

What is ADHD?

And what it is not.

ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) is a lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the way the brain processes information, regulates attention, and directs impulses to action.

It is not a defect of intelligence or a failure of character. Research shows that ADHD is caused by structural and functional differences in brain regions (especially the prefrontal cortex) and different levels of key neurotransmitters, dopamine and norepinephrine.

Key characteristics of ADHD include:

Inattention:

Difficulty concentrating on tasks, frequent distractions and forgetfulness.

Hyperactivity:

Excessive energy, restlessness, or inability to remain calm in appropriate situations.

Impulsivity:

Acting without thinking, interrupting others, and having trouble waiting their turn.

What is ADHD?

What is NOT a cause of ADHD?

Although there are many myths about ADHD, science clearly confirms that the cause is NOT:

Bad upbringing or lack of discipline:

ADHD is not the result of pampering or benevolent parenting. However, appropriate parenting strategies can help mitigate the impact of the symptoms.

A plethora of screens and technologies:

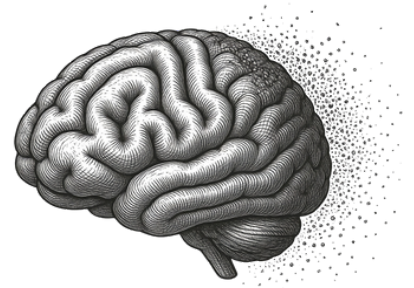
Flashy digital content may worsen symptoms, but it is not their primary biological cause.

Sugar and food:

Diet affects the body's overall energy, but it does not cause the neurological structure of the ADHD brain.

Laziness or weak will:

People with ADHD don't fail because they don't want to. They fail because their brains cannot generate enough chemical “fuel” to begin the task.



Types of ADHD

ADHD is divided into three main types based on the predominant symptoms:

Predominantly inattentive type (formerly ADD):

- Common in women and girls.
- It appears calm to the outside world, but inside there is constant chaos.
- Has difficulty maintaining attention on uninteresting tasks and activities.
- He often loses things like keys, phones, or school supplies.
- He appears forgetful and absent-minded in everyday activities.
- In some situations and when there is an excess of sensations, it can literally freeze.

Predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type:

- It manifests itself in visible physical restlessness, tapping of hands/feet.
- He is almost unable to sit still even during activities that require it.
- Acts without thinking, such as interrupting conversations or jumping into situations hastily without considering the consequences.
- They often spout answers before the questions are finished.
- Shows a constant need for movement or activity.

Combined type:

- It is manifested by a combination of inattention and hyperactive-impulsive symptoms.
- They may have problems in many areas, including concentration, organization, and impulse control.

What is the ADHD iceberg?

The tip of the iceberg represents the behavior that others see. Beneath the surface lies the true neurological and biological essence.

Visible manifestations:

Hyperactivity & Internal Restlessness:

Excessive movement or a constant feeling of internal tension that cannot be turned off.

Procrastination & Chaos in Time:

Putting off tasks until the last minute, not meeting deadlines.

Forgetfulness:

Losing keys, phones, not handing in homework, forgetting appointments.

Impulsivity:

Jumping into words, making hasty decisions, buying on impulse.

What is the ADHD iceberg?

Neurological Essence & Inner World:

Dopamine Deficit (Absence of Biochemical Fuel)

A normal brain maintains stable dopamine levels even during boring tasks. The ADHD brain is deficient in dopamine transmitters.

A task that does not bring immediate interest or excitement induces a state of "chemical silence."

The brain is physically unable to generate a signal to initiate action.

Executive Paralysis (Freezing vs. Laziness)

Laziness is a choice: One rests and enjoys it.

Executive paralysis is a control disorder: A person desperately wants to complete a task, sits over it, feels immense anxiety and remorse, but the prefrontal cortex fails to issue the command to physically move.

Interest-Based Nervous System

The normal brain operates on the principle of IMPORTANCE ("I do it because I need to"). The ADHD brain responds exclusively to 4 triggers: INTEREST, NOVELTY, CHALLENGE, and URGENCY (Crisis/Deadline).

If a task lacks any of these, executive functions fail.

What is the ADHD iceberg?

Neurological Essence & Inner World:

Attention regulation & hyperfocus

ADHD is not a lack of attention, but an inability to consciously control attention:

- Low Dopamine = Lack of Concentration:
The brain is constantly running around looking for stimulus.
- High dopamine = Hyperfocus:
When the brain is fascinated by a topic or pushed by a deadline (adrenaline), it is flooded with dopamine and locked into a state where it is not aware of time, hunger, or the world around it.

Time Blindness

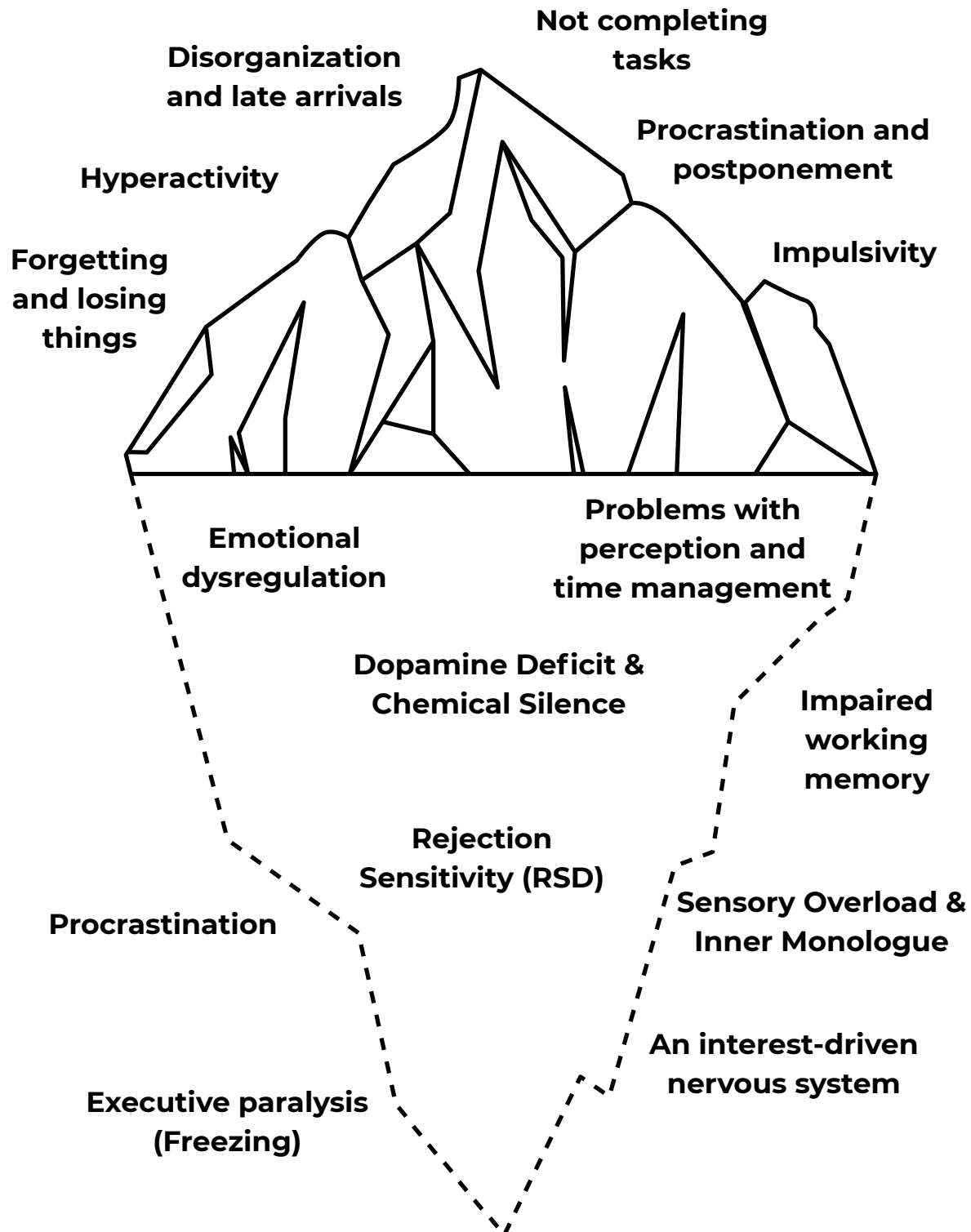
People with ADHD perceive time in only two categories: "NOW" and "SOMETIMES".

They lack an intuitive sense of the passage of time, which leads to chronic delays and underestimating the difficulty of tasks.

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)

Extreme emotional pain caused by feeling like a failure, disappointing others, or being criticized. Often leads to withdrawal, perfectionism, or avoidance behavior.

ADHD iceberg



Powerful features

& how they fail

Executive functions are the "control center" of the brain in the prefrontal cortex.
In ADHD, these functions are impaired:

Executive Function	Normal Function	How it fails in ADHD
Working Memory	Keeps instructions in mind while working.	Information drops out after a few seconds (requires visual reminders).
Task Initiation	Simply sits down and starts working.	The start brings about physical resistance and mental stillness.
Inhibition (Self-Control)	Thinks through consequences before acting.	Acts before the brain has time to evaluate the risk.
Emotional Regulation	Processes frustration with perspective.	A minor thing triggers massive overwhelm, crying, or an outburst.
Flexibility (Transitions)	Easily switches between activities.	Transitioning from one activity to another causes severe stress.

Skill building

& how they fail

The solution to ADHD is not to “try harder,” but to modify the environment and adapt the systems to one’s own biochemical needs:

1. How to overcome executive paralysis

2 Minute Rule (Microsteps):

Don’t set a task to “Clean the kitchen.” Set a task to “Take 1 glass away.” Once you overcome the initial resistance, the brain gets the first microdopamine and often continues on its own.

Body Doubling:

Work in the presence of another person (even online). The presence of another person naturally increases norepinephrine levels and helps maintain focus.

2. Working with time and memory

What is not seen does not exist:

Use visual boards, open shelves, sticky notes, and timers (e.g., Time Timer with visual disc count).

Batching:

Do similar tasks at once to save energy from constantly switching between different activities.

3. Calming the nervous system

Dopamine breaks:

Instead of scrolling on your phone (which overloads your brain even more), include movement, cold water on your face, listening to brown noise, or taking a short walk.

Conclusion

When to seek professional help

If symptoms significantly interfere with your daily life, work, relationships, or sleep, it is important to seek professional help:

Psychiatrist:

Only they can make an official diagnosis and possibly indicate pharmacotherapy (stimulants/non-stimulants) that supplies the missing neurotransmitters to the brain.

Occupational Therapist / ADHD Coach:

It helps by building specific, custom-made visual and organizational systems.

Psychotherapist (CBT):

It helps to process the trauma of years of failure, low self-esteem and anxiety.

Understanding your own neurology is the first step to relief.
Your ADHD is not a failure of willpower.

When you stop forcing your brain to function like other people's operating systems, and create your own customized conditions, your difference can become a source of incredible creativity, hyperfocus, and deep empathy.