

Handout Two to Accompany ADHD Training for Teachers

ADHD Specific Management Strategies

“Not all of these will work all the time; try some, then if not working try others”

Difficulty Sustaining Attention/ Completing Tasks

- Reduce task length
- Break longer tasks into short tasks that are achievable for the pupil and reward completion of each section promptly
- Follow a difficult task with a preferred task
- Allow short breaks between tasks
- Use a timer to indicate a period of concentrated work
- Emphasise quality of work rather than quantity
- Make use of alternative methods or recoding where appropriate – pictures, diagrams, recording voice, word processor
- Develop a reward system for work and homework completion (e.g. a raffle ticket system which leads to the awarding of a small prize of special privilege on the basis of a weekly random draw)

Easily Distracted

- Seat the pupil near the front of the class, close to teacher but not in a way that is presented as punitive or isolates them from other pupils
- Seat the pupil away from distracting influences (windows, doors, library corner, busy wall display, computer) to minimise visual or auditory distractions
- Have two seats in the class if possible for the ADHD child – one away from distractions for periods of concentrated work and another within a group to encourage socialisation and working together
- Place the pupils between well behaved positive role models
- Remove all objects not required for the task in hand from the desk and area around
- Listening to soft, (classical, often) music through headphones is a useful concentration aid and helps block out auditory distractions
- Use desk dividers/ study carrels to reduce visual distractions
- Use of adult proximity helps prevent wandering attention and also alerts the pupil they are off task. The adult should stand close when instructions are being given. The adult should prompt, but not keep telling the child what to do or their independence will never grow
- Ensure eye contact when giving the pupil assistance/ instructions
- Use attention training

Shouting Out/ Talking out to turn

- Ignore inappropriate questions/comments where possible – not always easy but try to praise another child when this happens for appropriate behaviour
- Provide positive reinforcement for listening – catch the child ‘being good’ and praise when possible, or reward in an appropriate, effective other way

- teach the child to practise a structured routine each time they approach a task with symbolic, pictorial checklist prompt if necessary e.g., 1. Stop and Listen 2 Look and think 3, Answer and Do
- Use the traffic light system (remind individual pupil if necessary)
- Use the Cube Box Challenge
 - A miniature behaviour programme that uses response cost and focuses on one problematic behaviour
 - Choose one behaviour (e.g. Shouting out) and set a date you will work on it. Explain the rules clearly before this starts and get the pupil's agreement
 - Teacher starts the day with a box of about 30 cubes or counters in it and the pupil has the same
 - Every time the pupil shouts out the teacher takes a cube from the pupil's box, every time the pupil puts their hand up and waits the pupil takes a cube from the teacher's box
 - At the end of the day the cubes are counted and the one with the most is the 'winner'
 - In high school an individual teacher could implement a cube box challenge during each of their lessons with a particular pupil over the course of a week

Untidy/disorganised

- Assist the pupil with personal organisation by colour coding books and folders, providing lists of books and materials needed for classes, providing print outs of course work and homework
- Enlist help from home with homework wherever possible
- Arrange for peer support. Find a relatively more organised friend who is willing to help out and something the ADHD child can 'help them back' with
- Reward tidiness through classroom rituals./ Set aside specific times in the class to tidy up folders drawers and school bags. Get everyone to do it together and make it a familiar routine
- Repeat expectations every time you set a piece of work - don't just say it once and expect it to be remembered
- Keep worksheets simple in format
- Keep materials to hand and make sure the pupil can get at them easily – not the other side of the room
- Develop a clear system for keeping track of completed and uncompleted work

Difficulty with transitions

- Use individual/group work schedules in picture or written format
- Define requirements carefully, remind the pupil frequently of the rules e.g. for lining up, walking down the corridor going in and out of the hall etc
- Aim for consistency across classes and by different teaching staff
- Give a 5 minute warning before the end of an activity to allow time to finish off and prepare for a change

Fidgets/ Squirms

- Break tasks into small steps
- Allow alternative seating. Allow the pupil to straddle their chair horse-back style, with the back of the chair against the pupil's desk (not on two legs) it is more difficult to swing it in this position.

- Allow the child to stand to work at an elbow height desk surface if possible
- Allow alternative movement where possible
- Provide opportunities for seat breaks e.g. going on an errand or getting it up to do a different activity
- Consider using Brain Gym
- Consider using a fiddle toy
- Seek advice from TO regarding sensory needs – complete a sensory profile to help inform

Peer problems

- Utilise Circle Time, role-play and drama
- Arrange joint activities in class with likely friends. Structure some play activities e.g. at break time
- Set cooperative learning activities in which all members of the group need to participate to ensure success
- Use lunchtime supervisors and parents to create opportunities to reward appropriate social behaviour i.e. get others to catch them being good so that they can be rewarded by having attention drawn to it and getting praise for efforts
- Assign pupils a responsibility in front of their peer group in order to increase standing of the pupil in the class group