

# **ADHD and Anxiety**

Kelliann Lively



# What is ADHD?

- A condition affecting children and adults characterized by problems with:
  - Attention
  - Impulsivity
  - Overactivity
- 3 Subtypes
  - Inattentive
  - Hyperactive
  - Combined Type

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

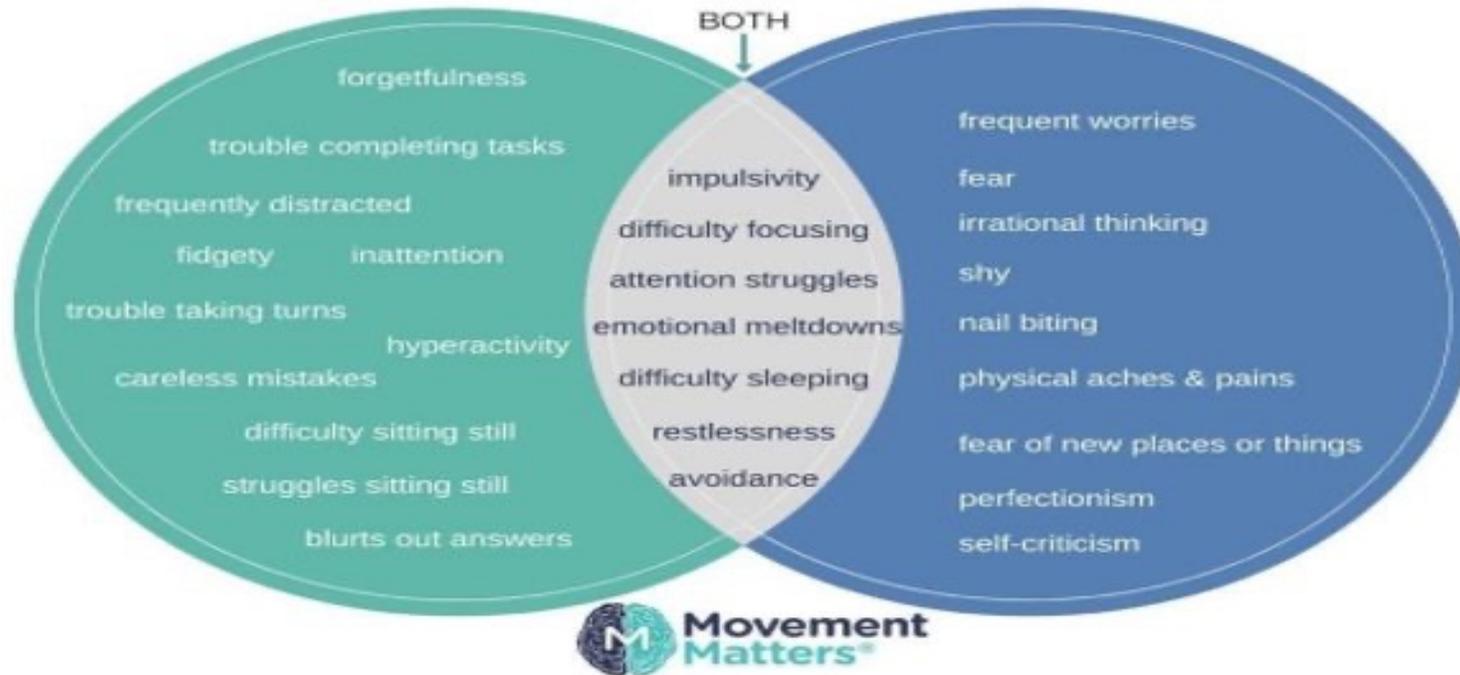
# What is anxiety?

- Apprehension or fear about a future threat or a response to an immediate threat
- Normal human response that can cause:
  - Restlessness
  - Fatigue
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Irritability
  - Sleep disturbance
- Can be positive by energizing and motivating people to accomplish tasks and goals

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

# ADHD and Anxiety Overlap

## ADHD VS. ANXIETY



<https://www.facebook.com/thecontentedchild/posts/adhd-vs-anxiety/1544643812350648/>

# How do they relate?



- College students are at greater risk for having anxiety symptoms and anxiety disorder (O'Rourke, Bray, & Antstopoulos, 2020).
- ADHD can cause students to feel overwhelmed, fall behind, more likely to experience negative situations and emotions, and have lower self-esteem.
- Once anxious, ADHD symptoms increase and become worse

# How to Cope

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# Regulate Behaviors, Emotions, & Mindset

Write it out!

- Use feelings and behaviors as information

Ask yourself:

- What am I feeling?
- What is the problem?
- What was the trigger?
- How can this be managed?
- What is the best, worst, and most likely outcome of the situation?



<https://www.bustle.com/p/11-journaling-tips-for-people-who-are-absolutely-terrible-at-keeping-a-journal-15514789>

# Coping Mechanisms

- Structure unstructured time to create a routine
- Exercise and movement
- Maintain healthy habits
- Better exercise, sleep, and eating habits
  - Limiting anxiety inducing triggers like caffeine and other substances
  - Reducing stress overall

# Additional Coping Mechanisms

- Organize physical spaces
  - Define where work, leisure, sleep, study, and other activities will be done around your home
  - Example: cleaning off your desk leaving nothing, but your to-do list out and visible.
- Decrease Sight Pollution
  - Reset and prepare your workspace for the following day
- Lower the bar on expectations
  - Reframe tasks into do-able terms
- Decatastrophize
  - Maintain perspective and practice gratitude
  - Defuse by accepting thoughts for what they are
    - Thoughts and NOT facts.

# References

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.).

O'Rourke, S. R., Bray, A. C., & Anastopoulos, A. D. (2020). Anxiety Symptoms and Disorders in College Students With ADHD. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 24(12), 1764–1774.

Prevatt, F., Dehili, V., Taylor, N., & Marshall, D. (2015). Anxiety in College Students With ADHD: Relationship to Cognitive Functioning. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 19(3), 222–230.

Ramsay, J. (2020, December 22). ADHD and Anxiety: Symptoms, Connections & Coping Mechanisms. Retrieved February 01, 2021, from <https://www.additudemag.com/adhd-and-anxiety-symptoms-coping/>