

credits

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M **TeenMentalHealth Speaks...** Magazine

Teen ADHD
Channel: [teenmentalhealth1](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



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From the desk of Dr. Kutcher

Adolescence is an exciting time of life. There is so much to do, so much to explore, so much to learn. All of this can be at times exhilarating, challenging, scary, painful or whatever. There will be successes and there will be failures. There will be times that we look back on and say “I wish I had not done or said that” and there will be times that we look back on and say “I see that doing or saying that was the right thing to do”.

We can look at this time of life as an opportunity for emotional, social and thinking growth and see many positives. Unfortunately, in my opinion, there is a social tendency to think about the adolescent years in negative terms. And, I for one am getting a little bit tired of hearing these kinds of negative stories. Where are the positive stories?

This does not mean teens don't have their struggles. Nor does it mean that the social, personal, educational challenges faced by teens aren't also faced by adults! Everyone has their challenges. Part of growing through the teen years is learning how to successfully overcome life's challenges.

Woven into these joys and sorrows of adolescence is the reality that some of the most concerning illnesses arise during that time. They include such things as: Depression; Panic Disorder; Schizophrenia; etc. Drug misuse and even drug abuse are other challenges that arise. Unrecognized and untreated they can have negative impacts during teenager-hood and for adulthood to come.

The good news is, we have lots of effective and positive ways to help teens and families who are facing the challenges of mental disorders. This does not mean that the usual ups and downs of teen life will go away.

These Magazines will help you and your families learn about some of the most common medical illnesses of adolescence – mental disorders. I hope that this will help you and your family better understand what these are, how to identify them and what you and your family can do to help.





TRANSITIONS



Available on Amazon.com and the Apple iBookStore. The App is free for download at the Apple App Store & online: teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/transitions

? why

mental health matters

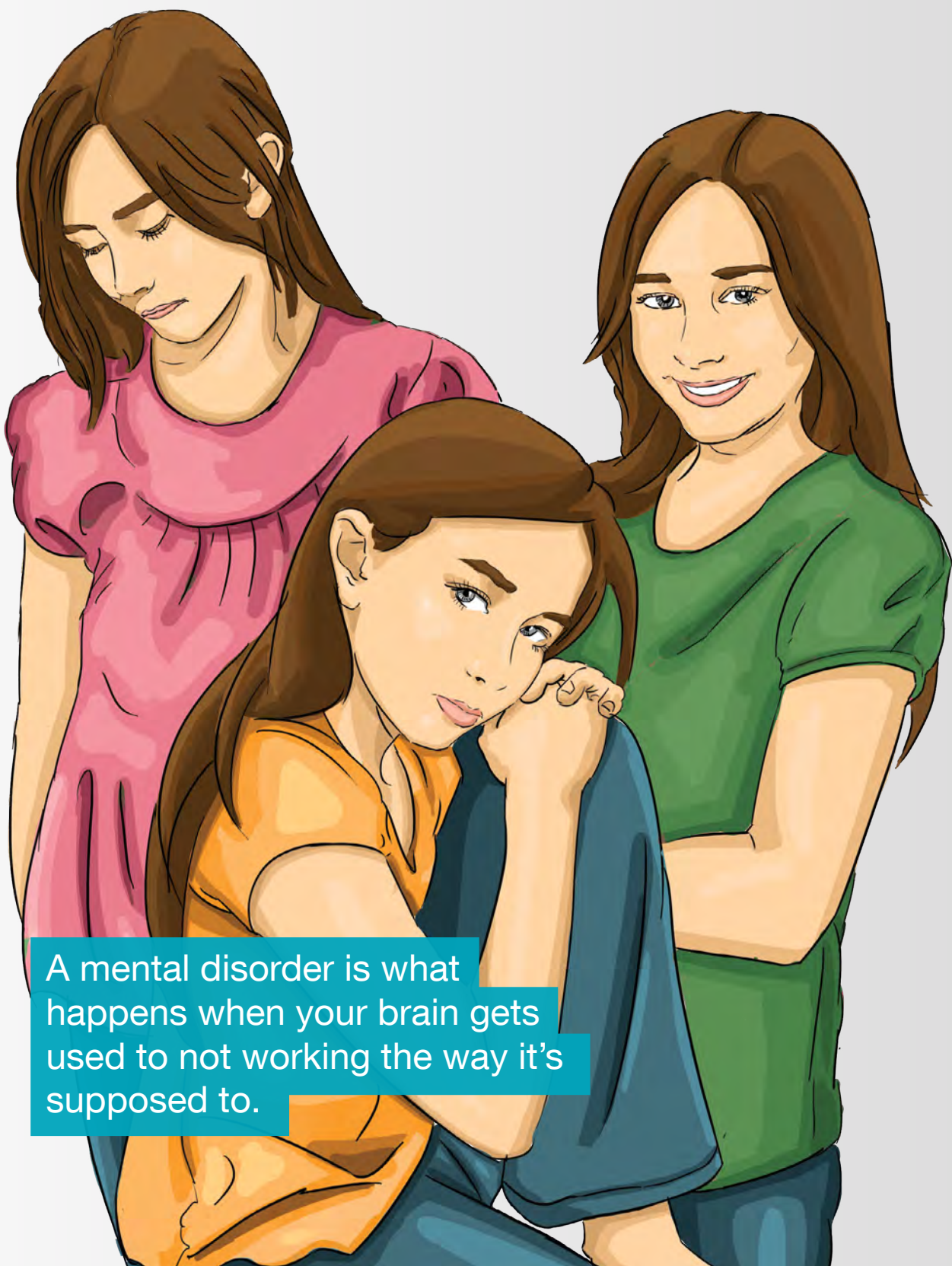
Mental health refers to the health of your brain. It's what is going on inside your head. Your mental health affects every aspect of your life, including your school performance, your physical health, your feelings, your self-esteem, and your relationships with other people. Having good mental health makes it easier for you to cope with stress and live your life the way you want to live it. Looking after your mental health is really important.

Many people experience mental health problems as teenagers. Mental health problems are when your brain is having difficulty working as well as it should. Usually, this happens when you are in a difficult situation, like if your parents are going through a divorce or someone you love dies. When this happens, you may need some extra help from a trusted adult (like a family member, a teacher, or a neighbour) or a counselor. Sometimes, however, our brains can work differently than usual for no apparent reason, causing us problems. For example,

they can make us feel sad all the time or feel anxious when there is no real danger. When this happens, it is considered a mental disorder.

A mental disorder is what happens when your brain gets used to not working the way it's supposed to. We get stuck in a pattern of feeling really down, or really anxious, or really distracted. Sometimes these patterns can even change the way our brain works. Just like how mental health affects all aspects of your life, so do mental disorders. Having a mental disorder can make it harder for you to do well in school, to get along with your friends and family, and to stay physically healthy. It makes it difficult to live your life the way you would like. Some people with mental disorders may end up using drugs and alcohol to cope, and other people may hurt themselves or think suicide is the answer.

Seek help as soon as you notice a problem. There are lots of people who can help you. Early treatment of mental disorders not only helps you right away, but the help you get can last your whole life.



A mental disorder is what happens when your brain gets used to not working the way it's supposed to.

? how

the brain works

In order to understand how the brain changes when someone has a mental disorder, we need to know how it usually works. The brain has 6 different but completely linked functions:

1 Thinking

Your brain is in charge of how you store and process information, whether it's figuring out a math problem, remembering to pack your lunch, concentrating during class, or planning what you are going to do this weekend.

2 Feeling

Your brain also controls how you feel at any given point in time and how you express those feelings to other people.

3 Perceiving/Sensing

Your brain is responsible for paying attention to what is going on around you. It does this by interpreting information from your senses - sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch. You see with your brain, not with your eyes!

4 Physical

Your brain controls how your body moves and reacts – from obvious things, like being able to move your hands, to things you don't even think about, like breathing or digesting your food.

5 Behaving

Your brain controls how you interact with the people around you and your environment. It's your brain that tells you what to do or say in different situations.

6 Signaling

Your brain also plays an important role in protecting you from danger. It keeps track of the information from your senses in order to alert you that you may be in trouble, like if you touch a hot stove and you immediately pull your hand away. Your brain is what stopped you from being badly burned!

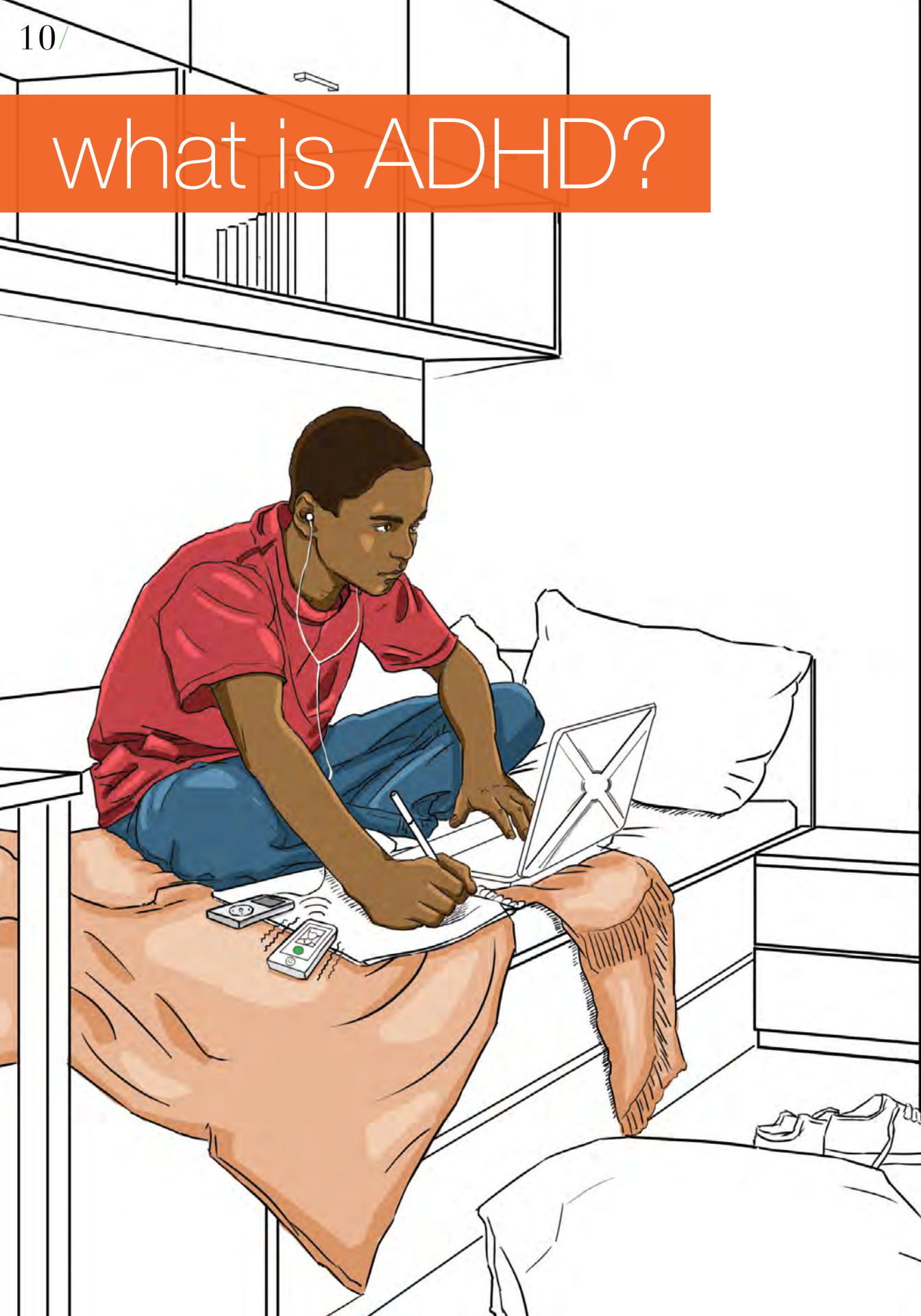
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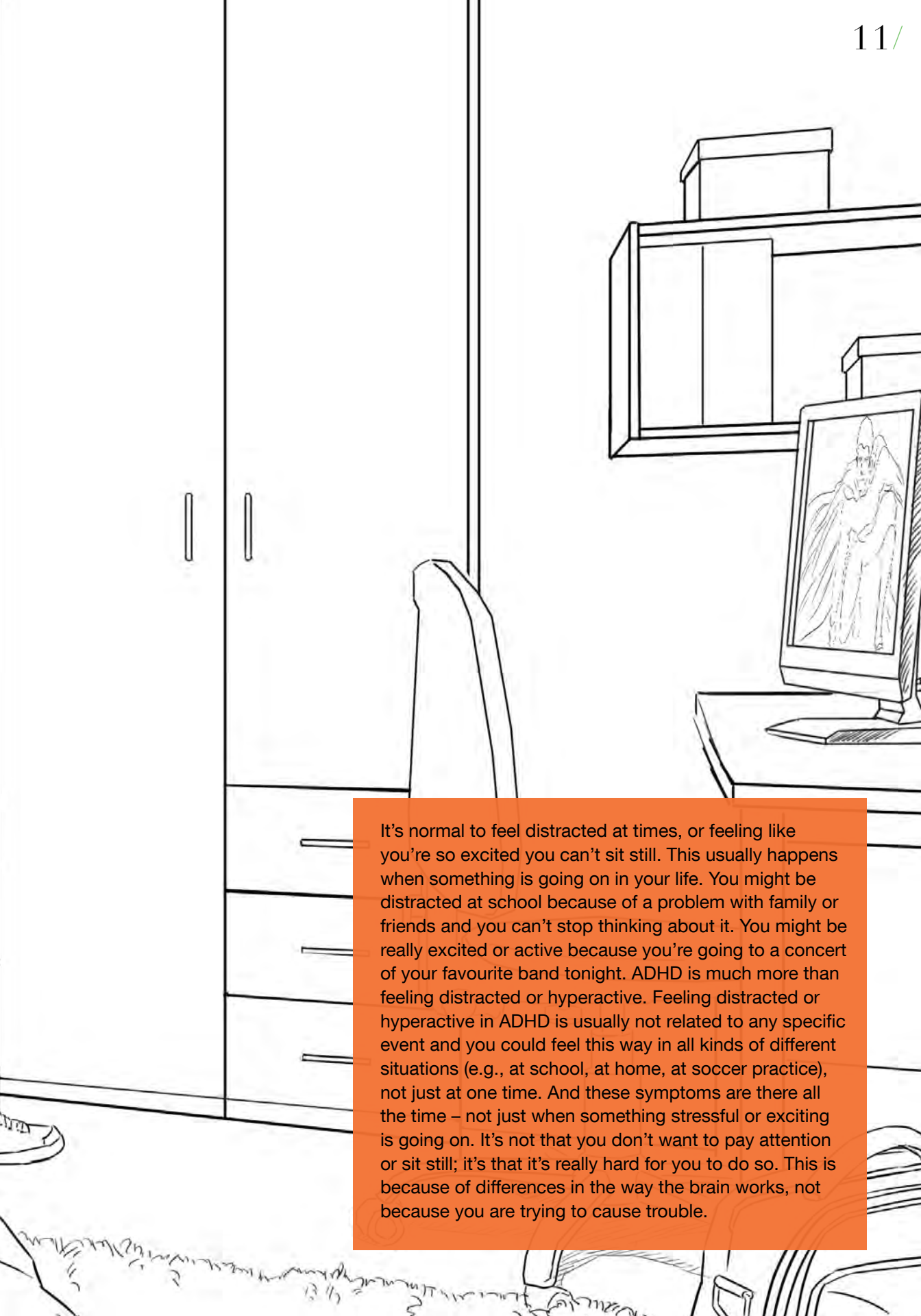
To learn more about the teenage brain, check out: teenmentalhealth.org/understanding-mental-health/the-teen-brain and youtu.be/EGdlpaWi3rc



When a person has a mental disorder, one or more of these brain functions are not working properly. And because these brain functions are all interconnected, when one function isn't working properly, the other brain functions will also be affected. In the case of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the brain's thinking, feeling, perceiving/sensing, and behaving mechanisms are not working the way they should. This can make it hard for you to focus, remember, plan ahead, or think things through before you act. And because your perceiving/sensing mechanisms aren't working properly, you might be paying way more attention to the things going on around you than you need to. When you're paying attention to lots of little details, it can distract you from more important things, like schoolwork, chores, or something your parents or friends are telling you.

what is ADHD?

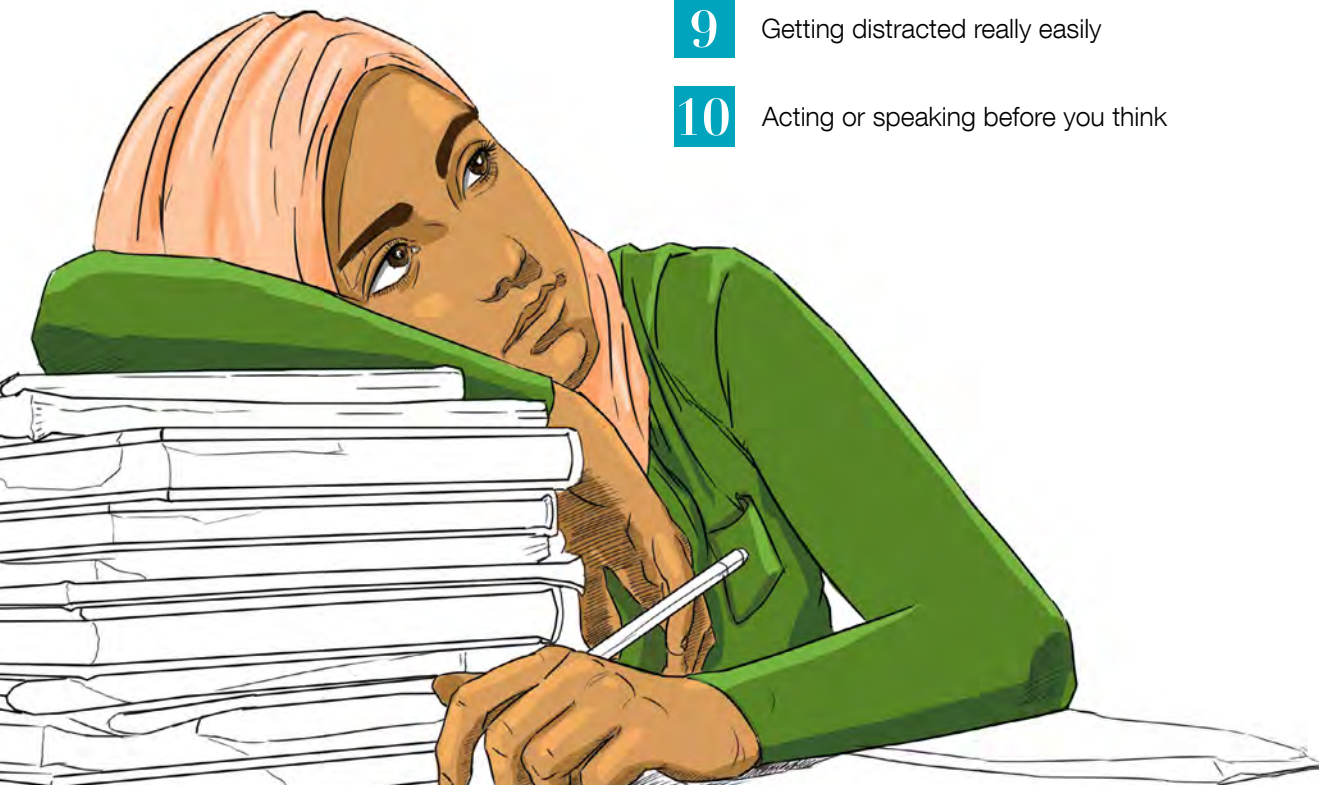


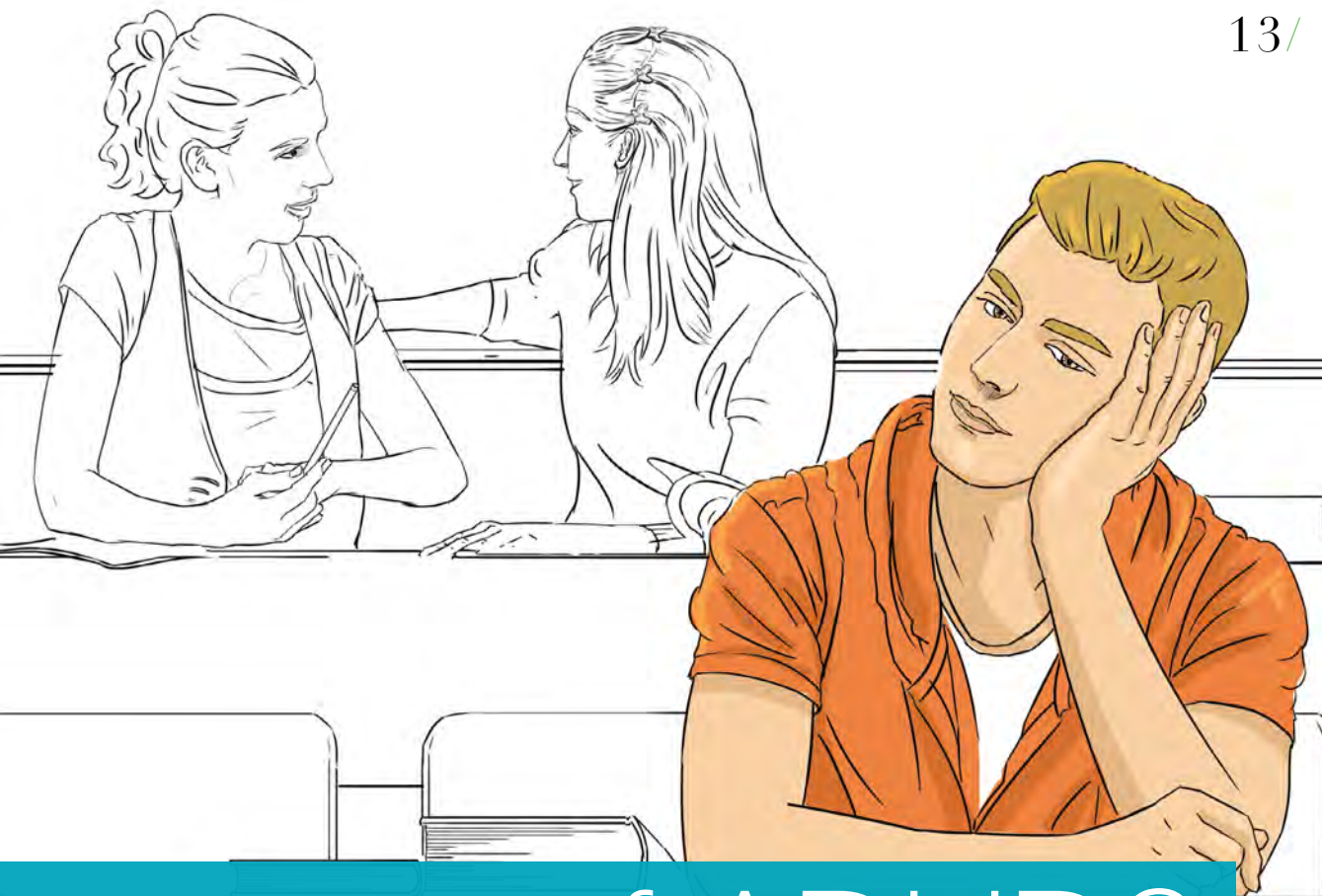
A line drawing of a room. On the left is a tall cabinet with two doors and three drawers. In the center is a chair. On the right is a desk with a computer monitor displaying a picture of a person in a cape, a keyboard, and a mouse. Above the desk are shelves with boxes. The floor is partially visible at the bottom.

It's normal to feel distracted at times, or feeling like you're so excited you can't sit still. This usually happens when something is going on in your life. You might be distracted at school because of a problem with family or friends and you can't stop thinking about it. You might be really excited or active because you're going to a concert of your favourite band tonight. ADHD is much more than feeling distracted or hyperactive. Feeling distracted or hyperactive in ADHD is usually not related to any specific event and you could feel this way in all kinds of different situations (e.g., at school, at home, at soccer practice), not just at one time. And these symptoms are there all the time – not just when something stressful or exciting is going on. It's not that you don't want to pay attention or sit still; it's that it's really hard for you to do so. This is because of differences in the way the brain works, not because you are trying to cause trouble.

common signs and symptoms

- 1 Difficulty staying focused or concentrating on something
- 2 Losing track of or frequently losing your things or someone else's
- 3 Forgetting information you need to know, especially when it has lots of little details
- 4 Talking all the time, even when you know you need to be quiet.
- 5 Daydreaming often
- 6 Feeling restless, like you just can't sit still
- 7 Starting projects but rarely finishing them
- 8 Feeling really impatient, like you just can't wait
- 9 Getting distracted really easily
- 10 Acting or speaking before you think





types of ADHD?

There are 3 different kinds of ADHD – so not everyone with ADHD has the same kind of problems:

1 Predominantly Inattentive Type
People with this type of ADHD have trouble paying attention, staying focused, being organized, and remembering things.

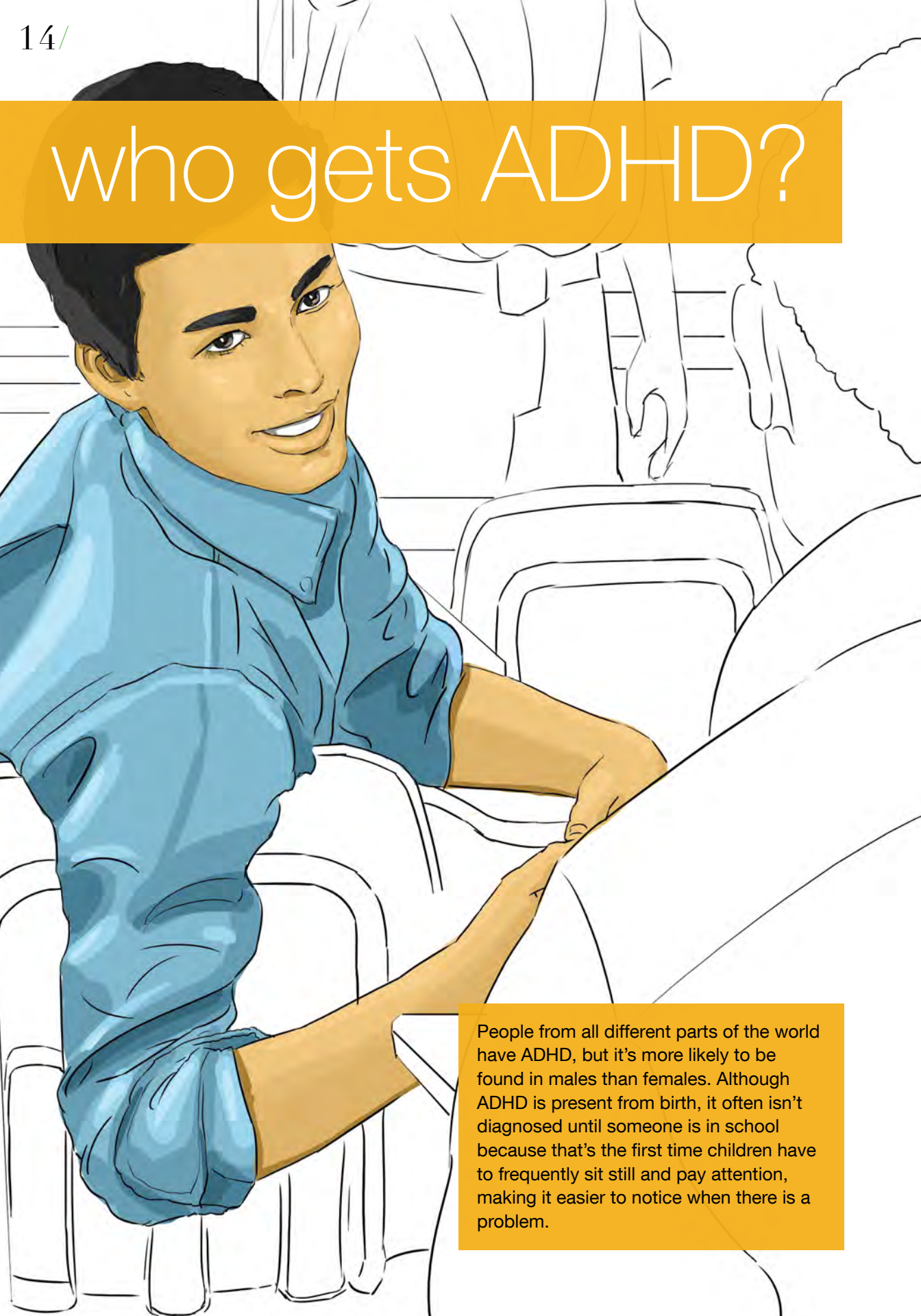
2 Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Type
People with this type of ADHD are often fidgety and active, have trouble sitting still, talk a lot, and always seem to be on the go.

3 Combined Type
This is the most common type of ADHD for kids and teenagers. People with this type of ADHD have symptoms of both of the other types of ADHD. They have trouble focusing, paying attention, remembering, and organizing, and also can feel hyperactive, impulsive, and always on the go.

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Check out this video on ADHD:
youtu.be/rIKMo8VuC_c

who gets ADHD?



People from all different parts of the world have ADHD, but it's more likely to be found in males than females. Although ADHD is present from birth, it often isn't diagnosed until someone is in school because that's the first time children have to frequently sit still and pay attention, making it easier to notice when there is a problem.

? what causes ADHD

If someone in your immediate family has ADHD, your chances of developing the disorder are much higher. That's because ADHD is thought to be caused mostly by genetics (which you inherit from your biological family) and environment. Environment can influence just how much ADHD causes problems.

3% - 7%

of school-aged kids have ADHD

[American Psychiatric Association, DSM-V: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 2013].

discover://

To learn more about ADHD, check out:
teenmentalhealth.org/for-families-and-teens/adhd-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder

? how

is ADHD treated

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is primarily treated with medication, although certain types of psychosocial interventions may also be helpful.

1 Medication

Medication can help your brain function better. Many different medications can be used to treat ADHD:

- ▼ **Stimulants** are the most common type of medication for ADHD. They help increase attention and focus, and decrease impulsivity and hyperactivity. They work for most people and they work quite soon after starting them. It is very important to take these medications only in the doses that are prescribed to you and under the supervision of your doctor.
- ▼ **Antidepressants** and a medicine called **Atomoxetine** are also sometimes used to treat ADHD. They can take up to 4-6 weeks to work.

Often, doctors will prescribe a combination of different medications. This combination may need some tweaking to find the mix that is right for you.

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To help make sure you get the best treatment for you, check out:

teenmentalhealth.org/for-families-and-teens/evidence-based-medicine and

teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/med-ed-booklet and

teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/communicating-with-your-health-care-provider-what-every-parent-should-ask and teenmentalhealth.org/images/uploads/communicating_with_healthcare_providers_student_version.pdf

2 Psychosocial Interventions

In addition to medication, psychosocial interventions (i.e., non-medication interventions) can also be helpful for people with ADHD and their families. There are a few different kinds of psychosocial treatments that might be helpful:

- ▼ **Behavior Therapy** can help improve school/academic functioning and relationships with family and friends
- ▼ **Parental Behaviour Training** helps parents learn about ADHD, how it affects their child, and the best ways to help a teenager or kid with ADHD
- ▼ **Classroom and Academic Interventions** alter the classroom and learning environments to make it easier for someone with ADHD to stay focused and get things done. Breaking things down into smaller chunks, keeping a schedule, and sitting at the front of the class (where there are fewer distractions) are all examples of this kind of intervention.

3 What else can help:

- ▼ Having a good support network of friends and family.
- ▼ Following the Mental Wellness tips on page 18!

teachers

counselor

doctor

co-workers

neighbours

siblings

relatives

coach

parents

friends



having a good support system

For someone with ADHD, having a good support system of trusted people is essential. A good support system will:

- 1 understand the challenges that having a mental disorder creates for you
- 2 give you honest and helpful advice when you need it
- 3 help you cope when you're having a rough time
- 4 remind you that you're not alone
- 5 listen to you when you need someone to talk to
- 6 help you stay focused when something is important
- 7 be there for you when you need them
- 8 hang out with you.



tips

to help increase overall mental health:

- 1 Structure your day.** For someone with ADHD, it can be hard to stay focused and get things done. Keeping a schedule, especially a visual one, can be really helpful. Having some structure in your day can make a big difference in what you get done and how you feel.
- 2 Exercise.** Daily physical activity improves your health and mood, and helps you get rid of stress.
- 3 Sleep.** Getting 8-9 hours of sleep each night will help you feel better the next day.
- 4 Eat healthy.** Eating a balanced diet gives your body the fuel it needs to help combat stress and be strong. Try not to skip meals and go easy on the junk food.
- 5 Daily relaxation time.** If you feel overwhelmed, try a relaxation technique, like Box Breathing or Hand Relaxation (see page 20).
- 6 Limit caffeine.** Caffeine can make your heart race, which can make you feel worse.
- 7 Stay away from alcohol and drugs.** Alcohol and drugs may seem fun at times, but they lower your inhibitions, which can make your impulsivity worse. That means there's a chance you might do something that you regret later.
- 8 Build healthy relationships.** It's important to have a good support network of people you trust.
- 9 Talk.** Talk to the people in your support network about your thoughts and feelings. Sharing with someone else can feel like a weight is lifted off your chest. At the same time – make sure to ask your friends about their thoughts and feelings – just make sure you're listening when they answer!
- 10 Stop thinking so much.** Thinking about something over and over can make you feel worse. Try not to let yourself replay negative thoughts and situations in your mind. Sometimes we do things we regret. Don't dwell on it. Apologize, if necessary, and move on.

If these tips don't help, do NOT get discouraged. Just like learning to play the piano or driving a car, some of these skills require practice and patience. For more help, talk to your school counselor or visit your family doctor. Your family doctor will be able to help you find the treatment that works best for you and can recommend places for you to go if you need more help.





Box Breathing

Box Breathing can help your heart rate return to normal, which helps you to relax. Here's how you do it: If possible, sit and close your eyes. If not, just focus on your breathing.

Step 1: Inhale your breath (preferably through your nose) for 4 seconds.

Step 2: Hold your breath for 4 more seconds. You're not trying to deprive yourself of air; you're just giving the air a few seconds to fill your lungs.

Step 3: Exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds.

Step 4: Pause for 4 seconds (without speaking) before breathing in again.

Repeat this process as many times as you can. Even 30 seconds of deep breathing will help you feel more relaxed and in control.

Hand Relaxation

Hand Relaxation helps to get rid of the tense feelings in your body. Here's how you do it: Clench the muscles in your left hand (make a fist) really tightly for 5 seconds. Then, let go gradually (for about 15 seconds), breathing slowly and concentrating on the feeling in your hand. Then, repeat using your right hand.

With practice, you can get really good at doing Box Breathing or Hand Relaxation techniques. You can do them just about anywhere, without anyone else knowing - on the bus, in class, even when you're hanging out with your friends.



dealing with stigma

If you have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, you may overhear insensitive comments about you and feel like you are being judged by other people. Remember that these people don't understand what ADHD is. Although it may be hard, try not to take their comments personally. They don't realize that ADHD is a medical condition that requires treatment, just like cancer or high blood pressure. Having ADHD does not make you weak and does not make you less of a person than anyone else.

What is stigma?

Stigma is a "polite" word for discrimination. It's a negative attitude people have about something they don't understand that can result in physical, mental, and emotional harm. When someone has a stigmatizing attitude, it means there is something wrong with their attitude- not with you. People make hurtful and judgmental comments and assumptions about people suffering from mental illness because they don't understand that mental disorders are just another kind of medical disorder. You wouldn't expect someone in a wheelchair to be able to climb stairs just because someone said "snap out of it!" This is just as true for mental disorders, like ADHD.

The best way to fight stigma is to help people better understand mental disorders.

helping someone coping with ADHD

If someone you care about has ADHD, the best and most important thing you can do is be supportive and understanding. In order to support someone else, you also need to look after yourself.



here are a few pointers:

1 Educate yourself

Understanding what ADHD is and how it affects the person you care about will help you to be a less frustrated and more supportive friend.

2 Don't blame yourself

It is not your fault that your friend has ADHD. Many different factors, including his/her genetic background, environment, and life experiences are involved in why your friend acts the way he or she does. No one can "make" another person have ADHD.

3 Encourage your friend to seek help

Having a friend he/she can trust, like you, is so important. But someone trying to cope with a mental disorder also needs treatment. Encourage your friend to see a doctor or school counselor to get the help he/she needs. Just remember that not everyone who acts hyperactive or has difficulty paying attention has ADHD.

4 Be patient

Sometimes it can be frustrating when your friend doesn't seem to be paying attention or keeps getting distracted. Take a deep breath and remember that ADHD is making your friend feel this way. He/she can't just "snap out of it." Getting impatient will only make the situation worse. Stay positive and be patient. Encourage your friend to follow his/her routine and take his/her medication as prescribed.

5 Listen

When you listen to and acknowledge your friend's feelings, it sends your friend the message that you care.

6 Don't try to change your friend

You don't have to solve all of your friend's problems or turn him/her into a different kind of person. Just be present and supportive.

7 Be positive

Positive moods can be contagious! It's really easy for someone with a mental disorder to focus only on the negative aspects of his/her life. Sharing your positive mood may help your friend see things from a different perspective.

8 Put yourself first

On an airplane, they tell you to always put your oxygen mask on first in an emergency before you assist someone else. You'll be no help to anyone if you're passed out. The same goes for helping your friend. If you burn yourself out by always putting him or her first, you won't be able to help anyone. It's absolutely okay (and so important) to take time away to take care of yourself.

9 Be aware of suicide risk

If your friend talks about death or suicide, don't ignore it or keep it a secret. Talk to a responsible adult whom your friend also trusts (e.g., parent, teacher, coach, counselor). Let your friend know that you care about him/her and his/her life. If your friend is talking about suicide, you must take it seriously.

10 Have fun together

Your friend needs someone who can have fun, relax, and laugh with him/her. These are all important parts of your friend's mental health (and yours!).

discover://

For more on ADHD and other mental health problems, check out:
teenmentalhealth.org

help

These are places you can find more information about ADHD and get help:

A Family doctor
Talk to your family doctor about your concerns. Your doctor can help you decide on the best treatment plan for you and refer you to a good psychologist, counselor, and/or support group.

B Library
Check your local community or school library for books to help you understand more about ADHD and how to cope.

C Phonebook
The yellow pages have lists of local support groups, counselors, and youth health centres, some of which may be helpful for you.

D Health Boards
Many communities have a health board with information on different support groups and other resources. They are often located in community centres, malls, and grocery stores.

E Kids help phone
The Kids Help Phone has counselors who answer phone calls and online questions from young people 24/7. You can reach them at 1-800-668-6868 or at www.kidshelpphone.ca

F Emergency
If you are feeling suicidal or are in crisis, go to your local hospital's emergency room immediately.

G Internet
The internet has loads of information about mental illness; just know that not all of it is accurate. In fact, the information on some websites is more wrong than right.

H School Counselor or Nurse
Your school counselor or nurse may have helpful resources for you, including books, pamphlets, and contacts in the community.

discover://

Teen Mental Health www.teenmentalhealth.org

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre www.keltymentalhealth.ca

National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov

Canadian Mental Health Association www.cmha.ca

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder www.chadd.ca

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance www.caddra.ca

About Kids Health (Sick Kids) www.aboutkidshealth.ca

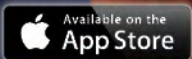
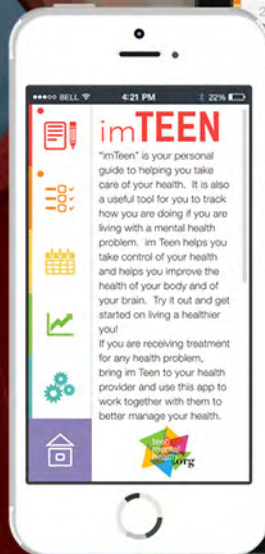
Mental Health Foundation www.mentalhealth.org.uk

imTEEN

Taking charge of your health



- ASSESSMENT
- CHECKLIST
- CALENDAR
- VISUAL REPORTS





FAMILY PACK

better mental health for you & your family

Support yourself and your family members in better understanding mental disorders and how to deal with them. If you have a mental disorder, are supporting a family member with one or are interested in how you can support a friend and their family, the Family Pack can help.



