

COULD I HAVE ADHD?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that's mainly associated with and diagnosed in children. However, it's estimated that **up to 60 percent of children with ADHD will have some symptoms that persist into adulthood.**

Unfortunately, often adults are not properly diagnosed or treated for the disorder.

Mild cases of ADHD can also go unrecognized in childhood. Nevertheless, the effects of the disorder can be particularly troublesome in adult life. ADHD can make accomplishing some everyday tasks and responsibilities a challenge. In addition, adults with ADHD sometimes have difficulty with their jobs and their relationships. They're also at higher risk for substance abuse.

RECOGNIZE YOUR SYMPTOMS

Here are some questions you should consider asking yourself to see if you need to seek medical advice on ADHD:

- Are you generally restless and unable to sit still for long periods of time?
- Do you feel that you're more impulsive than the average person?
- Do you find that you struggle to stop and think before doing or saying anything?
- Do you sometimes find yourself in difficult situations because you have overreacted angrily or even violently?
- Do you notice that you fidget a lot, or has anyone told you that you fidget?
- Do you have mood swings?
- Is it hard for you to concentrate?
- Have you lost a job (or jobs) because of poor time management skills or failure to complete assigned tasks?

Many adults with ADHD exhibit these symptoms. If a lot of this sounds familiar to you and/or you can recall having these symptoms as a child, it may be a good idea for you to speak to your physician.

Although you may not "outgrow" ADHD, you can certainly learn to live with it better. **With the appropriate care and treatment, adults with ADHD live productive and successful lives.**

TREATMENT

The good news is that if you are diagnosed with ADHD there are a number of effective treatments and therapies that may help you manage your symptoms:

Medications – A number of drugs have been shown to be effective at improving attention and concentration.

Counseling – A professional EAP counselor or life-coach can help people with ADHD learn skills to better deal with the disorder.

You can find out information about the EAP by contacting the program at **1-800-222-0364** (1-888-262-7848 for TTY callers), or by visiting the website at **www.FOH4You.com**. You can also contact your Human Resources department. □



This newsletter is brought to you by the Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides assessment, counseling, referral, management consultation, and coaching services to Federal employees and agencies throughout the United States. For administrative details about the program, contact Chiquita Cooper at 404-562-7950, ext. 125, or email Chiquita.Cooper@foh.hhs.gov. To visit us on the Web, please go to www.FOH4You.com.

Help is available all day, all week, all year. 800-222-0364, TTY: 888-262-7848.

Let's Talk is available electronically at www.FOH.hhs.gov/eapnews.

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Let's Talk

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Working at Home: 7 Tips to Help You Work Smarter

According to a recent survey by Stanford University, more than 10 percent of U.S. employees now work at home on a regular basis. Here are some tips that can help you work smarter, instead of harder, from home.

Set up a comfortable workspace/working environment. This should include everything you need to work efficiently and comfortably: a well-made (and ergonomic) chair and desk, phone, computer, and adequate lighting (both natural and electric).

Keep a regular schedule. Just because you don't have to be at the office by a certain time doesn't mean you should work whenever you feel like it. Maximize productivity by establishing a routine and keeping a schedule. Try to start work at a set time every day, schedule recurring phone and video chats with your colleagues throughout the week, and allocate time to answer emails. Also, by establishing regular "office hours" and making family members aware of them, they are more likely to understand that you take that time frame seriously and should not be unnecessarily interrupted during those hours.

Take breaks. It's great to immerse yourself in your work. However, it's also important to take regular breaks.

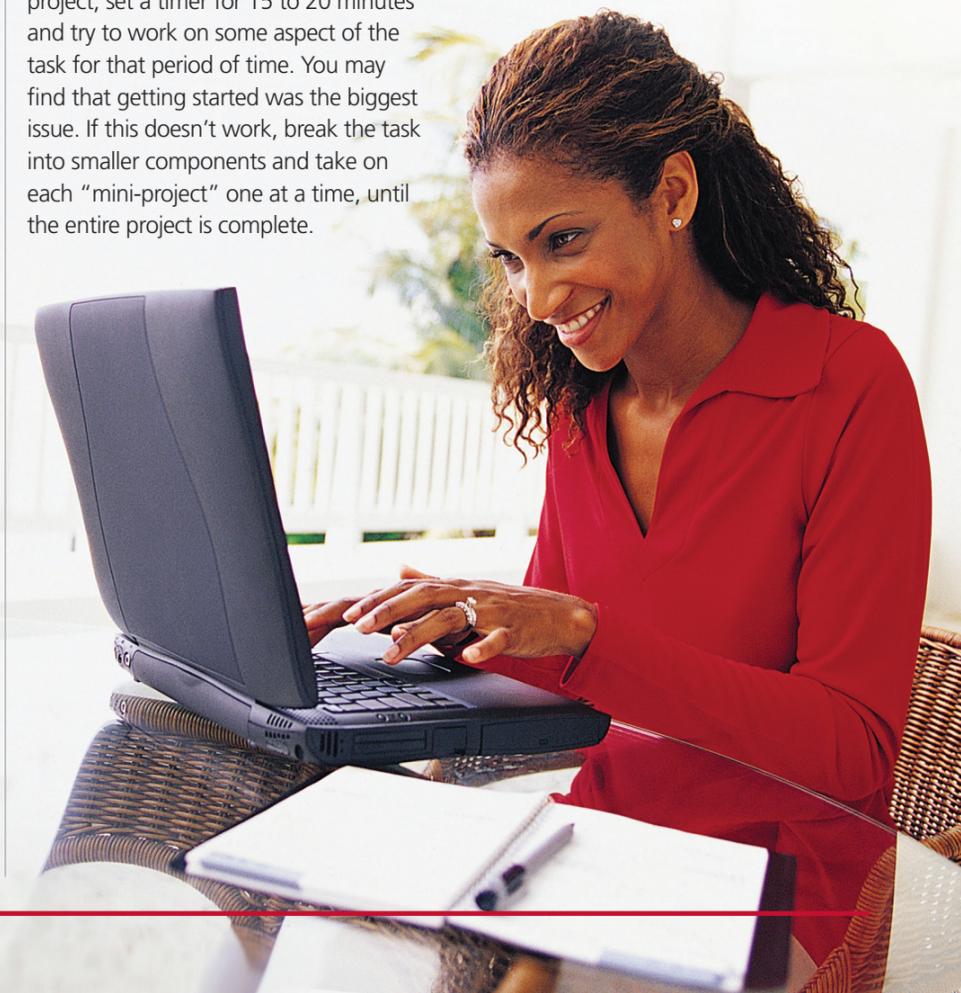
Taking breaks is a good way to keep your mind and body sharp, and to prevent burnout. Check your employee guidelines to determine the frequency of your breaks.

Set daily goals. Make sure you have clearly defined goals and tasks every day. Make a list of your goals/tasks, prioritize them, and work on the most important ones first. Remember to cross them off your list as you complete them.

Triumph over procrastination. If you just can't seem to get started on a project, set a timer for 15 to 20 minutes and try to work on some aspect of the task for that period of time. You may find that getting started was the biggest issue. If this doesn't work, break the task into smaller components and take on each "mini-project" one at a time, until the entire project is complete.

Take it outside. If your work is portable, take it somewhere else. A coffee shop, library, restaurant, or quiet spot in a park are all good choices. Sometimes a change of scenery and the removal of home distractions are all you need to increase your productivity. Make sure you're near a Wi-Fi source so that you can still be available to your team should they need you.

Working from home can be highly rewarding. Making some simple adjustments can help you be at your most effective and productive. □





Sailing to Success: Couples and Finances

Always remember that you're on the same crew, heading toward the same goals.

When it comes to managing a couple's finances, it's important to have shared goals and to be heading in the same direction. In many ways, it's like you are a two-person crew sailing a small boat together—you need to consistently coordinate your efforts.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

People often don't realize that their partners may have a completely different philosophy about money than they do. This can be because of a past crisis with money, because of the way your partner's family dealt with money, or because of your basic personality types—some people are more relaxed about money, while others are more careful. Nonetheless, you'll need to get on the same page, and this requires teamwork.

COMING TO THE TABLE

You'll want to start with an open and honest dialogue about money and how you feel it should be spent.

Choose a time and place that both of you will find relaxing and neutral for this conversation. It's not a good idea to have this conversation when someone is stressed out about balancing a checkbook or has just expressed concern about a recent purchase or "splurge."

Avoid placing blame by using sentences that start with "I feel" rather than "you always" or "you never."

And if you can't come to an agreement on your overall finances, see if you can reach a mutual understanding on just one aspect of your financial practices in your discussion. You can build from there at subsequent meetings.

MAPPING OUT THE PLAN

Working as a financial team can take a bit of soul searching and may require changing a habit or two. You and your partner may want to map out where you want to go. You can assess your money situation by keeping close track of how each of you currently spends money. This can sometimes be a helpful wake-up call for a partner who may spend money without considering the consequences. From there, you can set goals for spending and saving.

HEADING IN THE SAME DIRECTION

You'll need to agree on how much you need to put aside to pay shared expenses—such as rent, utilities, and car payments – as well as how much to set aside each month for savings. In fact, sometimes it's helpful to consider savings as part of your set shared monthly expenses, to ensure that you don't overlook it. You'll find that it's all been worth it once you and your partner are heading toward the same goal. □

Conditioning the Mind and Body to Combat Stress

When you're in a stressful situation, sometimes all you need is a quick fix—a speedy antidote to relieve the frustration or pressure that you're feeling.

For that in-the-moment stress release, you can:

- Take deep breaths
- Go for a walk in the fresh air
- Remove yourself from the difficult situation, if that's practical
- Find a quiet place to have a glass of water or cup of tea
- "Check out" for five minutes while you listen to relaxing music
- Meditate

PREPARE FOR NEXT TIME

An even more sustainable way to deal with stress is to prepare and condition your mind and body so that stress has less of an impact on you when you encounter it. This may take some patience and some training. The mind, like the body, needs a regular routine that helps it adapt to a new way of being.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

A great way to prepare for stress is through practice. Like so many other things, the more often you practice techniques for preventing stress, the easier they will get. It's a lot like developing muscle strength by starting out with light weights and progressing to heavier weights as your muscles become stronger. The same principle can be applied to stress management. Start out with a "light" situation, such as not getting frustrated while waiting in a checkout line. Once you are comfortable with controlling your stress in this scenario, you can then apply the same techniques to a more serious situation, such as staying calm and patient when your flight's delayed over an hour.

SURRENDER

Another helpful practice is surrendering to things over which you have no control. For example, you can't make the subway arrive any faster by getting angry and frustrated. You have no control over how the subway runs. You can only try to change your attitude, by surrendering and being calm as you deal with the present situation. Or, you can try to increase your chances of arriving on time by waking up earlier, so that you feel less rushed.

THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION

Don't forget that stress can be a physical response to outside forces. If you are in a good mood and take good care of your body, external events often have little effect on you. However, if you are tired or hungry, for example, you can become a "bundle of nerves." So, by taking good care of your body with nutritious food, regular physical activity, relaxation, and sound sleep, you're more physically prepared to let stress roll off your back. □

