

Explaining ADHD

Resources

- [How to \(explain\) ADHD](#) (6:32)
- [Am I Lazy, Stupid, Messy, Flaky? ADHD](#) (4:35)
- [Explaining ADHD \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)

Identities & Themes

- Identity affirmation
- Bias, prejudice, and stereotypes
- General diversity
- White/European
- Ability and Neurodiversity

Summary of Resource

What is ADHD and how do you explain it to people? In both videos, Jessica McCabe collaborated with members of the ADHD community to provide simple explanations of what it is like to live with ADHD and discusses the most common ADHD challenges.

Condition for Belonging: Respect

Anti-Bias Education Tenets

- Empathy & Understanding
- Healthy Complex Identities
- Respect Across Differences

Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

Before You Teach

Vocabulary

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) -

ADHD, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, is a relatively common neurodevelopmental diagnosis. The [American Psychiatric Society](#) offers details about the condition, which often is diagnosed in children, and is more commonly diagnosed among boys than girls. Adults are also diagnosed with ADHD. Symptoms include restlessness, difficulty in focusing or staying organized, and impulsivity. Those with an ADHD diagnosis may also exhibit difficulty sitting still or engaging in quiet activities.

Refer to someone as having attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder only if the information is relevant to the story and if you are confident the person has been medically diagnosed with the condition. Use “attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder” on the first reference; ADHD is acceptable on the second.

Working memory- Working memory is one of the brain’s executive functions. It’s a skill that allows us to work with information without losing track of what we’re doing.

Resources:

<https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/working-memory-what-it-is-and-how-it-works>

Teacher Reflection Questions

- How familiar are you with ADHD? What mental models/images come up for you when the term is used?
- How familiar are you with the three different presentations of ADHD (hyperactive/impulsive, inattentive, combined)? How might these three look differently in the students that you serve?
- The video states that people with ADHD tend to get corrected or teased a lot more than their peers. How might this affect student performance in the classroom?

- What questions do you have about ADHD? Who in your school would be a good source to reach out to for answers?

Materials Needed for Lesson

- [Explaining ADHD \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- Ability to project a slideshow and video
- Journal or notebook

Process of Implementing

- Project the [Explaining ADHD \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- Introduce the lesson and vocabulary.
- Show the video.
- After showing the video, give students time to complete a written reflection on at least one journal prompt.
- Lead students through the discussion questions.

Journal Prompts

- The video gives one metaphor for people with ADHD brains as a neverending hamster wheel or a pinball machine. Have you ever felt this way? How so?
- Because ADHD can present itself in so many different ways, it can be easily overlooked or written off. Are there any connections that make with students who might be misunderstood or overlooked?

Discussion Questions

*Essential questions are in bold.

- What stood out to you in the videos? What are some key take-aways from the videos?
- Why do some people think that ADHD doesn't really exist?
- **Behavior is affected by our brains. How might the behaviors of a person with ADHD look differently from someone with a neurotypical brain?**
- How can feelings of shame create a cycle that is damaging to us?

Follow-Up Activity

Split students into groups of three and explore the extra links provided below to encourage ongoing discussions about ADHD. Ask students to share key highlights and learning from their assigned website with their peers. For more structure, you could ask them to share 3 new things they learned, 2 things to keep in mind when treating people with ADHD with respect, and 1 question they have.

- Hyperfocus: <https://childmind.org/article/hyperfocus-the-flip-side-of-adhd/>
- Executive function Connections: <https://www.additudemag.com/inside-the-add-mind/>
- ADHD Myths and Misunderstandings
<https://chadd.org/about-adhd/myths-and-misunderstandings/>