

Resource 5: DSM IV criteria

ADHD criteria from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the DSM IV criteria).

(American Psychiatric Association, 1994)

A. Either (1) or (2)

(1) Six (or more) of the following symptoms of inattention have persisted for at least six months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with development level:

Inattention

- a. Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in school work, work, or other activities.
- b. Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities.
- c. Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
- d. Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behaviour or failure to understand instructions).
- e. Often has difficulty organising tasks and activities.
- f. Often avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as school work or homework).
- g. Often loses things necessary for tasks and activities (eg, toys, school assignments, pencils, books or tools).
- h. Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli.
- i. Is often forgetful in daily activities.

(2) Six (or more) of the following symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsiveness have persisted for at least six months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with development level:

Hyperactivity

- a. Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.
- b. Often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected.

Cont...

- c. Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate. (In adolescence or adulthood may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness.)
- d. Often has difficulty in playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly.
- e. Is often 'on the go' or often acts as if 'driven by a motor'.
- f. Often talks excessively.

Impulsiveness

- g. Often blurts out answers before questions have been completed.
- h. Often has difficulty awaiting turn.
- i. Often interrupts or intrudes on others (eg, butts into conversations or games).
- j. Some hyperactive-impulsiveness or inattentive symptoms that caused impairment were present before the age of seven years.
- k. Some impairment is present in two or more settings.
- l. There must be clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.
- m. The symptoms do not occur exclusively during the course of a pervasive development disorder, schizophrenia or other psychotic disorder, and are better accounted for by another mental disorder.