

*Maryland State Bar Association Lawyer Assistance Program
Wellness Tip Sheet*

Attention Deficit Disorder is not just a problem in children

I often have lawyers come into my office laughing while telling me they think they have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Typically expressing that they have a hard time staying organized, focused, and on task. They are surprised when I tell them that adults can have ADD and that it is not just a problem that is exclusive to children. This tip sheet will hopefully shed some light on adult ADD.

Attention deficit disorder can go undiagnosed in childhood. The child may have been able to compensate for his problems only to have difficulties as an adult when his responsibilities increased. When trying to balance, for example, a career, household, finances, and family, it becomes more difficult to organize, focus, stay on task and manage your stress. Juggling so many responsibilities is difficult for anyone, but especially challenging for someone with ADD.

Adult ADD can present quite differently in adults and each adult can have very different symptoms. Often symptoms are overlooked because adults don't typically present with hyperactivity that you see in children. Below is a list of adult ADD symptoms. Recognizing your symptoms is the first step in learning to manage them. You can have as few as one of the following symptoms and still have ADD.

- Poor listening skills – having a hard time remembering conversations and following directions
- “Zoning out” without realizing it, even in the middle of a conversation
- Difficulty paying attention or focusing, such as when reading or listening to others
- Struggling to complete tasks, even simple ones
- Unable to stay on task due to extreme distractibility
- Tendency to overlook details, leading to errors or incomplete work
- Focusing on a task to the extent of being oblivious to everything going on around you

The good news is that adults with ADD typically are high energy, very creative, and think out-of-the box. An adult with ADD needs to identify their strengths and create a work environment that supports them.

There are many ways to assist someone with adult ADD. These include:

- Education for yourself and family
- Support Groups
- Counseling
 - Communication skills

- Assertiveness skills
- Time-management Skills
 - Problem-solving
 - Managing multiple demands and details

If you would like further information on adult ADD
please contact the Lawyer Assistance Program for **free, confidential** assistance at
410-685-7878 x3041 or 800-492-1964 x3041.