

## **SYMPTOMS AND FIXES FOR ADD**

### **GOALS OF THE EXERCISE**

1. Identify symptoms of ADD that have been experienced over the past 6 months.
2. Become familiar with the preliminary elements of some treatment techniques.
3. Understand that treatment involves more than just taking medication.

### **ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR WHICH THIS EXERCISE MAY BE MOST USEFUL**

- None

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR PROCESSING THIS EXERCISE WITH THE CLIENT**

Adult ADD is a syndrome that is revealed in a myriad of different symptoms. Review the client's checklist of symptoms that he/she has experienced and allow them to discuss any of them in more detail. It is also important to focus the client's attention on the intervention strategies that are a part of successful treatment. Many clients have the notion that medication alone is the complete answer to their struggles. They may have questions that need to be answered about the coping skills that are briefly described in this homework assignment. Provide the client with as much detail as necessary for their understanding of these techniques. Reinforce those strategies that you believe will be beneficial to them and that will be the focus for future treatment sessions.

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## SYMPTOMS AND FIXES FOR ADD

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is characterized by a variety of symptoms or signs. Although you may have become aware of having ADD as an adult, the symptoms of distractibility, short attention span, impulsivity, and restlessness most likely began in childhood. This assignment encourages you to review your life and indicate what symptoms are a part of your experience. We then take a brief look at a list of coping skills that commonly help ADD clients.

### Symptom Checklist

1. Check all the symptoms that you have experienced within the last 6 months.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of concentration            | <input type="checkbox"/> Disorganized                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easily distracted                | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely finish projects         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restless and fidgety             | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily irritated (short fuse)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impulsive actions                | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily frustrated              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid mood swings                | <input type="checkbox"/> Low self-esteem                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tendency for addictive behaviors | <input type="checkbox"/> Interrupt or intrude on others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent work and effort     | <input type="checkbox"/> Fail to listen                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor sense of time               | <input type="checkbox"/> Make careless mistakes         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easily overwhelmed               | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor time management           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty switching activities  | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy high-risk behaviors      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel “driven by a motor”         | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic lateness               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk excessively                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily bored                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently lose things           | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor employment history        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blurt out answers                | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel anxious                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient in awaiting turn       | <input type="checkbox"/> Often depressed                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetful in daily duties        | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor eye contact               |

2. List the three most problematic symptoms.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why are these symptoms the most problematic? What are the consequences for you of each of these three symptoms?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Fixes**

Following is a list of coping techniques that are used to assist people who struggle with ADD. Review the list and place a checkmark next to those that you think might be most helpful for you to receive further guidance with as your treatment progresses.

\_\_\_ *Medication:* One of the most common treatments for ADD is the prescription of stimulant medication by a physician. There are various types of these medications and they are prescribed in various dosages to fit individual needs.

\_\_\_ *Problem-Solving Skills:* The client is taught how to approach problems in a systematic way and analyze the pros and cons of various solutions before making a decision for action. This approach is a replacement for the impulsivity that characterizes many ADD clients.

\_\_\_ *Stop, Listen, Think, Act:* This technique is also designed to curb impulsivity. The client is taught to listen carefully to the requirements of a situation and then to think about what action should be taken in response to the situation before engaging in a behavior.

\_\_\_ *Positive Self-Talk:* The client is taught to give himself/herself positive messages to counteract feelings of low self-esteem, inadequacy, depression, and anxiety.

\_\_\_ *Time Out:* This procedure is commonly used to help clients reduce their irritability and impulsivity by training them to remove themselves from stimulus situations for a short time before reacting. This allows for consideration of consequences and engaging actions in a more planful manner.

\_\_\_ *Relaxation:* Many clients with ADD are fidgety and restless, anxious, and on edge. Learning to implement relaxation techniques is a major help in reducing stress and reactivity.

\_\_\_ *Self-Reward:* Self-reward procedures are implemented to assist ADD clients in completing tasks that are often left incomplete. This procedure is also helpful in motivating clients to be focused in their actions.

\_\_\_ *Reminder Aids:* Forgetfulness and lack of organization are common traits of ADD clients. Learning to use checklists, notes written to self, organization calendars, and day planners are useful techniques.

\_\_\_ *Physical Exercise:* To reduce the restless, fidgety energy that is common to ADD clients, physical exercise on a regular basis is often implemented. The exercise reduces stress and

