

## What can you do?

If you feel like your child may have ADHD, it is important to seek out professional help and diagnosis. But keep in mind that female ADHD diagnosis may not be as straightforward as it is with males.

Be there for your child, it might sound obvious, but try not to assume that they know. If you don't tell them you're there, and that you understand, will they really know?

Be approachable – if your child wants to speak to you, give them your time

Be supportive – encourage, support and praise

Encourage exercise, family time, and integration but take their emotions into consideration

Encourage your child to openly talk about how they are feeling, without judgement and interruption

Look for and encourage hobbies and encourage down time, but without being forceful. For females with ADHD, they can even struggle to commit to things that they enjoy

Actively listen to your child, listen to the words they use

Look out for symptoms

Show positivity to your child

Converse and engage. Even if it's just at mealtimes, or in the car, make use of your time together

Teach your child coping mechanisms - keeping a diary, relaxation exercises, taking blu tac to school as something to fidget with

Be proud! Even of the most basic achievements

Be patient and don't take things they say or do personally

Love them and make sure they know they are loved

**Attention Deficit  
Hyperactivity  
Disorder (ADHD)  
Females and ADHD**



**The Lotus Mental Health**

[www.thelotusmentalhealth.org](http://www.thelotusmentalhealth.org)

## What is ADHD? And how does it affect females?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, better known as ADHD, is a medical condition that affects brain development and activity with regards to attention. A person with ADHD is often characterised as being unable to keep still, concentrate and often has minimal self-control. Another aspect is Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), which is characterised by inattentiveness.

For many people, when they think about ADHD, their minds are instantly, and subconsciously flooded with images of 'naughty boys' - boys who can't sit still in school, boys who disrupt classrooms. But now the research shows us that girls are just as likely to have ADHD as boys, but boys are twice as likely to be diagnosed. This is often because of one particular trait that females with ADHD display – Masking.

For females with ADHD much of their hyperactivity takes place internally – and can be more anxiety/rejection based, whereas males are more likely to be hyperactive outwardly. This often means that a female with ADHD is constantly, and relentlessly plagued with constant flows of thoughts rushing through their head simultaneously. Females with ADHD are more likely to change their behaviours, by mimicking/mirroring the behaviours of their peers in order to hide the fact that they are different.

This often leads to females ADHD going unnoticed in school, as they tend to be labelled as 'quiet, get's on with their work with little to no fuss, well-behaved, polite, helpful,' etc. But internally, this couldn't be further from the reality.

There isn't much 'quiet time' in the minds of females with ADHD and combined with the masking, females have a harder time when it comes to diagnosis. However, there are still signs and symptoms that you can look out for, as subtle as they may seem.

## Signs and Symptoms in females with ADHD

- Get upset easily
- Daydream/lose concentration
- Forgetful
- Chatty
- Struggle with time management
- Struggle completing tasks, but can get consumed by tasks that appeal to them
- Appear shy but can often interrupt and blurt out thoughts
- Appear lazy at times – this is often when they are overwhelmed
- Highly sensitive – to sounds, noise, criticism
- Can appear to have no motivation, then unable to breakaway from the things that do motivate them
- Over-react and take things very personally
- Don't take criticism well – it is often seen as a personal attack
- Disorganised and messy – this is often seen in their work, their bags, school trays etc
- Struggle to maintain focus on things that do not interest them
- Lash out when they are overwhelmed – vocally, physically, emotionally
- Have low self-esteem
- They have the same impulses as males, but they work hard to 'push the impulses away' often leading to outbursts/tears/tantrums/zoning out
- They feel rejected and personally attacked if they haven't completed a task/answered a question right/behaved in the 'right way'
- Often emotionally tired