

ADHD A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Am I an ADHDer? What's involved in diagnosis?

1 Screen for evidence of ADHD

You can complete a screening questionnaire for ADHD yourself or with a health professional like your GP. The results will tell you whether you have clinically significant ADHD traits that might justify seeking further formal ADHD assessment.

ADHD SYMPTOMS / CHARACTERISTICS

There are three categories of symptoms of ADHD: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. At a minimum, you need to have inattentive symptoms for diagnosis of ADHD. Hyperactivity and Impulsivity may not be present in some cases of ADHD.

- There must be evidence of these characteristics in both adulthood AND childhood.
- These characteristics must also have affected multiple areas of your life eg: study, work, relationships.

You are statistically more likely to be an ADHDer if:

- Someone in your family has an ADHD diagnosis or has ADHD characteristics.
- You identify as an autistic person or have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- You have learning differences such as dyslexia or dyscalculia.

Inattention

Inattentive symptoms can look like forgetfulness, making silly errors, overlooking details, having trouble keeping track in a conversation, challenges with organisation and starting uninteresting tasks.

Hyperactivity

Hyperactive symptoms can be external (eg: trouble staying seated, needed to fidget and move) or internal (restlessness whilst waiting, rapid thoughts).

Impulsivity

Impulsive symptoms relate to inhibition. Symptoms can look like a tendency to interrupt or finish other people's sentences, substance use challenges, frequent speeding fines.

ADHD, like Autism Spectrum Disorder or Specific Learning Disorder in Reading (Dyslexia), comes under the umbrella of "neurodivergence". Despite being termed "disorders" they simply refer to naturally occurring brain differences or neurodiversity.

2

Decide if you want to get an assessment to determine diagnosis of ADHD



If screening indicates some signs of ADHD are present the next step is to decide if a diagnosis is useful for you and what your options are. These are factors to consider:

Do I want to discuss and try medication options? Is it possible that medication might help to manage symptoms?



Is a diagnosis important to understand myself and my challenges and to learn how to manage these challenges?



Am I seeking diagnosis so I can get access to support? (Eg: in my studies or workplace)



If yes to any of these then assessment is a good idea

To receive a formal diagnosis of adult ADHD, you must see a **psychologist** or a **psychiatrist** for an ADHD assessment.

A **psychologist** can perform cognitive and mental health assessments as well as help you to manage symptoms. A psychologist **cannot** prescribe medication.

A **psychiatrist** is a medical doctor who can perform mental health assessments **and** can prescribe medication.



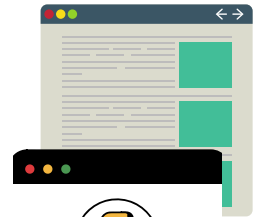
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Steps when booking an ADHD assessment



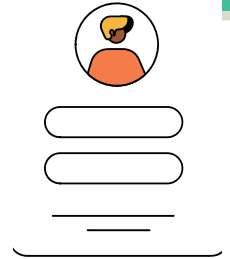
1

Make a **list** of possible psychologists. You can do a search of psychologists in your area using the website [Psychology Today](#), or using the [Australian Psychological Society directory](#), or your search engine. You can also ask your family, friends, or GP for recommendations.



2

Go to the psychologist's **website** and check in their "About" page or profile whether they have **experience** and expertise in assessment of ADHD.



3

Once you have a list of psychologists with experience in assessing ADHD, your next step is to **compare options** for assessment packages/price. You can collect this information from their website, or by calling and asking the **cost** of ADHD assessment.



4

Call the psychology practice to **book in**.
What to say:

- I would like to book in for an ADHD assessment with psychologist__.
- What is your soonest appointment available?
- If __ isn't available, are any other psychologists with experience in ADHD assessment available?
- What is the likely cost?
- How many sessions will the assessment take?
- What will I need to bring to the first session?
- What will I need to do before the first session?



5

Some practices will offer an **introductory call** for you to chat to the psychologist to get a feel for their approach and to decide what assessment package might best suit you.

The psychology practice will take all **your contact details**, and send you out additional information to **prepare** you for your first session.

