

## What Are the Signs of AD/HD?

There are three main signs, or symptoms, of AD/HD. These are:

- problems with paying attention,
- being very active (called hyperactivity), and
- acting before thinking (called impulsivity).

More information about these symptoms is listed in a book called the

*Diagnostic and*

*Statistical Manual of*

*Mental Disorders*

(DSM), which is published by

the American Psychiatric Association (1994). Based on these symptoms, three types of AD/

HD have been found:

- *inattentive* type, where the person can't seem to get focused or stay focused on a task or activity;
- *hyperactive-impulsive* type, where the person is very active and often acts without thinking; and
- *combined* type, where the person is inattentive, impulsive, and too active.

*Inattentive type.*

Many children with AD/

HD have problems paying attention. Children with the inattentive type of AD/HD often:

- do not pay close attention to details;
- can't stay focused on play or school work;
- don't follow through on instructions or finish school work or chores;
- can't seem to organize tasks and activities;
- get distracted easily; and
- lose things such as toys, school work, and books. (APA, 1994, pp. 83-84)

*Hyperactive-impulsive*

*type.*

Being too active is probably the most visible sign of AD/HD. The hyperactive child is "always on the go." (As he or she gets older, the level of activity may go down.) These children also act before thinking (called

*impulsivity*

). For example, they may run across the road without looking or climb to the top of very tall trees. They may be surprised to find themselves in a dangerous situation. They may have no idea of how to get out of the situation.

Hyperactivity and impulsivity tend to go together. Children with the hyperactive-impulsive type of AD/HD often may:

- fidget and squirm;
- get out of their chairs when they're not supposed to;
- run around or climb constantly;
- have trouble playing quietly;
- talk too much;
- blurt out answers before questions have been completed;
- have trouble waiting their turn;
- interrupt others when they're talking; and
- butt in on the games others are playing. (APA, 1994, p. 84)

*Combined type.* Children with the combined type of AD/HD have symptoms of both of the types described above. They have problems with paying attention, with hyperactivity, and with controlling their impulses.

Of course, from time to time, all children are inattentive, impulsive, and too active. With children who have AD/HD, *these behaviors are the rule, not the exception*.

These behaviors can cause a child to have real problems at home, at school, and with friends. As a result, many children with AD/HD will feel anxious, unsure of themselves, and depressed. These feelings are not symptoms of AD/HD. They come from having problems again and again at home and in school.

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