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An Informational Digest of EmpowerM3 by Coach Cindy

What Tags Along with ADHD

Understanding Co-existing Conditions of ADHD

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Which came first, the chicken or the egg? The diagnosis process for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD and once called ADD, is complicated enough. Deciphering the best action to manage symptoms becomes even more challenging when adding co-existing conditions, also known as comorbidities, like anxiety and depression. And co-existing conditions go way beyond anxiety and depression. This article will teach you the common and not-so-common comorbidities associated with ADHD that you need to know when diagnosed with ADHD.

Comorbidity- n. existing simultaneously with and usually independently of another medical condition.



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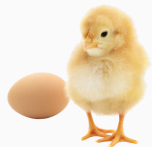
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Before we begin, I want to preface the importance of partnering with a trained mental health professional. An ADHD diagnosis can only be determined using the DSM-5 by a clinical psychologist, clinical social worker, nurse practitioner, neurologist, pediatrician, or psychiatrist. Only medical professionals, doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pediatricians, and psychiatrists can prescribe ADHD medication. Occupational Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and ADHD Life Coaching can offer additional support. ADHD is a brain-based difference. Therefore, finding appropriately trained professionals specializing in ADHD management is vital to managing your ADHD.



The chicken or the egg?

What came first? Is it the fall-out from ADHD symptoms that cause anxiety or anxiety that blocks the brain's access to the Prefrontal Cortex, causing ADHD-like symptoms which lead to depression?

Only a trained medical doctor can decipher what is at play. That said, your awareness of what co-existing conditions are and their relationship to ADHD is essential in managing the way you live life. You don't know what you don't know until you know it. Knowing what to look for and the appropriate language to communicate is extremely important in meeting your needs. Having the awareness to report symptoms properly is essential in employing proper management. The ability to do so could positively change the way you experience life. The following informative list is meant to raise awareness of what can tag along with ADHD. You may not even know what could be co-existing.



Attention deficit disorder (ADHD or ADD) can be diagnosed by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a pediatrician or family doctor, a nurse practitioner, a neurologist, a master level counselor, or a social worker.

(WHO CAN DIAGNOSE ADHD?, 2017)





ADHD Co-existing Conditions

Behavioral Disorders

Conduct Disorder (CD) co-exists with ADHD in 27% of children and 20-25% of adults (1). The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry describes conduct disorder as having "great difficulty following rules and behaving in a socially acceptable manner." Conduct disorder is often confused with Oppositional Defiant Disorder. Individuals with CD are often deemed as "bad actors" instead of having a mental illness that could be treated. CD is treated with medication and behavioral therapy.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) co-exists with ADHD in 40% of children (1). Signs of ODD may be excessive and repetitive uncontrollable anger, outbursts, short fuses, argumentative, defiant, lack of self-responsibility, high levels of anger, and resentment (2.). As a result, children often require outside assistance in behavior training.



About half of the children with ADHD had a behavior or conduct problem.

-(CDC, 2022)





Mood Disorders

38% of children and adults will also have a mood disorder

Depression co-exists with ADHD in 14-15% of children and 47% of adults (1). Depression is more common in females than males (3). Some common symptoms of depression include lost interest in things that once brought joy, persistent sadness, anxiety, frustration, lack of appetite, and loss of focus. In addition, symptoms like lack of appetite, restlessness, and fatigue can mimic some common side effects of ADHD medications. This can make diagnosis difficult.



Bipolar Disorder occurs in up to 20% of adults (1). This Disorder presents dramatic shifts in a person's mood, behavior, thought, and ability to think clearly. People with bipolar experience manic

moods with excessive highs and depressive moods with extreme lows. Mood changes can last hours, days, weeks, or months.

Teens with ADHD are 10 times more likely than their peers without ADHD to develop depression.

(CUNCIC, 2020)





Neurodevelopmental Disorders

are associated with the function of the brain.

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is a sensory processing disorder involving the way the brain processes sound. Up to 50% of ADHD individuals also have APD. Both ADHD and APD symptoms overlap and require appropriate testing to decipher what is truly happening at the brain level.

Autism Spectrum Disorder- 14% of children with ADHD will also be on the Autism Spectrum (4). ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed co-existing condition of ASD.

Learning Disorder- 50% of children with ADHD will also have a co-existing Learning Disorder (1). Common learning disorders affect a child's ability to:

- Read.
- Write.
- Do math.
- Use or understand language.
- Socialize.
- Learn other skills that don't involve words.

Dyslexia co-exists in 20-40% of diagnosed ADHDers. It affects a person's language ability. Individuals struggle to recognize words, learn to read, spell and decode language.

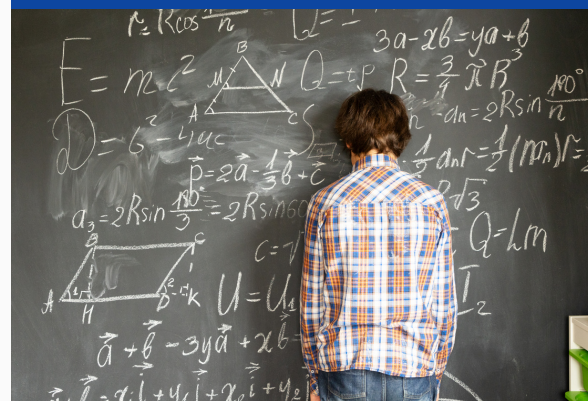
Dyscalculia also known as Math Learning Disorder. Dyscalculics can be brilliant at reading, writing, speaking, and socializing yet may secretly struggle with clocks, time management, and money (5).

Dysgraphia affects a person's ability to write. Often people with dysgraphia struggle with legible handwriting and forming correct spelling (6).

Dyspraxia is described as a motor learning disability. It is neurological in origin and affects the planning and execution of movement. Many individuals with dyspraxia struggle with fine and/or gross motor skills and coordination (7).

Many people with ADHD can struggle with learning and schoolwork because of the executive function problems related to their ADHD, yet they do not have enough of an impairment to be diagnosed with an LD.

(SINFIELD, 2021)





Neurodevelopmental Disorders - Continued

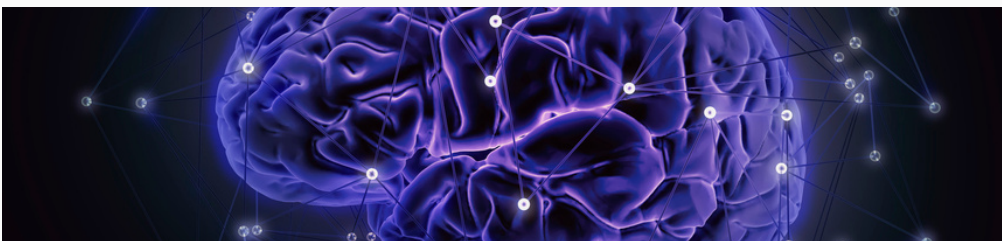
Speech Problems occur in 12% of children (1).

A recent study showed that the group with ADHD had a delay/slowdown of half a second in performing the task, that is, a delay in processing speech. Prof. Boaz Ben-David, speech scientist and head of the Communication, Aging, and Neuropsychology lab (CANlab) at the Baruch Ivcher School of Psychology at Reichman University, says,

"People with ADHD 'miss' words during a conversation or lecture, and once that accumulates, they have difficulty understanding the meaning of the sentences that have been said. The effort people with ADHD have to make in order to cope with distractions dilutes their cognitive resources, affects their ability to use their working memory effectively and impairs their perception and processing of speech (8)."

Speech problems have greater repercussions in connecting with others and forming relationships.

Tourette Syndrome occurs in less than 10% of children with ADHD (1). Tics are uncontrollable, sudden, rapid, repetitive, non-rhythmic movements or sounds. Although the individual may be able to suppress them for a short time, they are involuntary movements or sounds. Tics are often outgrown and occur three times more in boys than girls (9).



It is estimated that those with ADHD receive 20,000 corrective or negative messages by age 10.

(ADHD AND THE EPIDEMIC OF SHAME, 2016)





Other Conditions

Anxiety Disorders co-exist with ADHD in 19-30% of children and 53% of individuals (1).

Generalized Anxiety (GAD) 1 in 4 adults with ADHD will also be diagnosed with GAD (10). People with GAD experience more significant worry, anxiety, fear, and recurrent headaches.

Social Anxiety occurs when the individual fears they will say or do something that will embarrass them or bring scrutiny. It is common for individuals with ADHD to also have social anxiety.

Panic Disorder People who suffer from panic attacks may feel out of control of themselves and their immediate situation. In addition to psychological symptoms, panic attacks may accompany physical symptoms like chest pain, heart palpitations, and shortness of breath (11).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a form of anxiety that can develop in individuals after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Signs of PTSD may include uncontrollable thoughts about the event, flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety (12).

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is often missed in folks with ADHD. OCD involves obsessive recurrent thoughts and impulses, which often lead to anxiety. Compulsions included repetitive behavior and recurrent mental acts that usually cannot be controlled. Thirty percent of individuals with OCD often also have ADHD (13).

Many boys with social anxiety retreat into a virtual world of gaming because it is safer and easier than possibly facing rejection from peers.

– Ryan Wexelblatt, LCSW





Other Conditions- Continued

Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria (RSD) is severe emotional sensitivity and pain sparked by the belief that important people have rejected or criticized them. RSD may also be triggered by a person's intense internal dialog believing they have fallen short in meeting their own expectations and personal standards. Often these standards are set high and unattainable, feeding this negative internal dialog. RSD episodes can last for one to four weeks. Therefore, self-management during an episode is imperative in preventing further mental health challenges. RSD is highly prevalent for individuals with ADHD, although not well understood at the brain level yet.

Sleep Disorder Sleep Disorders occur in 25-50% of children with ADHD (1). Children and adults with ADHD and a sleep disorder often report more severe ADHD symptoms and a lower quality of life. They may also be more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, inattention, difficulty processing information, and a higher BMI. In addition, individuals with ADHD-related sleep deprivation may feel grumpy, irritable, restless, or tired or have trouble paying attention at school or work (14). Sleep disorders vary in severity from mild to severe.

Substance Abuse 15% of individuals with ADHD will also suffer from substance abuse (1). Substance abuse is seen in youth and adults. Up to 25% of adults in treatment for substance abuse have ADHD. In addition, it is not uncommon for individuals to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol as a form of treatment for their unmanaged ADHD symptoms (15). Therefore, substance abuse is of great concern for people with ADHD.

Co-existing conditions complicate diagnosis and treatment. Therefore, building awareness of what may tag along with ADHD is vital to managing your wellness. You know what you know when you know it... and then keep learning. Fortunately, research is ongoing, giving a greater understanding of ADHD and its co-existing conditions each year. If you feel more is going on, talk to your medical provider. Living better, healthier, happier lives is essential as we step into the future.



“Sensitive people usually love deeply and hate deeply. They don't know any other way to live than by extremes because their emotional thermostat is broken.”

— SHANNON L. ALDER



Hello

Thank you for joining me. My name is Cynthia North, but people know me as Cindy. I am ACC Certified Life Coach with the ICF as a Certified ADHD Life Coach (CALC) and a trained PQ Coach™ member with Positive Intelligence® devoted to partnering with clients to create self-success within ADHD and living life. I work with all ages having a special interest in how the brain affects the outcome. I help ADHDers and stuck people move from crippled in doubt to capable with clarity. I have expanded to offer personalized Mental Fitness Coaching through Shirzad Chamine's Positive Intelligence® Program. New possibilities bloom with deeper self-awareness and through the strength in your mental fitness. I have an innate desire to empower others no matter what difficulties they face with or without ADHD. I believe everyone is worthy of stepping forward out of stuck.

ADHD has touched me personally and professionally.

I know first-hand how ADHD symptoms and behavior can wreak havoc on family dynamics, school, and work success. I chose to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach as well as a member of Positive Intelligence® as a PQ Coach™ because I want others to discover their greatness within ADHD strengths while working with their executive functioning challenges through a positive mindset. I am where I am today because of my two dynamic ADHD children. They both teach me and open my mind to more each day. Their needs were beyond a hug, discipline, structure, or praise. So I sought professional help, ultimately finding a trained ADHD Life Coach. And here I am serving people who want different and deserve ease and flow.

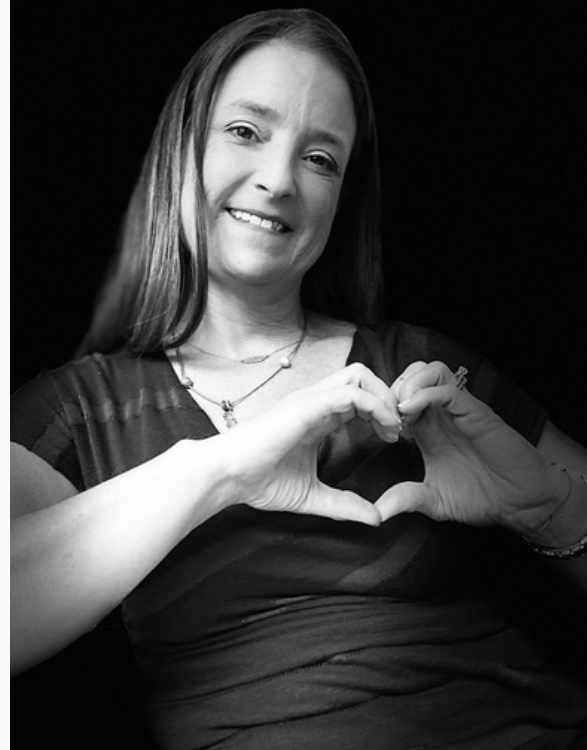
Life experiences have made way for opportunity. I am on a journey to slay stigmas surrounding brain differences. Finding a Life Coach to empower my child led me to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach myself to serve others past their stuck ways and ADHD stigmas. Choosing to strengthen your inner self is where Empower M3 starts. The work is an inside job where your "M3" begins. Connecting your heart and brain with a Coach creates empowerment opportunities. EmpowerM3 - is where the 3 connect to take flight.



There is a more extraordinary tomorrow when your discovery starts today.

ADHD is not
something you
outgrow. ADHD
is something
you grow with.

— CINDY NORTH,
LIFE COACH AND AUTHOR





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