

# Adult ADHD Symptoms and Functioning Checklist

A clinical conversation guide for adults and helping professionals

Purpose: This checklist helps organize a conversation about attention regulation, impulsivity, activity level, and everyday functioning in adulthood. It is not a validated diagnostic instrument and does not establish an ADHD diagnosis.

## Instructions

Complete the checklist based on the past six months and across more than one setting when possible. Consider whether similar patterns were present in childhood, while recognizing that stress, sleep, mood, substances, medications, and medical conditions can produce overlapping difficulties.

| 0     | 1      | 2         | 3     | 4             |
|-------|--------|-----------|-------|---------------|
| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Almost always |

  

| #  | Statement                                                                                                               | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1  | I miss details, make avoidable mistakes, or lose track of what I am doing.                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2  | I have difficulty sustaining attention during reading, conversations, meetings, paperwork, or routine tasks.            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3  | I appear not to listen or realize that my attention has drifted during direct conversation.                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4  | I start tasks but have difficulty following through, especially when they involve several steps or delayed rewards.     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5  | I struggle to organize time, materials, priorities, schedules, or deadlines.                                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6  | I postpone or avoid tasks that require sustained mental effort.                                                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7  | I frequently misplace items needed for daily activities.                                                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8  | External events or unrelated thoughts easily pull my attention away.                                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9  | I forget appointments, obligations, messages, bills, or routine responsibilities.                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10 | I feel internally restless, fidget, or have difficulty remaining seated when expected.                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11 | I speak, decide, spend, drive, interrupt, or act before adequately considering consequences.                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12 | I have difficulty waiting, pacing myself, or shifting from an interesting activity to a necessary one.                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13 | These patterns interfere with work, education, finances, health care, household responsibilities, or driving.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14 | These patterns contribute to conflict, unreliability, unequal responsibility, or misunderstanding in relationships.     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15 | Similar difficulties were present before adulthood or have been noticed across multiple settings by other people.       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16 | I am willing to discuss one specific support, environmental change, or formal assessment with a qualified professional. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

# Clinical Review

Use the responses to locate patterns, functional effects, and the next clinically appropriate conversation.

## 1. Review by domain

| Domain                                      | Items       | Clinical focus                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Attention and organization</b>           | Items 1-9   | Look for inconsistent attention, incomplete follow-through, organizational difficulty, task avoidance, misplaced items, distractibility, and forgetfulness. |
| <b>Activity and impulse regulation</b>      | Items 10-12 | Look for internal or visible restlessness, impulsive actions or speech, difficulty waiting, poor pacing, and trouble shifting activities.                   |
| <b>Functional and developmental context</b> | Items 13-16 | Examine impairment across life areas, relational effects, childhood or cross-setting evidence, and readiness for support or assessment.                     |

## 2. Interpretation

This checklist intentionally has no diagnostic cutoff. A total score can obscure the most important information. Review which individual items were marked Often or Almost always, whether difficulties occur across settings, whether they impair functioning, and whether there is credible evidence that the pattern began before adulthood. Consider alternative or co-occurring explanations rather than relying on a total score.

Clinical caution: Attention and impulse-control difficulties may also reflect sleep deprivation, anxiety, depression, trauma, substance use, medication effects, learning problems, bipolar-spectrum conditions, or medical illness. Unsafe driving, dangerous impulsivity, severe functional collapse, or self-harm risk requires direct assessment.

## 3. Discussion prompts

- Which pattern creates the greatest cost in daily life?
- Where and when does attention work better?
- What structures or environments reliably improve follow-through?
- Were similar patterns present in childhood, and who might provide useful history?
- What other conditions could be intensifying the difficulty?
- What is one observable support or environmental change to test next?

## 4. Notes and next step

Primary concern:

Settings and functional impact:

Developmental or collateral information needed:

Agreed next step:

Follow-up date: