CHILDREN, TEENAGERS AND ADULTS

ADHD Therapy and Support: Your Options

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition that can affect attention, activity levels and impulse control. It can also influence how a person manages everyday demands.

People with ADHD have different strengths, experiences and support needs. Support should make life more manageable and meaningful, rather than expect everyone to use the same strategies.

What can psychological support focus on?

Depending on your goals, support may include:

- Understanding ADHD and how it affects you personally.
- Creating practical systems for appointments, tasks and routines.
- Breaking tasks into manageable steps and making it easier to begin.
- Coping with frustration, overwhelm or stress.
- Building confidence and responding to self-criticism.
- Communication, relationships and asking for useful adjustments.
- Addressing anxiety, depression or sleep concerns that occur alongside ADHD.

These are possible areas of work, not guaranteed outcomes. A clinician should help you choose priorities and review whether the approach is useful.

Change the environment as well as the strategy

Support is not only about asking the person to try harder. Task demands and environments matter too.

Practical changes might include written instructions, visual reminders, fewer competing distractions, movement breaks or clearer steps and deadlines.

What helps one person may not help another. Strategies should be tested collaboratively and adjusted to fit real life.

Children and families

Children's support often involves parents or carers and, with consent, school staff. The focus may include predictable routines, supportive responses, manageable expectations and changes that help the child participate.

Parent and family interventions are recommended in the Australian ADHD guideline. Being offered this support does not imply poor parenting. It helps families find approaches suited to their child's needs.

The child's communication, development, learning, sensory needs and physical health should also be considered. Distress or difficulty participating should not automatically be treated as deliberate misbehaviour.

The Psychology Hub offers ADHD diagnostic assessments from age five. Families with younger children can still seek guidance about development, attention, activity levels and daily routines; another pathway may be more appropriate.

Teenagers and adults

Increasing responsibilities can make difficulties with organisation, follow-through and competing priorities more noticeable.

Cognitive-behavioural interventions are recommended options for adolescents and adults with ADHD. They can help with practical functioning and wellbeing, including coping, planning and responding to unhelpful thoughts.

Support may also address the emotional impact of diagnosis or years of being misunderstood. Goals should reflect the person's choices, strengths and circumstances.

Do I need a diagnosis first?

You can seek help with attention, organisation, routines, emotions or stress without an ADHD diagnosis. Similar difficulties can have several explanations, so support should avoid assuming the cause.

If you want to clarify whether ADHD is present, an assessment is a separate process. It considers developmental history, difficulties across settings, functional impact, other possible explanations and conditions that may occur alongside ADHD.

A therapy appointment alone does not necessarily establish a diagnosis. Discuss what you are seeking when booking so the clinic can recommend an appropriate starting point.

Does therapy replace medication?

Psychological support and medication have different roles. Medication is an evidence-based option for many people with ADHD. Psychological, family and environmental support can address needs that medication alone may not resolve.

The right combination depends on age, symptoms, functional impact, preferences and health needs. Discuss medication options, benefits and risks with an appropriately qualified medical practitioner.

Psychologists do not prescribe ADHD medication. With consent, they can contribute assessment information and collaborate with the medical practitioner providing care.

Sleep, movement and general wellbeing

Sleep and physical activity can affect daily functioning. Discuss difficulties in these areas with your clinician and GP rather than assuming they are simply part of ADHD.

Healthy routines can support wellbeing, but ADHD is not caused by a lack of discipline, and lifestyle changes are not a substitute for individualised care.

Finding support at The Psychology Hub

Appointments are available at our North Lakes clinic in Brisbane and online across Australia, subject to suitability and clinician availability.

Our team can help you consider therapy, diagnostic assessment or another suitable starting point. You can also ask about a free discovery call to discuss service options.

Call 1300 366 614 or visit thepsychologyhub.com.au/contact/.

For assessment information, visit thepsychologyhub.com.au/assessment-services/.

References and further reading

AADPA: Australian Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline for ADHD

AADPA: Executive summary

AADPA: Cognitive-behavioural intervention approaches

Healthdirect: ADHD medicines

General information only. This resource does not replace an individual assessment or advice from a qualified health professional.

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