

ADHD in Girls

It is easy to spot the student with a strong hyperactive and impulsive component in the classroom, however spotting the quiet, undemanding, student who spends much of their time daydreaming is more of a challenge. Often, but not always, this is the way that girls with ADHD present in an academic setting. The inattentive sub-type of ADHD more frequently found in females, although not exclusively, can often go undiagnosed resulting in later coexisting disorders of anxiety and depression. Frequently girls are not diagnosed until later in adolescence or adulthood when they present with these coexisting disorders. Unfortunately, even today many females with ADHD may be treated for depression and anxiety, often unsuccessfully, while their underlying ADHD remains undiagnosed and untreated. Females who do end up in the doctor's office for an assessment of ADHD are likely those with more severe symptoms. Girls who have a high level of intelligence are even less likely to be diagnosed at school age, but also do not reach their academic potential. Females with ADHD may be able to obtain academic success due to their obsessional and perfectionistic tendencies, spending long hours on home work and assignments in order to compensate for their ADHD, further increasing their anxiety. Boys' symptoms of hyperactivity decrease in adolescence, but girls' symptoms of mood swings, anxiety and depression often increase.

Some of the Ways Girls May Present in the Classroom:

Inattentive Sub-type

- Daydreamers
- Not willing to take risks and easily discouraged
- Shy
- Easily overwhelmed
- May be under active
- Self-blaming
- Anxious and depressed
- Anxiety around school performance

Hyperactive/Impulsive sub-type or combined

- Hyperactivity may be expressed in being over-talkative
- Fidgety
- Bossy
- Risk taking
- Unable to keep up with work load

Other traits:

- Problems with times of transitions
- Immature
- Unable to read other's cues
- May not have friends
- Difficulty fitting in