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES  
+ BEHAVIOR DIFFERENCES

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AUTISM

Specific symptoms and severity varies from case to case.

# Diagnostic Tests for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

## 1. Developmental Screening Tools (for early signs):

- *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)*
- *Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised (M-CHAT-R/F)*
- *Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers and Young Children (STAT)*

## 2. Diagnostic Evaluations (in-depth assessments):

- *Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition (ADOS-2)*
- *Autism Diagnostic Interview – Revised (ADI-R)*
- *Childhood Autism Rating Scale, Second Edition (CARS-2)*
- *Gilliam Autism Rating Scale, Third Edition (GARS-3)*
- *Social Responsiveness Scale, Second Edition (SRS-2)*



## 3. Cognitive and Language Testing (to assess intellectual and developmental functioning):

- *Wechsler Intelligence Scales (WPPSI, WISC)*
- *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales*
- *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)*
- *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF)*

## 4. Additional Assessments (as needed):

- *Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS)*
- *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales*  
*Sensory Profile questionnaires*

## Who Can Diagnose Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Developmental Pediatricians

Child Neurologists

Child & Adolescent Psychiatrists

Clinical Psychologists (Ph.D. or Psy.D.)

Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) &

Counselors (LPCs) Under Supervision or training



## A Brief History

**1938-1944** Hans Asperger distinct psychological characteristics as 'autistic psychopaths'.

**1943** Leo Kanner created Autism as a psychological disorder.

**1960-70** "Frigid Mother" for schizophrenia was applied to global developmental delay.

**1980** CARS assessment

**1987** DSM III PDD-NOS started to conceptualize a "Spectrum"

**1988** The movie "Rain Man" & Standardized testing for ASD.

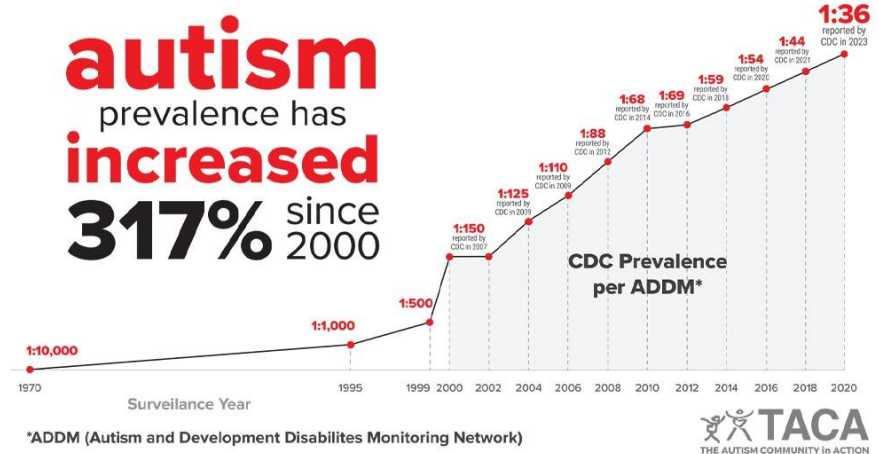
**1994** DSM IV Created Autism Spectrum Disorder

**2000s** A spike in autism prevalence. It is suggested that clinicians were sometimes swayed by parents lobbying for a particular diagnosis or influenced by the services available within their state.

**2011** Get SET Early program for pediatricians

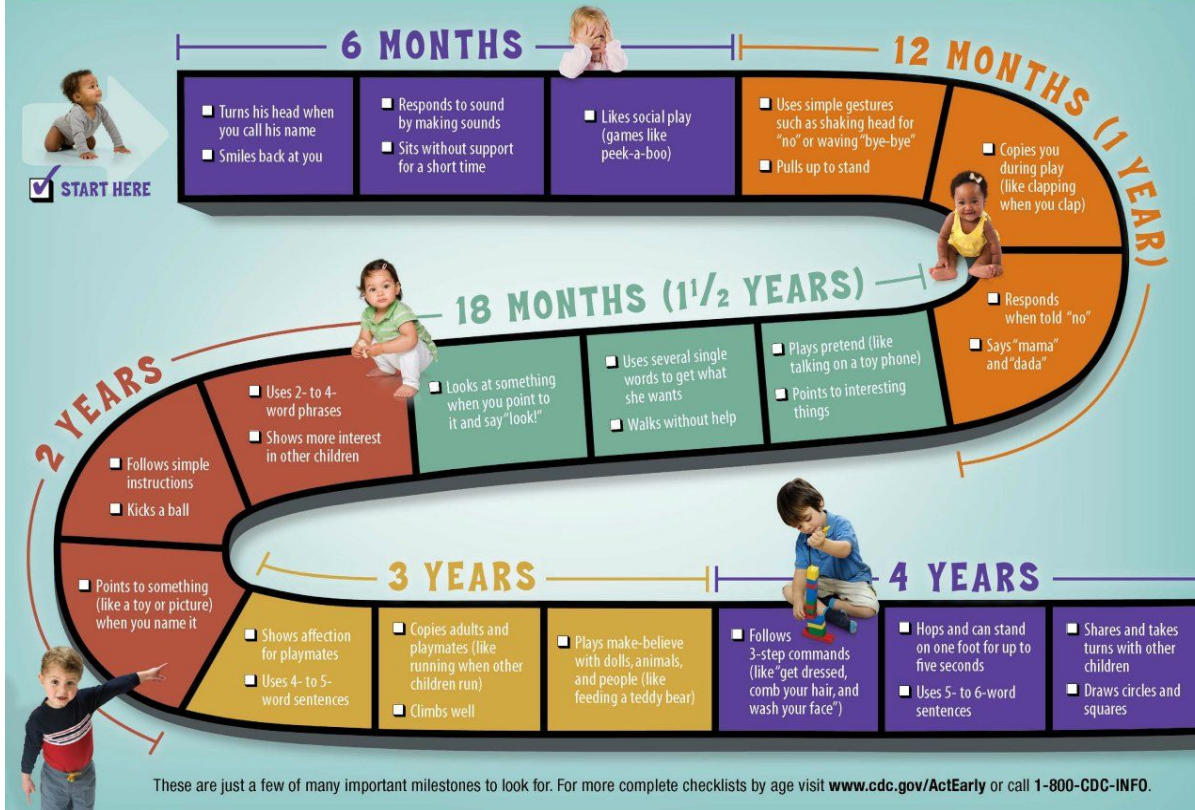
**2013** DSM-V Autism Spectrum Disorder now taking the place of PDD-NOS, and Asperger's.

## Is Autism an epidemic?

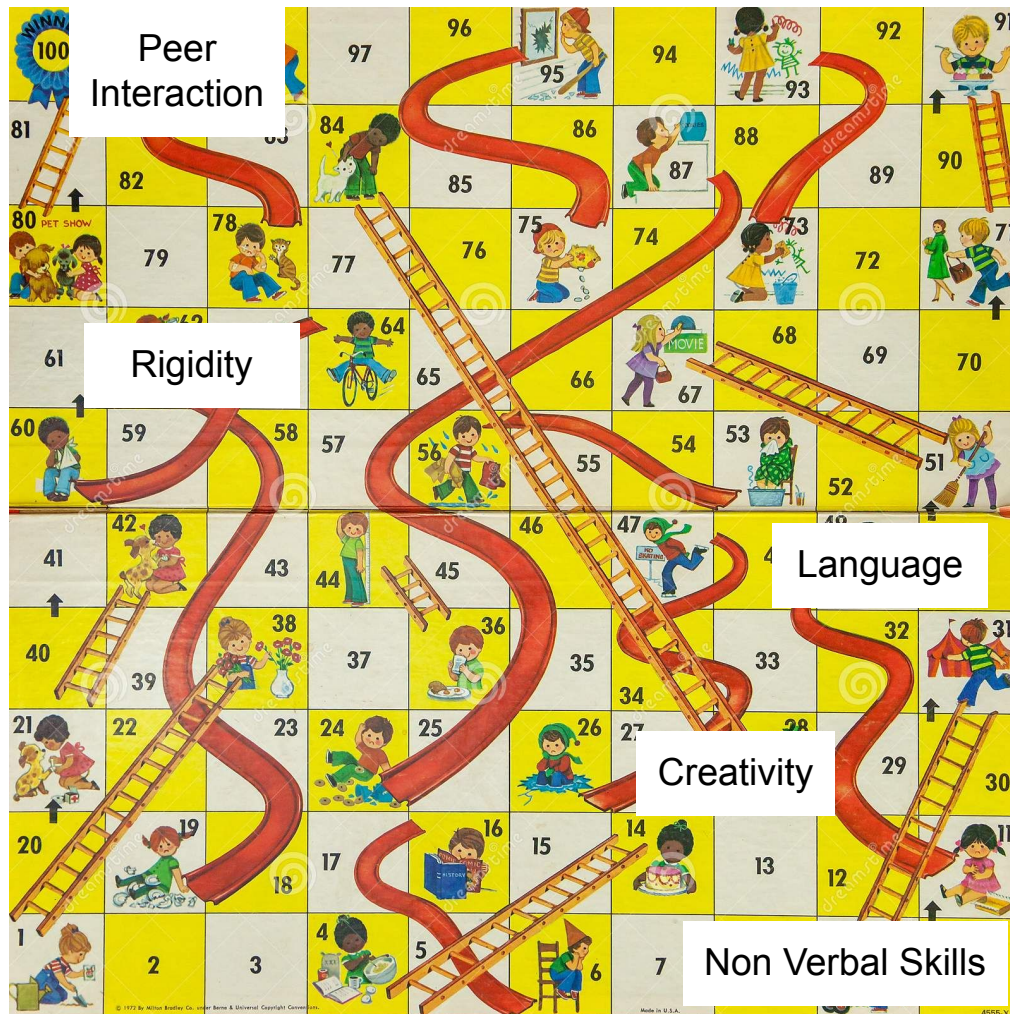


# Your Child's Early Development is a Journey

Check off the milestones your child has reached and share your child's progress with the doctor at every visit.



Who remembers this from lifespan class?



Early  
childhood  
model with  
kids with  
Autism.

# THINGS YOU *MIGHT* SEE RELATED TO COMMUNICATION...

- Differences in volume, rhythm, or sound
- Repetitive or odd speech
- Reduced eye contact/discomfort with eye contact
- Differences in emotional expression (flat, exaggerated Unusual or inappropriate responses)
- Less use of gestures and other non-verbal communication
- Reduced understanding of others' gestures

## ASD LEVEL 1

Requires support

- Difficulty initiating social interactions.
- Problem with planning and organisation at times.



## ASD LEVEL 2

Requires considerable support

- Social interactions are limited to narrow special interests.
- Frequent restrictive and repetitive behaviours.



## ASD LEVEL 3

Requires very substantial support

- Severe deficits with verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Narrowly focused and becomes distressed when changing behaviours or focus.





# THINGS YOU MIGHT SEE RELATED TO SOCIALIZATION IN ASD....



- Less awareness of personal space
- Difficulty with interpreting others' facial expressions, body language, or moods
- Difficulty "reading" expectations for activities
- Fewer initiations of social interaction or difficulties keeping social interactions/conversations going
- Difficulty understanding other people and their perspectives
- Need to control play

# REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS AND INTERESTS ASSOCIATED WITH ASD

- Narrowed or intense interests
- Parts of Objects
- Need for sameness and routines
- Unusual body movements
- Sensory differences or interests

## DAILY ROUTINE OF KIDS

Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa.  
Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient



# THINGS YOU *MIGHT* SEE RELATED TO REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR, INTERESTS, OR SENSORY DIFFERENCES

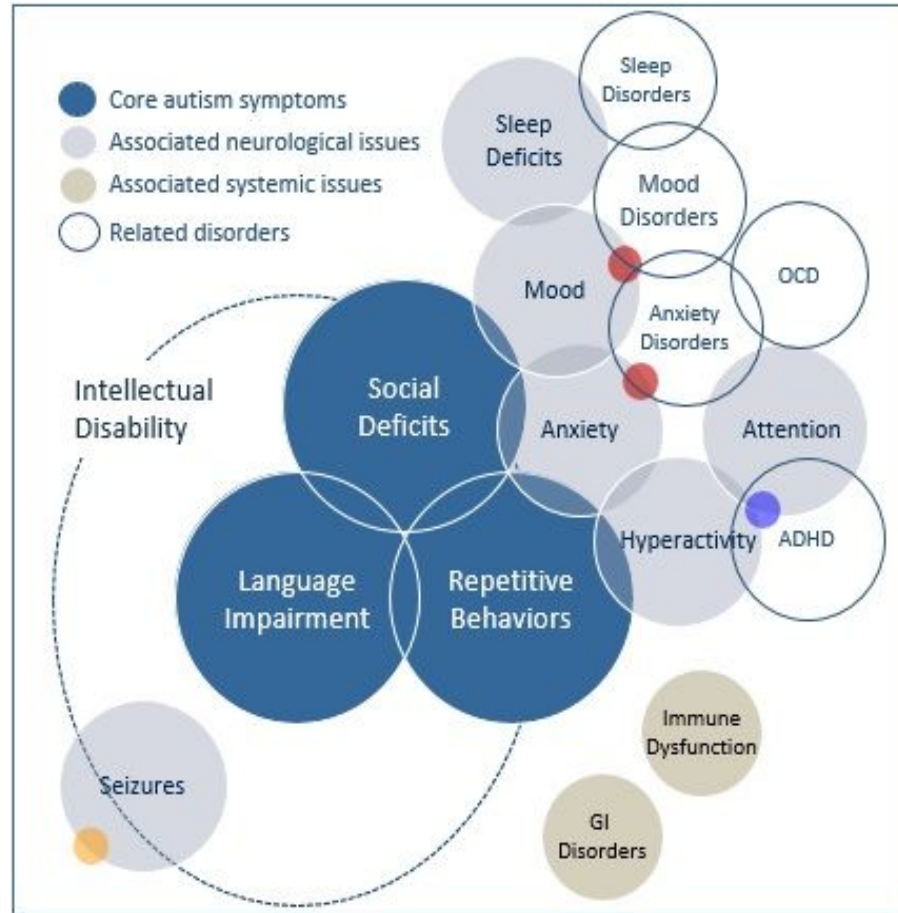
- Difficulty talking about others' interests
- A desire to collect things
- Preoccupation with a piece of an object or with a part of a pattern
- Difficulty transitioning or dealing with changes in the routine
- Repetitive body movements or unusual ways of moving
- Sensory-seeking behavior
- Sensory sensitivities



Category	Sensory Avoidance (Hyper-reactivity)	Sensory Seeking (Hypo-reactivity)
Response Type	Over-sensitive to sensory input	Under-responsive or craves sensory input
Touch Sensitivity	Dislikes being touched; avoids grooming or certain fabrics	Constantly touches objects or people; seeks tactile input
Pain/Temperature Awareness	May be overly sensitive to pain or discomfort	Appears indifferent to pain or temperature extremes
Sound Sensitivity	Easily overwhelmed by loud or unexpected noises	May make loud noises for enjoyment; less sensitive to surrounding noise
Visual Response	Bothered by bright lights or visual clutter	Fascinated by lights or motion; uses peripheral vision to watch objects
Crowds/Social Settings	Avoids crowded or overstimulating environments	May seek out busy environments for stimulation
Food Sensitivity	Avoids foods with certain textures or smells	May mouth or lick non-food objects; drawn to strong tastes or smells



# Issues Associated with ASD



# NERODIVERSITY IN MARRIAGE

## Common Non-ASD Needs

Adventure  
Approval  
Being Needed  
Being Noticed  
Commitment  
Compliments  
Connection/Intimacy  
Excitement  
Going out  
Passion  
Reassurance  
Spontaneity  
Surprises  
Time Together  
Touching  
Verbal Affection  
Variety

## Common Needs for Both

Acknowledgement  
Appreciation  
Being heard  
Concern  
Encouragement  
Feeling Important  
Honesty  
Loving me as I am  
Loyalty  
Organization  
Protection  
Respect  
Safety  
Security  
Support  
Trust  
Understanding  
Valued for accomplishments

## Common ASD Needs

A calm environment  
Certainty  
Consistency  
Control  
Direct requests  
Information  
Logical explanations  
Practicality  
Predictability  
Punctuality  
Quiet  
Routine  
Solitude  
Specific Instructions  
Stability  
Structure  
Time for special interest



INATTENTIVE (6+)

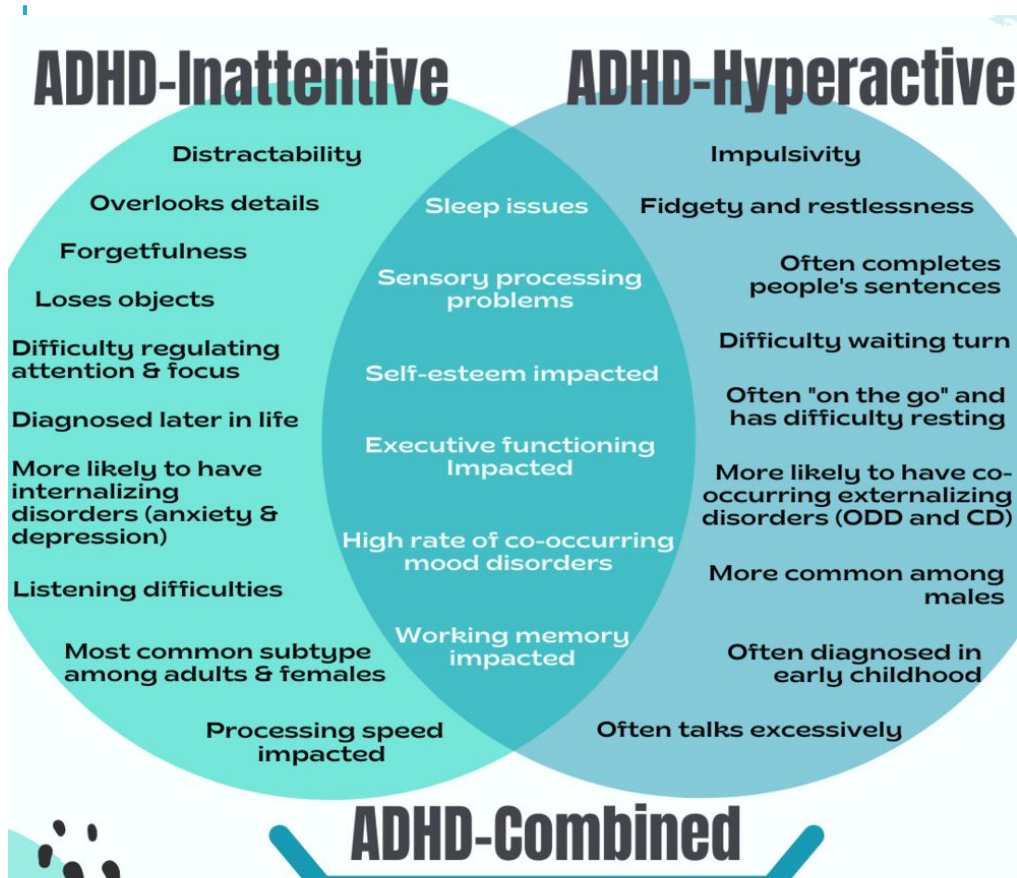
+/-

HYPERACTIVE (6+)

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ADHD (AFTER 6 MO)

Different ways in which the symptoms of this type of disorder appear and the severity of symptoms varies from case to case.



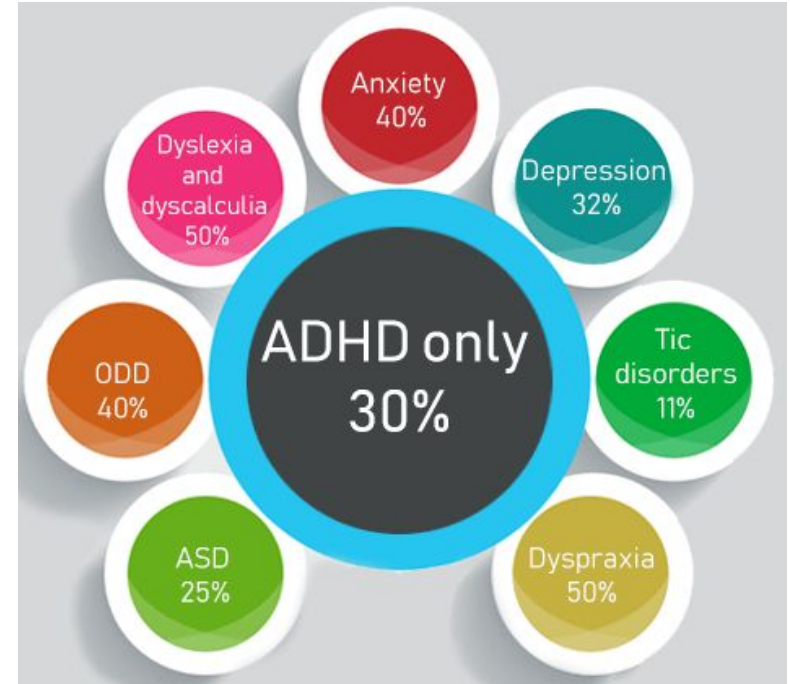
Everyone has some elements of ADHD it's when you have 6 or more for over 6 months you start thinking about a diagnosis.



# Facts about ADHD

## ADHD Prevalence and Demographics (U.S.)

- An estimated **6 million children aged 3–17 years** (approximately **9.8%**) have ever been diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- CDC data from 2016–2019 reports:
  - Ages 3–5 years: **265,000** children (about **2%**) diagnosed
  - Ages 6–11 years: **2.4 million** children (about **10%**) diagnosed
  - Ages 12–17 years: **3.3 million** children (about **13%**) diagnosed
- Boys (**13%**) are more likely to be diagnosed than girls (**6%**).
- Diagnosis rates are higher among Black, non-Hispanic and White children compared to Hispanic or Asian children.



ADHD is the only diagnosis about 30-31% of the time.

# Gender Differences in ADHD

## FEMALES

- Onset at/after puberty
- Less likely to be diagnosed
- Internalizing behaviors
- Inattentiveness more difficult to identify
- Show distress by crying/sadness/mood
- Impatience complained about but not as often seen behaviorally
- Greater likelihood for depressive/anxiety disorders
- Shame/shyness is common
- More empathic
- Hormonal fluctuations can significantly affect symptoms

## MALES

- Onset before puberty
- More likely to be diagnosed
- Externalizing behaviors
- Inattentiveness easier to identify
- Show distress through agitation
- Impatience shown through aggression/hostility
- Higher rates of substance use disorders
- Shame/shyness is less common
- Less empathic

## ADHD & Marriage

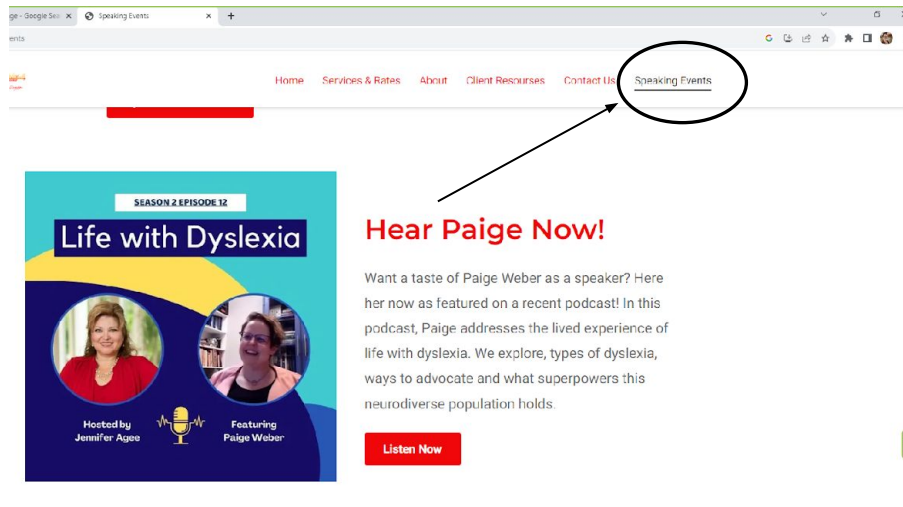
It's not hard to find plenty of research on the challenges of ADHD in marriage, but what do you think some of the benefits are?



# GOT QUESTIONS? LET'S CONNECT!

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More  
Information  
on Dyslexia



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