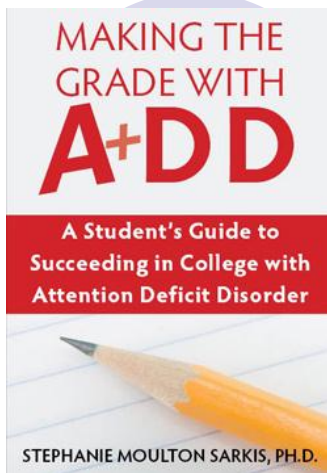


Making the Grade with ADHD: How to Succeed in College with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



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DSM-IV-TR Criteria for ADHD

- Inattentive type
 - Meets at least 6/9 criteria)
- Hyperactive/Impulsive type
 - Meets at least 6/9 criteria
- Combined type
 - Meets criteria for both the Inattentive type and Hyperactive/Impulsive type
- Criteria may be changing in DSM-5 (2013)

How Many College Students May Have ADHD?

- Affects 4.4 % of adults in the United States¹
 - 8 million people
- Approximately 2 to 8% of the college population has ADHD²
 - One study found 7.48%, with 20% approaching ADHD diagnostic requirements³
- At least 25% of college students with disabilities are diagnosed with ADHD²

How do College Students with ADHD Function Compared to Non-ADHD Classmates?

- More academic concerns and more depression than non-ADHD students^{4,5}
- Students with ADHD also have lower GPAs more social concerns, emotional instability, and substance use.⁵
- Freshmen with ADHD were more likely to start smoking than their non-ADHD classmates.⁵

Why ADHD Symptoms May Not “Show Up” Until College

- Many students are first diagnosed when they reach college
- The structure of high school may mitigate ADHD symptoms
- Students have difficulties with self-imposed structure in college
- Parents provided structure to the student when they lived at home

How Symptoms Change into Adulthood

- At least 50% of children with ADHD retain their symptoms into adulthood⁶
- Hyperactivity turns into “inner restlessness”
- Inattention stays at same level, but hyperactivity looks less “hyperactive”
- Start having increased difficulties with money management
- May begin experiencing legal difficulties

What an ADHD Student Looks Like

- Does not work to potential
 - Has 160 IQ but gets C and D grades
- Consistently late to appointments
- Impulsive spending
- Difficulties with organization
 - Papers fall out of the backpack
- May have difficulty getting along with roommates or other peers

What an ADHD College Student Sounds Like

- “I sit and read, but I get to the end of the page and have no idea what I just read.”
- “My friends can sit in the library for 3 hours and study. I just wander around the rows of books until they’re ready to leave.”
- “My mom used to wake me up every morning for school. Now I forget to set my alarm clock and I miss my class.”

ADHD Students and their Parents

- The ADHD student may feel resentful of what they view as their parents' interference and simultaneously feel dependent on their parents
- Many parents have previously had to watch their ADHD children like a hawk
 - Dilemma of backing off/getting involved
- People with ADHD may go through developmental stages at a delayed rate

ADHD Students Over the Traditional Age

- People with ADHD are less likely to attend college than their peers⁷
- Higher college dropout rate
- Return to school later in life
- May take longer to finish coursework
- May be working more than one job while attending school

ADHD College Students are at Increased Risk For:

- Car accidents⁸
- Unplanned pregnancy
 - ADHD teens 10 times more likely to have an unplanned pregnancy than their peers⁹
- Sexually transmitted diseases
 - 16% vs. 4% for non-ADHD adults¹⁰
- Depression/anxiety
 - Comorbidity rate of 25%-50%¹¹
- Eating Disorders
 - 4 times more likely in ADHD girls¹²

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Risks

- 1 in 5 ADHD adults has experienced substance abuse¹²
- Start using drugs at an earlier age and have more intense use¹³
- People with ADHD are more likely to succumb to peer pressure
- 8% of college students have used stimulant medication illicitly¹⁴
- However, people who have ADHD & do not take medication are four times more likely to abuse substances^{15,16}

Medications and ADHD

- Stimulant medications

- Adderall, Vyvanse, Concerta, Daytrana

- Schedule II drugs

- Non-stimulant medications

- Strattera

- Intuniv

Medication Issues



- If students must take their medication while on campus, the medication should be kept in the original pill bottle.
- Carry letter from doctor stating name and dosage of medication, and diagnosis of ADHD
- Medications should be secured at the student's residence

Should a Student Change Doctors?

- Students should consider switching to a doctor in their new town if:
 - It is recommended by their hometown doctor
 - Student has comorbidity issues
 - Student has started a new medication or dosage
 - Student is planning on staying in area after they graduate
 - There is an ADHD specialist in the area

ADHD Medications and Athletes

- According to NCAA, ADHD medications are acceptable
- Yearly NCAA drug testing does not check for stimulants
- Stimulants are checked at drug testing for NCAA championships
 - Student must have letter from doctor submitted to team physician or coach ahead of time

Recommendations for Scholarly Success

- Seek accommodations
- Always attend the “real” class
 - Use the online/televised class as a supplement
- Use study groups
 - Limit the number of participants to four or five
- Meet with professors regularly
 - Review tests and class notes
- Get tutoring on a regular basis

Recommendations for Personal Success

- Seek help from a counselor and/or coach
- Receive regular health care
- Get as much sleep as possible
- Have a structured schedule
 - Study for 30 minutes, take a 15 minute break
 - Schedule in relaxation time, but not too much!
- Seek healthy stress-reducing outlets

Seeking Accommodations

- Accommodations “even the playing field” so the ADHD student is working at par with his or her peers.
- Receiving accommodations in high school do not automatically qualify a student for accommodations in college
- Private colleges are not required to provide accommodations unless they receive federal funding

Applying for Accommodations

- Apply through college's Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS)
- Apply as early as possible
- Most OSDS require
 - Recent ADHD evaluation
 - College may require specific assessment tests
 - Student is responsible for paying for evaluation
 - Copy of IEP/Section 504 paperwork from high school
 - List of the student's requested accommodations

Recommended Accommodations

- Assistance with writing class notes
- Extended time on tests
- Testing in a separate and quiet location
- Permission to record lectures
- Instructions given in writing
- Priority in class registration
- Reduced course load

Students' Records & Privacy Rights

- Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - College students 17 years old and older have exclusive access to their records
 - Must sign a release to allow parental access to records
- It is recommended that students allow parents to have access to their records

Money Tips for ADHD College Students

- Have student's account linked online to parents' account
 - Easy transfer of funds
- Have a “reverse” credit card
 - Prepaid amount
- Get direct deposit & automatic withdrawal
- Use a bank with local branches

Living with Roommates



- Student should be honest about lack of neatness, but does not need to disclose ADHD diagnosis
- Student should not discuss their ADHD medication with roommates
- Pros vs. cons of roommate matching
- Pros vs. cons of living on own



Summary

- Options available for college students with ADHD
 - Medication
 - Counseling
 - Coaching
 - Tutoring
 - Accommodations

Recommended Resources

- [Making the Grade with ADD: A Student's Guide to Succeeding in College with Attention Deficit Disorder](#) by Stephanie Sarkis PhD
- [10 Simple Solutions to Adult ADD: How to Overcome Chronic Distraction & Accomplish Your Goals](#) (2nd ed.) by Stephanie Sarkis PhD
- [Adult ADD: A Guide for the Newly Diagnosed](#) by Stephanie Sarkis PhD
- [ADD and Your Money: A Guide to Personal Finance for Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder](#) by Stephanie Sarkis PhD and Karl Klein JD

Recommended Resources

- Survival Guide for College Students with ADHD or LD by K.G. Nadeau
- ADD and the College Student: A Guide for High School and College Students with Attention Deficit Disorder by P.O. Quinn
- Test-Taking Power Strategies: Improve Your Test Scores by Learning Express

Recommended Resources

- Becoming a Master Student (10th ed.) by S. Ellis
- College Rules! How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College (2nd ed.) by S. Nist-Olejnik & J.P. Holschuh
- Been There, Should Have Done That II: More Tips for Making the Most of College by S. Tyler
- How to Become a Straight-A Student: The Unconventional Strategies Real College Students Use to Score High While Studying Less by C. Newport

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