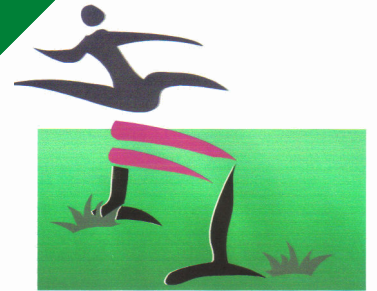


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**Skyrocketing demand for
ADHD meds is straining the
U.S. health care system**

Stories about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, have been having a resurgence in the social media zeitgeist the past several years, and it may be leading more people to seek out diagnosis for the condition.

“A lot of my patients would hold up their phone to the camera and be like, ‘Here’s this video that I saw on TikTok and this is why I have ADHD,’” said Dr. Sasha Hamdani. She is a psychiatrist and ADHD specialist who also is a content creator about the condition with more than 800,000 followers on TikTok.

Hamdani estimates that about 50% of patients who inquire about the condition actually yield an ADHD diagnosis.

ADHD diagnoses and prescriptions have been increasing across all age groups since before the days of social media. The number of ADHD diagnoses in 2010 were almost five times what they were in 1999. And between 2007 and 2016, the number of diagnoses of ADHD in adults more than doubled.

“Certainly the effects of the pandemic have been clear in terms of increasing stress, but also the advent of telehealth has brought more access to more people and brought more people into treatment,” said Dr. Lenard Adler, the director of the adult ADHD program at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine. “I don’t think we have a clear answer, but certainly the number of prescriptions of ADHD medications have gone up in the last several years.”

Social media content can be a problematic source for health care information. One media analysis of popular TikTok videos found that roughly half of the videos sampled contained misleading or potential misinformation.

“I think increased awareness is always what I would call a double-edged sword,” said Dr. Anthony Yeung, a psychiatrist at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia, and one of the authors of the study. “I think we’ve definitely moved into an area of talking about mental health that’s really positive. There’s much less stigma.”



“The other side of this double-edged sword, though, is sometimes if we’re talking about mental health symptoms or diagnoses, we then run the risk of perhaps misconstruing again things that are on the spectrum of normal as being pathological,” Yeung said.

This influx in people seeking out treatment all at once can cause a problem of supply and demand.

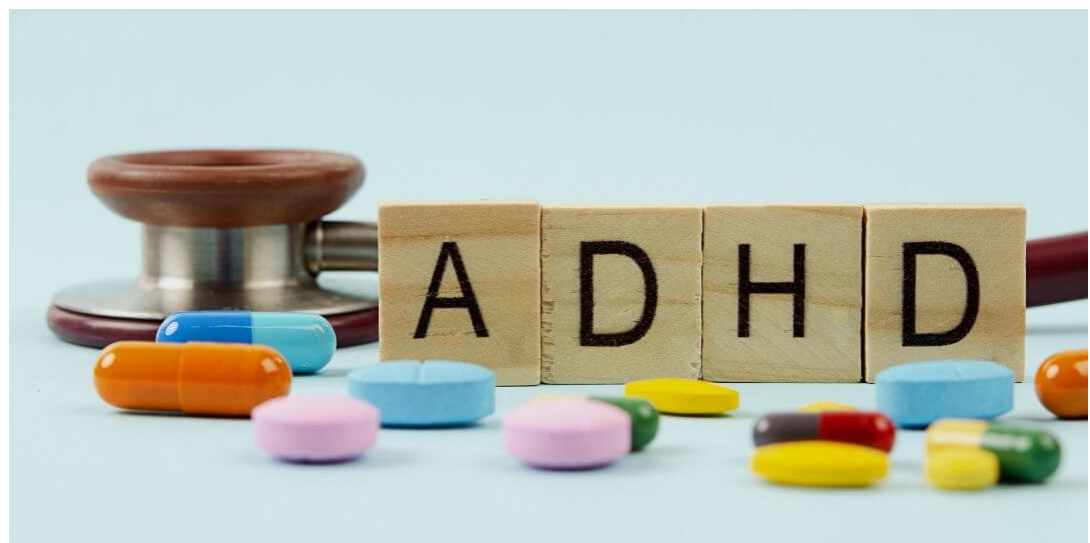
“What I see in my practice is that we have a six-month waiting list to get in. And we’re incredibly busy,” Adler said. “Some of that’s from the pandemic, but I think there’s a general need for services at this point.”

Some people may start self-diagnosing if they are unable to access treatment, which can come at a cost.

“One of the challenges with self-diagnosis is that it may cause increased anxiety for individuals,” said Yeung. “When people talk about symptoms online, sometimes those symptoms might actually not necessarily be representative of a certain illness or disorder, but it might be talked about in such a way that anyone watching that video might actually see it as such and think they have that diagnosis.”

This bottleneck doesn’t just apply to doctors visits. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced in October that there was a shortage of both the brand name and generic form of Adderall in the U.S.

“Logistically, it’s been a nightmare for patients and providers,” Hamdani said. “[Stimulant medications] are so highly controlled, you can’t just transfer it [to a different pharmacy]. You have to cancel a script. You have to then go find another pharmacy that has it. By that time, it might not be filled because other people have filled it there. It’s a lot of logistical shifting and work on that front. And that’s extremely frustrating for the patient.”





Identifying the Symptom of Worthlessness to Prevent Suicide in Adolescents With ADHD

New research finds that clinicians should ask routine questions about feelings of worthlessness at initial and follow-up examinations of adolescent patients with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to help prevent suicide.¹

“We identified worthlessness and disorganized path of depression as the primary contributor to suicidal thoughts and planning,” wrote the authors.¹

Previous studies have found that ADHD, depression, and general anxiety disorder (GAD) are all strongly correlated with suicidal ideation. Specifically, adolescents with ADHD are at a higher risk of suicide than adolescents without ADHD.² The current study gathered 185 high school-aged children in Hungary, mean age of 14.79 years, with (N=89) and without (N=96) ADHD in order to assess the relationship between ADHD, depression, GAD, and worthlessness—a symptom experienced by 70% to 80% of patients with major depressive disorder.³

The Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview for Children and Adolescents was used to evaluate psychiatric symptoms and disorders as well as suicidal thoughts and planning. Regularized psychological networks were used to investigate the associations. ADHD symptoms were significantly correlated with symptoms of depression ($p = 0.3$, $p < 0.001$) and of suicidal thoughts and planning ($p = 0.17$, $p = 0.02$), but not with anxiety ($p = 0.12$, $p = 0.11$). Suicidal thoughts and planning were significantly related to depression ($p = 0.3$, $p < 0.001$), but not to anxiety ($p = 0.06$, $p = 0.42$). Anxiety was significantly associated with only depression ($p = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$). Worthlessness was found to be directly related to suicidal ideation.

“The current study draws the attention of clinicians to the importance of screening suicidality among their patients with ADHD, with special focus on those who have comorbid depression and/or anxiety,” said the authors.¹

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2. Giupponi G, Giordano G, Maniscalco I, et al. Suicide risk in attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Psychiatr Danub*. 2018;30(1):2-10.
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Does Your ADHD Help or Hurt During the Holidays?

Hyperfocusing on the perfect gift. Decorating ad nauseum. Addressing but never sending cards. ADDitude readers describe how ADHD shows up during the holidays, and how they manage the season while avoiding holiday burnout.

ADHD brings creativity, spontaneity, and generosity, which can enrich any season. During the holidays, it can also cause cards to go unmailed, or make you forget about that school potluck until your child asks what you're bringing – just minutes before the event.

We asked ADDitude readers how their symptoms show up during this time of year, and how they get through the holiday season with minimal burnout. Read their responses and tell us how you make the season work in the Comments section below.

Holiday Hyperfocus and Perfectionism

"I make handmade Christmas cards that never get sent out. I generally run myself ragged trying to make everything perfect. There's never enough time and I end up being really disappointed in myself." – Janet "

I get so excited about gifts and I end up spending way too much money (and I am terrible with money as it is). Also, I don't often buy them in time, so January presents are a thing." – Izzy, England

"I research everyone's interests and try to make presents as perfect and personal as possible. I end up disappointed if I am unable to get the perfect gift for someone, especially if that gift doesn't exist or is way outside of my budget. – Charlotte, United Kingdom

Seasonal Overwhelm and Burnout

"Usually as overwhelm. I have all the ideas but none of the initiative." – Liz, Missouri

"I am always overwhelmed, scattered, and too tired to really enjoy the season. There's no mental energy left for any creativity, spontaneity, or generosity." – Amy, Virginia

"ADHD shows up during the holidays as procrastination anxiety. Lots of running around, getting distracted in stores, and wrapping gifts late." – Kaleigh, Massachusetts

"As a mom with ADHD, Christmas and Thanksgiving are often overwhelming due to the extensive to-do list. Planning six to eight weeks in advance seems like overkill, but it may be the only way for me to be able to enjoy the holiday season without feeling totally stressed out." – Joy, North Carolina

Thriving During the Holidays

“I thrive during the hectic pace of the holidays. My mood is happier and I flourish.” — Helen, California

“I am the family decorator and get completely immersed in creating magical Christmas displays for my family members.” — Leslie, Michigan

Holiday Mishaps

“Years ago, I had a personalized ornament made for my sister, who lives in another state, as a gift. I forget to send it in the mail to her then — and every other year after that. Now the ornament hangs on my tree. The year the ornament was made is part of its design, so it makes me laugh every time we put it up.” — Amylynn, Massachusetts

“I showed up to our neighborhood progressive dinner dressed up and bearing a hostess gift — only to discover I was a full day early. Oof!” — Regina, Virginia

“Before I was diagnosed with ADHD, I purchased front row seats to a Wiggles concert for myself and the kids. The concert was a few days before Christmas, and I purchased the tickets back in May. Despite having the tickets displayed on the fridge for months, I mistook the concert date for being a day later than it was. I only realized my mistake on the night of the actual concert. My kids had already gone to bed by then thinking they were seeing the Wiggles the next day. That concert I had tickets for was their last performance in my town, so we had no other chance. I ended up telling the kids the next day that the Wiggles were sick and couldn't perform. (Luckily my kids were only toddlers then.)” — Denise, Australia

Avoid Holiday Burnout: Simplicity & Setting Your Own Rules

“For Thanksgiving, my husband and I used to go shopping, overspend, overcook. Now we just book a restaurant and enjoy a delicious meal.” — An ADDitude Reader

“I make sure I have down time during the holidays and try not to say yes to everything. This may mean that we miss some events, but we focus on having fun in the events that we do attend.” – Glenda, Canada

“I used to try getting everyone dressed and coordinated for the ‘official’ family pic for our Christmas cards. What a nightmare! Now I just make a collage of informal images I’ve taken throughout the year.” – Michelle, Mississippi

“I always have cookies and casseroles in the freezer in case of a holiday emergency.” – Poppy, New Hampshire

“We try to forgo traditional Christmas season festivities and choose our own activities. It’s to grant ourselves a break from everyone and everything, including (and mostly) from expectation anxiety.” – An ADDitude Reader

“I gave up controlling the Christmas tree and have accepted the chaos of my child’s decorating as part of Christmas charm!” – Kate, Oregon

“Our family pares down holiday celebrations to our most-loved essentials. As introverts with ADHD, we decline most invitations, focus on small family celebrations, and repeat our favorite traditions year after year.” – Doña, California

“At 57, I think I have the season down. I’ve reduced the number of gifts I need to send and receive and mail my cards in November. We keep it simple.” – Rita, Canada

“During the holiday season, I have learned to lower expectations and keep it simple. Overall, don’t let other people set expectations for you. I have learned that most people are just as overwhelmed and will not blame you or even notice the things you miss!” – An ADDitude Reader



Holidays and ADHD Kids

MANAGING SYMPTOMS:

- Stick to a regular schedule as much as possible.
 - This includes wake-up times, medication, and any behavioral treatment. Drug “holidays” may work for over summer vacation for some kids, but during this time of year, medication may be the best method for keeping your child’s symptoms under control when they encounter stressful situations.
- Warn about any changes in advance.
 - Talk to your child about when big upheavals will occur, and what they can expect when they do. Remind them as often as necessary – a week before the event, then a few days before, then once the morning or afternoon of.
- Develop strategies.
 - If you want to bring your child holiday shopping with you, plan on going during off-peak hours to avoid a possible meltdown. Use available resources – like daily planners, list-making apps, and written reminders to help your child – and yourself – stay on track.
- Don’t be afraid to put away a few toys for later!
 - Too many new things at once can overstimulate ADHD children. Plus, you’ll have something to pull out for a rainy day a few months down the road

SAFETY:

Without the structure of regular school days, your kids will probably be less closely supervised – which may lead to some dangerous situations. Follow these safety tips to keep your peace of mind – without sacrificing your child’s fun.

- Toy Safety:
 - Pay attention to recommended age ranges and instructions.
 - Trust your instincts. If you think your child isn’t mature enough to play with a certain toy, put it away where they can’t get it.
 - Be mindful of hazards, like small parts or long strings – especially for younger children.
- Indoor and Outdoor Safety:
 - Make sure your child stays as dry as possible when they’re outdoors – particularly their hands and feet.
 - Sledding near roads should be prohibited or closely monitored.
 - Only use the fireplace when you’re at home and awake.
- Visiting Relatives – At Your House or Theirs:
 - Keep in mind that not all homes will be as safety-proofed as yours. Watch out for possible dangers.
 - Clean up as soon as possible after a party – so your child doesn’t accidentally come into contact with allergens, alcohol, or tobacco.
 - Keep a list of emergency numbers on your fridge for the babysitter or yourself – if something goes awry, you’ll save yourself the stress of searching for the doctor’s cell phone number.

KEEP THE PEACE:

Think of last year's holiday season — particularly celebratory dinners you spent with your extended family. Was your ADHD child a well-behaved dream — or a little bit closer to a nightmare? If you answered the latter, try these tips to keep your child calm and on good terms with your relatives

- Are they... hyperactive?
 - Plan regular intervals for them to burn energy. If possible, encourage outdoor play before dinner is served. During the long meal, allow them to get up and walk around when necessary, or ask for their help in serving the food.
- Are they...impulsive?
 - Provide more structure and increased supervision whenever possible. Outline the party beforehand, and provide periodic reminders throughout the day of when guests will be arriving or dinner will be served.
- Are they...easily distracted?
 - Sit next to them at dinner to help them refocus if necessary. Before the party, agree on a subtle reminder that they are drifting off — like a quick hand on their knee.
- Do they have sensory processing issues?
 - If your child becomes overloaded, take them to a quiet part of the house to regroup. If there are older children present, ask one of them to play a game with your child, one-on-one. Some undivided attention from people they look up to may be enough to get them back on track and ready to face the party

HELP THEM ENJOY THE HOLIDAY:

The holidays are their time, too! Help them make the most out of this time of year by following these simple tips:

- Practice Empathy
- ADHD kids are often so hyperactive or so focused on controlling themselves that they lose sight of others around them. This isn't because of a mean streak or purely selfish behavior — ADHD can be a lot to handle, and kids with attention deficit may get wrapped up in it, especially during the school year.
- Help them bring out their giving side by working together to come up with gift ideas for other family members. Then, plan a special day to go shopping together — help her pick out the gifts, then wrap them together when you get home. Your child will delight in participating in the gift-giving process, and he'll love watching family members enjoy his gifts.
- If your child struggles to behave at family gatherings, he may start to be viewed by relatives only in terms of his shortcomings — and that's unfair. Make sure your child gets a chance to share his strengths and accomplishments with guests — whether it's by prominently displaying a piece of artwork, or allowing him to play a song on the piano.
- If your child struggles with organization, planning, and other executive functions, the unpredictability of the holidays may be stressful. Getting her involved with the planning can be a great way to teach these skills and build her self-esteem.
- Work together to make a list of things you'll need to buy for the party, having him suggest favorite foods and beverages. Write out a timeline for the party (Ex: 6:00 pm: Guests arrive. 7:00 pm: Dinner is served. 8:00 pm: Presents are opened.) Remind your child about politely greeting each guest and saying goodbye, whenever possible.
- After a successful party, thank your child for his help. He'll be proud of his contributions and learn a few lessons about working with others.

IMPORTANT
NUMBERS



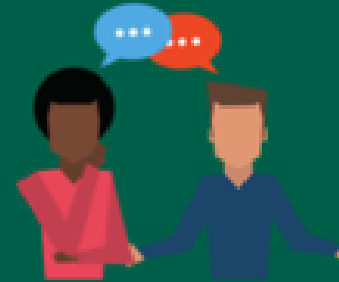
IF YOU NEED
HELP, PLEASE
MAKE THE CALL



GET THE SUPPORT
YOU NEED



YOU ARE NOT
ALONE



National Suicide
Prevention Hotline:
1-800-273-8255

National Domestic
Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-7233

Runaway and
Homeless Teen
Hotline Help:
1-800-246-4646



Coalition for the
Homeless:
212-776-2000

Drug and Alcohol
Hotline:
800-622-2255

Food and Hunger
Hotline:
866-888-8777

Homeless Services
Hotline:
212-533-5151

Rape Crisis Hotline:
212-227-3000

National Child
Abuse Hotline:
1-800-422-4453

National Teen
Dating Abuse
Helpline: 1-866-
331-9474

Crisis Lifeline for
LGBTQ Youth:
1-866-488-7386

Boys Town National
Hotline:
800-448-3000

American
Pregnancy Helpline:
866-942-6466

Behavior Management Consultants believes that, "No Child is Born Bad". Our mission is to educate, mentor, and assist parents, caregivers, and professionals to cope with, socialize, and identify values important to today's youth.

The goal is to serve public and private social service organizations including, but not limited to:

- Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs)
- Juvenile Detention Centers
- Residential Treatment Centers (RTCs)
- Public Schools
- Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

We are confident that we will meet our goals thereby ensuring that our clients are being kept abreast in the ever-changing landscape of Human/Social Services.

Quote of the Month

"Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart."
– Washington Irving



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