ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER RESOURCES

Adult Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Checklist
by Daniel G. Amen, M.D.

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In conjunction with other diagnostic techniques, Dr Amen says he, "uses the following general adult ADHD checklist to help further define ADHD symptoms. No ADHD adult has all of the symptoms, but if you notice a strong presence of more than 20 of these symptoms, there is a strong likelihood of ADHD ."

Read this list of behaviors and rate yourself (or the person who has asked you to rate him or her) on each behavior listed. Use the following scale and place the appropriate number next to the item.

- 0 = never
- 1 = rarely
- 2 = occasionally
- 3 = frequently
- 4 = very frequently

**IMPORTANT:** This is not a tool for self-diagnosis. Its purpose is simply to help you determine whether ADHD may be a factor in the behavior of the person you are assessing using this checklist. An actual diagnosis can be made only by an experienced professional.

Past History

1. *History of ADHD symptoms in childhood, such as distractibility, short attention span, impulsivity or restlessness. ADHD doesn't start at age 30.

2. History of not living up to potential in school or work (report cards with comments such as "not living up to potential")

3. History of frequent behavior problems in school (mostly for males)

4. History of bedwetting past age 5

5. Family history of ADHD, learning problems, mood disorders or substance abuse problems

Short Attention Span/Distractibility

6. *Short attention span, unless very interested in something
7.*Easily distracted, tendency to drift away (although at times can be hyperfocused)
8. Lacks attention to detail, due to distractibility
9. Trouble listening carefully to directions
10. Frequently misplaces things
11. Skips around while reading, or goes to the end first, trouble staying on track
12. Difficulty learning new games, because it is hard to stay on track during directions
13. Easily distracted during sex, causing frequent breaks or turn-offs during lovemaking
14. Poor listening skills
15. Tendency to be easily bored (tunes out)

**Restlessness**

16. Restlessness, constant motion, legs moving, fidgeting
17. Has to be moving in order to think
18. Trouble sitting still, such as trouble sitting in one place for too long, sitting at a desk job for long periods, sitting through a movie
19. An internal sense of anxiety or nervousness

**Impulsivity**

20. Impulsive, in words and/or actions (spending)
21. Say just what comes to mind without considering its impact (tactless)
22. Trouble going through established channels, trouble following proper procedure, an attitude of "read the directions when all else fails"
23. Impatient, low frustration tolerance
24. A prisoner of the moment
25. Frequent traffic violations
26. Frequent, impulsive job changes
27. Tendency to embarrass others
28. Lying or stealing on impulse

**Poor Organization**
29. Poor organization and planning, trouble maintaining an organized work/living area
30. Chronically late or chronically in a hurry
31. Often have piles of stuff
32. Easily overwhelmed by tasks of daily living
33. Poor financial management (late bills, check book a mess, spending unnecessary money on late fees)

**Problems Getting Started and Following Through**
34. Chronic procrastination or trouble getting started
35. Starting projects but not finishing them, poor follow through
36. Enthusiastic beginnings but poor endings
37. Spends excessive time at work because of inefficiencies
38. Inconsistent work performance

**Negative Internal Feelings**
39. Chronic sense of under achievement, feeling you should be much further along in your life than you are
40. Chronic problems with self-esteem
41. Sense of impending doom
42. Mood swings
43. Negativity
44. Frequent feeling of demoralization or that things won't work out for you

**Relational Difficulties**
45. Trouble sustaining friendships or intimate relationships, promiscuity
46. Trouble with intimacy
47. Tendency to be immature
48. Self-centered; immature interests
49. Failure to see others' needs or activities as important
50. Lack of talking in a relationship
51. Verbally abusive to others
52. Prone to hysterical outburst
53. Avoids group activities
54. Trouble with authority

**Short Fuse**

55. Quick responses to slights that are real or imagined
56. Rage outbursts, short fuse

**Frequent Search For High Stimulation**

57. Frequent search for high stimulation (bungee jumping, gambling, race track, high stress jobs, ER doctors, doing many things at once, etc.)

58. Tendency to seek conflict, be argumentative or to start disagreements for the fun of it

**Tendency To Get Stuck (thoughts or behaviors)**

59. Tendency to worry needlessly and endlessly
60. Tendency toward ADHD ictions (food, alcohol, drugs, work)

**Switches Things Around**

61. Switches around numbers, letters or words
62. Turn words around in conversations
Writing/Fine Motor Coordination Difficulties

63. ___ Poor writing skills (hard to get information from brain to pen)
64. ___ Poor handwriting, often prints
65. ___ Coordination difficulties

The Harder I Try The Worse It Gets

66. ___ Performance becomes worse under pressure.
67. ___ Test anxiety, or during tests your mind tends to go blank
68. ___ The harder you try, the worse it gets
69. ___ Work or schoolwork deteriorates under pressure
70. ___ Tendency to turn off or become stuck when asked questions in social situations
71. ___ Falls asleep or becomes tired while reading

Sleep/Wake Difficulties

72. ___ Difficulty falling asleep, may be due to too many thoughts at night
73. ___ Difficulty coming awake (may need coffee or other stimulant or activity before feeling fully awake)

Low Energy

74. ___ Periods of low energy, especially early in the morning and in the afternoon
75. ___ Frequently feeling tired

Sensitive To Noise Or Touch

76. ___ Startles easily
77. ___ Sensitive to touch, clothes, noise and light

When you have completed the above checklist, calculate the Total Score: _______
Total Number of Items with a score of three (3) or more: _______
Score for Item #1: _______
Score for Item #6: _______
Score for Item #7: _______

Dr. Amen suggests: "More than 20 items with a score of three or more indicates a strong tendency toward ADHD. Note: The three items with * and a score above three are essential to make the diagnosis." He adds: "One of the most common ways I diagnose ADHD in adults is when parents reluctantly tell me that they have tried their child's medication and that they found it very helpful. They report it helped them concentrate for longer periods of time. They became more organized and were less impulsive. Trying your child's medication is not something I recommend!"

Editor's Note: If you believe your score indicates possible ADHD, then you might want to read these articles at our website: Tips for finding an ADHD Clinician and ADHD Support and ADHD 101.

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