

## What Are Some Strategies I Can Use When ADHD Symptoms Interfere With My Social Activities?

ADHD can sometimes make social situations challenging. For example, you may sometimes blurt out things without thinking first, or have trouble keeping up with conversations.

### Here are a few tips that may help you in social settings:

- Before speaking or acting, pause for 10 seconds to make sure that what you want to say or do is a good idea.
- Practice "active listening"—pay very close attention to what others are saying before you join the conversation.
- Ask your friends, therapist, [ADHD coach](#), or teachers to help you practice conversational skills, including how to ask questions correctly.

Whether or not to tell people about your ADHD is a personal decision.

### Before discussing your ADHD, think about the following:

- To build close relationships, you need to share. However, you also need to be able to trust. You may want to share your ADHD story with someone. Just be sure you can trust that person to respect you and the information you share.
- When you tell people about your ADHD, be prepared to answer questions and respond to misperceptions about ADHD. Speak from your own experience, or suggest articles, websites, or books. Written information is useful for people who are interested in learning about ADHD. Sharing this information may also be useful for those who have outdated views about ADHD.
- If you are in college and your professors know about your ADHD, you can talk to them about how it affects your schoolwork and your behaviour in class. They may be happy to help. If you need additional support, you can talk with your academic advisor.
- If you are employed, you may decide to tell your company or co-workers about your ADHD. Let them know of ways they can help you manage your ADHD symptoms—for example, by sending a list of tasks in an email to help you keep track. If you need additional support, you may want to talk to your human resources department.
- Set aside a special space to do work.
- Keep all your materials in one place so you can easily find them.
- While doing work, reduce distractions like background noise to help stay focused.
- Make a list of your tasks and check them off when you are done.
- Break down large assignments into smaller parts. Set deadlines for completing each part.
- Reward yourself when you complete a piece of work. Spend 15 minutes watching a favourite TV show, or doing another activity you like.
- Add extra time when planning out assignments, to allow for delays you don't expect.
- Try exercising just before studying to help clear your head.

- Each night, make a written schedule so you know what's coming up the next day. Clip it to your daily planner.

The symptoms of ADHD can be challenging for individuals who are in the workforce. Below are some helpful suggestions for managing your ADHD symptoms during the workday.

### **Working with ADHD - Limiting distractions**

- Use earphones, soothing music or other sounds to drown out office noises.
- Work in uncluttered space, such as a conference room, where distractions are few.
- Send phone calls directly to voice mail, and respond to them at the same time every day.
- Write down ideas in a notebook to avoid interruption of the task you are currently doing.
- Keep a list of ideas that you get during meetings so that you can talk about them more effectively.
- Perform one task at a time. Do not start a new task until the present one is completed.

### **Working with ADHD - Organization and Planning**

- Use a tape recorder or take notes at meetings.
- Write checklists for complex tasks.
- Use memory triggers such as a bulletin board or a reminder list on your computer for announcements.
- Learn how to use a day planner to help you keep track of tasks and events.
- Write notes on sticky pads and put them where you can easily see them.

### **Working with ADHD - Time management**

- Use time line charts to break down large projects into more manageable smaller parts, with due dates.
- Reward yourself for achieving due date goals.
- Use watches with alarms or buzzers, daily planners, or computer software with alerts or reminders.
- Program your computer to beep 5 minutes before every meeting on your calendar.
- Avoid overscheduling the day by blocking out more time than you think each task or meeting will take.

### **Talking to your employer about your ADHD**

You may decide to tell your supervisor or human resources department about your ADHD. Let them know of ways they can help you manage your ADHD symptoms. For example, sending a list of tasks in an email to help you keep track. Your employer may also be able to provide certain accommodations, like time management software.

You may find it helps to get regular feedback from your supervisor and co-workers to see if there are any areas that you could work on improving with your behavioral therapist or ADHD coach.

Following are some strategies that can help you stay on track with your ADHD management plan:

### **Schedule appointments with health care professionals.**

Schedule regular follow-up appointments with your ADHD health care team, so that they can:

- Track your progress
- Update your ADHD management plan, if necessary
- Answer questions about your ADHD
- Provide information on additional ADHD resources and support organizations that might help you
- Evaluate your need for continued treatment

### **3 helpful steps to prepare for your appointment:**

1. Print and complete Questions for Your Health Care Professional. This will help your health care professional evaluate your symptoms, perform an assessment, and determine a management plan if necessary. Be prepared to discuss any medications you're currently taking.
2. Collect feedback to share with your health care professional. Write down examples of how your ADHD symptoms affect you at home, at work, or in social settings. Request feedback from people closest to you—your significant other, family members, and friends. You may also want to gather report cards from your time in school and any job performance reviews you may have.
3. Take someone with you. Your significant other or friend may hear or remember something that you don't. They may also think to ask a question that might not have occurred to you.

### **Organize your schedule.**

Make regular use of planners, logs, watches, timers, apps, and computer reminders to help organize your schedule, track progress, and establish and maintain a routine for completing tasks.

### **Set realistic goals.**

Set goals for yourself that are specific, realistic, and measurable.

### **Join a support group.**

There are many ADHD support and advocacy groups. Get involved with these groups for additional support for you and your family.