



URBAN
SAINTS

RESOURCE

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Effective support for young
people with additional needs



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Young people with ADHD can sometimes be viewed as having frequent and occasionally severe behavioural problems that can interfere with their ability to lead a normal life, although generally it is understood that this is a response to their feelings and often out of their control. They may have difficulties with their relationships, including with adults and other young people.

Young people with ADHD who have difficulties with concentration can sometimes have associated learning difficulties as well. Their impulsive nature can put them at risk of physical danger. Due to them sometimes having difficulty controlling their feelings, they can often get incorrectly labelled as “bad”.

Key issues

- **Behaviour** – this can often be interpreted as being uncontrolled and can lead to exclusion. Young people with ADHD can sometimes struggle to regain calm when they become agitated.
- **Concentration** – difficulty focusing on a particular task for very long unless helped to do so. This can then lead to fidgeting, disruption, or a falling behind with instructions and work.
- **Attention to detail** – young people with ADHD often do not have a well-developed attention to detail and can consequently make mistakes, leading to frustration. They may also have limited problem-solving skills.
- **Impatience** – this is common and includes being unable to wait or queue, shouting out an answer before the question has been completed, or frequently interrupting.
- **Lack of social skills** – often demonstrated by talking too much. Difficulties understanding facial expression, body language etc. Can struggle to make and keep friends.

Support strategies for your group

- Many young people with ADHD will have a school support plan. This, along with parent/carer consultation, should be a starting point for developing your support strategy.
- Don't give too many instructions at one time. Take it step-by-step and use clear language. Ask "Do you understand?"
- If possible have a 'Calm/Chill Area' which a young person can access (appropriately supervised) if they show signs of becoming agitated. Place calming things that the young person enjoys doing in this quiet area. The key is to remove the young person from the source of agitation before it builds up. Having some ear defenders here might also be helpful.
- Seat the young person close to or next to a leader and away from windows and distractions. If possible allocate one of your team to be a one-to-one helper for the young person. Use a fiddles box to help aid concentration.
- Good planning is important in ensuring that you accommodate the needs of a young person with ADHD in your programme. Young people with ADHD often need structure and clear routines that are not too complicated. A visual timetable might help here.
- Pastoral care/teaching is vital. Relationship building with a young person with ADHD brings great behavioural benefits as well as helping you to understand the young person's world better.
- Young people with ADHD can be given some responsibilities, under supervision, and often respond well to this involvement.



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Further Information: ADHD Information Services addiss.co.uk

Research shows that young people with additional needs are more likely to be abused than their peers (NSPCC) This increased vulnerability is due to a number of factors including communication differences, increased dependence on caregivers, social isolation and a higher likelihood that warning signs would be missed or misinterpreted. As a youth leader it's therefore important to be especially alert to changes in behaviour and wellbeing and discuss any concerns with a safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity.



**This resource is just one
of the many ways we're
here to walk with you!**

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and resources to equip you in
disciplining young people.

urbansaints.org

This resource has been adapted from our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit.



If you're interested in helping your team become more aware and welcoming of young people with additional needs, you can explore our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit at urbansaints.org/resources

The original content of this resource was created in partnership with **Youthscape** as part of the Invited to Belong resource.